

Full-Time Public Enemy

Chapter 26: Chapter Twenty-Six: Everyone Shouts to Beat

"Uh..." A stunned silence fell.

Liu Shichan had a pair of impressive long legs. Girls who practiced martial arts often favored short skirts or shorts for ease of movement. She usually wore sports shoes, paired with white over-the-knee socks.

Now, the socks were torn to shreds. The shoe on her left foot had also been ripped off, revealing her pale ankle and bare foot. It was somewhat embarrassing but made for an even more dangerously alluring sight.

*A similar scene from the sixteen-episode art-house epic, *Prototype and Valkyrie*, seemed to flash through Chen Gu's mind.*

Lost in thought, he found himself staring straight at the girl's bare feet.

Even someone as habitually carefree as Liu Shichan flushed crimson with embarrassment in an instant. She cursed, "Chen Gu, you bastard!" then turned and fled.

"Ooooh—" A chorus of jeers erupted from the crowd. The boys from Class Four, in particular, glared at Chen Gu with murderous intensity. Chen Gu felt wronged enough for snow to fall in summer. *If I said this was all an accident, would anyone actually believe me?*

Chen Zili's eyes shone with a blue light. *My heavens, Grandpa, you're incredible! A master fighter and a smooth talker! You're the grandpa for me!*

Although Chen Zili considered himself a typical scion of a wealthy family, he'd never once confessed his feelings to a girl in all his years.

The reason was simple: he was too much of a homebody and far too timid.

From now on, if he could just follow Grandpa—Grandpa handling the fights, Grandpa as his wingman for picking up girls—Chen Zili felt his life would reach its zenith.

"Ahem, cough, cough..." Teacher Zhou cleared his throat and felt compelled to criticize Chen Gu. "You, too. Don't you know to go a little easier on your female classmates? This is a sparring exchange; you should know when to stop."

"Yes, yes, I was wrong," Chen Gu readily admitted.

While the classmates were causing a ruckus, Chen Zili, coming down from his delusional high, suddenly realized something: *The techniques Chen Gu just used were definitely from the "Ancient Martial Great Nine Forms"! The initial block was clearly from Wing Chun, and that final touch was the Dragon Claw Hand. What does this mean? My Grandpa is a martial arts prodigy!*

As soon as the sparring exchange ended, the Lubei dark web exploded. Everyone who had bet lost their hard-earned Gold Shields down to the last coin. This ignited a furious rage among the students. On the website's homepage, the campaign titled "Fully Support Goddess Liu Liu to Crush Chen Gu! Grand Signature Drive!" soared to a new record of 1,200 participants!

Lubei Middle School had roughly one thousand students and over two hundred faculty and staff members.

The implication was obvious.

Later, when the video of the fight was released, various discussions erupted. Many analyzed it from technical and scientific angles, all concluding that Chen Gu's final move must have been a touch, not a grab.

There was no doubt about it; the guy must have been scheming for ages, meticulously planning, enduring countless hardships... all for that single touch.

This, however, completely overshadowed the fact that Chen Gu was a fighting prodigy—a detail only Teacher Ouyang and a handful of others noticed.

"Come with me. I know a secret path we can use to sneak off campus," Chen Zili earnestly promised Chen Gu. "The Dead Phoenix Gang is reportedly already blocking the school gates. Everyone's out for your blood right now."

So these are the consequences of hitting a woman? Chen Gu found it rather absurd.

Fortunately, Chen Zili, with his years of experience skipping classes and sneaking out, successfully led Chen Gu over the wall.

"Let's go. Come home with me."

Chen Gu felt a flutter of nervousness. *He was about to meet his son's family. Would they accept him? He looked presentable enough, right? Not too embarrassing to be seen with... Academically, he was somewhat accomplished, having been specially cultivated by the school, with a promising future ahead... This mindset...was he like a new bride meeting the in-laws, or a son-in-law moving in with his wife's family? Definitely not like the father-in-law.*

To be honest, Chen Gu hadn't planned to actively approach Chen Jixian's family. The mess belonged to the original owner of this body, but Chen Jixian had made enormous sacrifices, and Chen Gu, as the successor, had indeed benefited. Since Chen Jixian's family was extending an olive branch, it would be rather impolite not to reciprocate.

Chen Gu summoned his bodyguards and car. Then, he and his 'grandson' headed to Chen Jixian's home.

This dinner had been Chen Zili's doing. The bodyguard incident had led the young man, in his perceived wisdom, to a revelation: his father was actually a stoic but filial son—he just couldn't bring himself to show his affection openly.

So, he prodded his mother, Xiao Jiangxia. Naturally, Xiao Jiangxia didn't want her husband and his biological father to remain estranged, so she had taken the initiative to arrange this dinner.

Chen Jixian lived in a detached house with a courtyard, a rarity in this day and age. As a colonel, this was military-assigned property; he would have to return it if he ever retired.

The car stopped at the courtyard gate, and Chen Gu dismissed the bodyguards. Chen Zili burst in first, shouting, "Mom, we're back!"

Xiao Jiangxia hurried out, not to welcome her little rascal of a son, but her father-in-law.

However, upon seeing Chen Gu, Xiao Jiangxia found herself in an awkward predicament. How should she address him? Chen Gu still looked seventeen or eighteen, the same age as her own son.

"You... you're here," she managed, deciding to forgo any specific term of address.

Chen Gu was even more flustered, only managing an awkward, "Thank you for your trouble."

In his past life, Chen, the renowned actor, had played countless roles and analyzed innumerable scripts, but he'd never encountered a scenario quite like this... He had absolutely no precedent to draw upon.

Xiao Jiangxia then called her daughter out. This time, Chen Gu refrained from any bizarre impulse to hug his beautiful 'granddaughter.' Instead, with the demeanor of an elder, he presented the gifts he had bought on the way.

They were nothing particularly original—just some common, yet presentable, items.

Xiao Jiangxia engaged in some awkward small talk for a moment before excusing herself. "I'll go get dinner started. You young people can chat amongst yourselves."

Once in the kitchen, she nearly banged her head on the chopping board. 'You young people'? What on earth was she saying? Was that how a daughter-in-law should address her father-in-law?

Chen Jixian finished work very late that day. He wasn't in a good mood, and his usually sharp eyes were half-closed and listless.

He knew he had failed, and what made it worse was that this failure was of his own choosing.

Recently, his superiors had spoken with him. It seemed he would soon be retiring from the military and transferred to a civilian post. Furthermore, judging from their conversation, the "civilian post" they were arranging for him didn't seem to be a desirable one.

Did he regret it? Yes, a little.

Was he resentful? Yes, a little of that too. But his resentment was directed less at Chen Gu and more at Chen Beiliu. His feelings towards his own grandfather were complicated, something he couldn't quite sort out himself.

Nearing his home, Chen Jixian heard his daughter's laughter from inside. He frowned. *That girl is usually so quiet. Why is she so cheerful today? Don't tell me she's fallen in love and brought some boy home?*

Chen Jixian's hand instinctively went to his service pistol, his gaze turning even colder.

The moment he stepped inside, he saw a familiar back. His eyelids twitched, flicking upward by a millimeter. His daughter, Chen Qingyu, rushed over joyfully, "Dad, you're back! Grandpa was just saying he's good friends with the famous musician Gao Mengjiu, and he's planning to recommend me to..."

Chapter 27: Chapter 27: Modified Mutant

Chen Qingyu attended a music and arts school and always had good grades. She had loved singing since she was young, and her biggest dream was to become a great singing star.

However, Chen Qingyu, who usually had more influence with her father than Chen Zili, saw her father's face turn colder, his drooping eyelids seeming to weigh even heavier.

"Come with me," Chen Jixian said as he walked over to Chen Gu, his voice indifferent.

Chen Gu hesitated but then got up and followed him. Chen Zili and Chen Qingyu were both baffled, with the latter looking at Chen Zili. "Didn't you say that Dad is a very filial son?"

Chen Zili had guessed their father arranged the bulletproof car and bodyguards. Chen Jixian was so frighteningly serious that Chen Zili would never dare ask him to confirm it.

But at this moment, the grandson suddenly had an epiphany: *Since Chen Gu gets along well with someone of Gao Mengjiu's stature, the bodyguards and car might not necessarily have been arranged by Father after all!*

His eyes darting around nervously, he said, "I... I just remembered something. I need to go to the basement..."

Having just tripped up his sister and mother, he figured he wouldn't get off lightly. He had a "safe room" in the basement and wanted to hide there for a bit.

Chen Jixian led Chen Gu out the door, where two guards stood at the entrance.

Chen Jixian suddenly turned around, his eyes bulging. Before he could even start his furious interrogation, Chen Gu had already guessed everything. He raised his hands, waving them. "Okay, okay, I didn't plan on bothering your family. I know you warned me: take the money and live my own life."

"This dinner, I genuinely thought you knew about it, which is why I came."

"Don't worry, there won't be a second time."

After saying that, Chen Gu turned and left without waiting for Chen Jixian's reaction. *He indeed felt a bit guilty towards Chen Jixian, but this tragedy was the previous owner of this body's fault, and he didn't have the patience to face his adult son's accusations.*

Chen Gu stuffed his hands deep into his jacket pockets. He had taken only a few steps when a surge of discontent rose in him, and he grumbled, "Damn it, they're my family too."

His granddaughter was adorable, his daughter-in-law virtuous, and his grandson recklessly courting death... Although their meeting had been brief and awkward, it surprisingly felt a bit wonderful.

Chen Jixian's ears twitched; he had heard the muttering clearly. But he just watched dispassionately as Chen Gu walked away, his eyes slowly returning to their usual state.

Chen Jixian watched his retreating figure. Chen Gu was almost at the street corner, about to turn. Only then did Chen Jixian turn to go back inside, but an odd situation suddenly arose within his perception.

Everything around him turned gray and dark, except for one person approaching from his ten o'clock direction—radiating a glaring, blood-red aura.

This person wore a loose hoodie, the hood pulled up, hands in their pockets, walking briskly towards them.

The guards at the door immediately became alert and, without hesitation, raised their guns. "Stop right there!"

The person ignored them. The two guards disengaged the safeties on their weapons and shouted again, "Stop! Don't move!"

The person slowly raised his hands.

However, the way he raised his hands was strange: fingers pressed tightly together, backs of the hands facing forward. Most people, due to their physiology, would face their palms forward when surrendering.

The two guards were Chen Jixian's elite troops, seasoned in battle, and they immediately noticed this anomaly. They advanced in an assault stance, guns aimed at the target, shouting, "Turn your hands around!"

After they shouted several times, a corner of the mouth of the person hidden under the hood curled into an eerie smile. He asked, "Are you really sure you want this?"

As he turned his palms forward, with a sudden SHING, his two hands splayed open, blooming into four sharp, triangular blades each. Simultaneously, a CLICKING mechanical sound came from his wrists as the "palms" shot forward, connected by a metal flex shaft as thick as a thumb.

The four-petaled blades spun continuously as they flew, hurtling toward the faces of the two guards.

The target could deftly control his "hands" via the flexible metal shafts.

However, the sudden attack didn't catch the guards off guard. Pushing forward the arms holding their guns, the raised parts under their forearm sleeves burst open with a METALLIC RATTLE, unleashing a multitude of fish-scale metal pieces. Then, drawn together by magnetic forces, these pieces quickly formed a seamless shield, protecting the two guards behind it.

SCREEECH!

The target's four-petaled hand-blades rotated rapidly, cutting against the shield, emitting an earsplitting screech and sending sparks flying, yet they ultimately failed to penetrate.

Chen Jixian stood behind them, as firm as Mount Tai. These were all veterans he had personally trained, and as expected, they had not disappointed him.

He shook his head slightly, a hint of disappointment in his voice. "Just an illegal body-modifier? Not a Mutant?"

Chen Jixian issued an order nonchalantly, "Finish this quickly. I still need to go back and beat up my son!"

The two guards quickly communicated. One adjusted his weapon—a standard-issue, full-function automatic rifle of the Confederation military—to "Suppression Mode." Instantly, the firing rate surged. Amidst a RAT-TAT-TAT of dense gunfire, a hail of bullets PINGED and CLANGED against the four-petaled hand-blades and flexible shafts, forcing the target back.

The other guard switched his rifle to "Shock Subdual" mode, aimed at the target, and pulled the trigger. BOOM! The target's body vibrated intensely at a high frequency, instantly dislocating all its joints, and some connections in its mechanical modifications came loose.

CRACK! The target collapsed to the ground.

The guards sighed with relief but remained on high alert, one covering the other as they quickly approached to make an arrest.

Suddenly, an evil, potent aura burst forth from the fallen figure's body. Chen Jixian's eyes snapped wide open. "Careful!" he yelled.

RRRIP— The hoodie was torn open as the target's body rapidly swelled. Foul-smelling, mucus-covered black tissue continuously self-replicated, and in an instant, he transformed into a five-meter-tall monster with two heads (one large, one small), four arms, and three sharp, elongated tails!

With a guttural roar and a mere swipe, it tore the approaching guard to shreds.

The guard's legs, which had undergone bio-metallic modification, CLATTERED to the ground as scattered parts.

The high-polymer composite bulletproof vest worn by the guard was as fragile as paper against its sharp claws.

WHOOSH— Another of its claws swiped at the second guard but missed, as Chen Jixian rushed forward and pulled the guard behind him.

"A Mutant!" the guard cried out in shock. "I can't believe the illegal body-modifier was also a Mutant! This Mutant is incredibly cunning; it only revealed its true capabilities just now!"

The first guard had been too close. The magnetic shield, which had easily blocked the four-petaled hand-blades, was useless against the Mutant's talons; a casual rake of its claws tore the shield apart.

Chen Jixian was furious. *There was nothing he hated more than someone killing the soldiers under his command!*

He stepped forward, taking a deep gulp of air. His body swelled in response, his powerful muscles tearing through his military uniform with a series of RIPS and SNAPS as he transformed into a colossus fully two point four meters tall!

Chen Gu, standing at the street corner, was dumbstruck. *My adult son... he's actually a Professional? As expected of my own flesh and blood!*

Chapter 28: Chapter 28 The Father-Son Battalion Goes to Battle

The Mutant, with foul-smelling saliva dripping from its mouth, roared and charged at Chen Jixian. Its footsteps were like thunder, shaking the ground violently.

Chen Jixian pushed back with one foot, propelling the surviving guards into the yard, while he rushed toward the Mutant.

BOOM!

Chen Jixian's fist collided heavily with the claw of the Mutant.

A visible, pale white shockwave burst forth from the point of impact between their fist and claw, pulverizing the ground tiles, walls, and plants within a five-meter radius as if struck by a cannon.

"AWOOOOO—"

The Mutant howled in pain, flailing its claw. Chen Jixian, though standing firm, was pushed back four meters by the tremendous force, his feet gouging two deep tracks into the ground.

His expression was as still as water. Without a word, he charged again like a battle tank.

A Professional and a Mutant clashed once more. The Mutant was exceptionally powerful, but Chen Jixian was no less formidable. Chen Gu didn't know what his Profession was, but judging by his fighting style, he was another relentless brawler.

The continuous BOOMING sounds of their battle echoed. From a distance, Chen Gu suddenly understood: it was no wonder Zhao Zhenhuai, despite his superior command capabilities, was still outranked by Chen Jixian in the cultivation sequence. It was also

no wonder Chen Jixian had managed to covertly assault and kill the Empress of the Alien Insect Race!

The "special bomb" reported to have killed the Empress didn't exist; Chen Jixian himself was that "bomb"!

Inside the residence, the alarm sounded; support should be arriving soon. The Mutant grew more agitated, howling incessantly.

Chen Gu suddenly looked in a certain direction. It was an enclosing wall. Then, with a BANG, the wall crumbled to pieces, bricks flying in all directions as an even larger Mutant burst through!

This creature was six meters tall, like a moving mountain of flesh. Its pitch-black body was covered with human hands and legs. In the center of the flesh mountain, there was a one-meter-wide, blood-red vertical pupil!

The whole Mutant looked extraordinarily disgusting and eerie.

The hands and feet worked together, propelling the flesh mountain towards the residence, the ground tiles CRACKING and CRUMBLING beneath its massive weight.

Chen Jixian suddenly panicked; his wife and children were inside the residence!

He launched a furious assault to drive back his opponent, but this Mutant was cunning, entangling him fiercely.

The Meatball Mutant had reached the entrance of the courtyard. From inside, a gigantic explosive projectile was shot out. However, this projectile, capable of destroying a regular armored vehicle, vanished silently into the body of the Meatball Mutant!

The guards stood firmly at the entrance, guns raised.

As the flesh mountain rolled over them, they kept firing, powerless to stop it. Just as the six-meter-high, dark flesh mountain was about to crush one of the guards, a figure suddenly appeared above it.

With a downward press of the figure's palm, intense beams of light burst out from within the flesh mountain. The guard, startled, dropped his gun and fled back into the yard in panic.

The Meatball Mutant, in excruciating pain, stood still. Its hands and feet trembled rapidly, and the giant vertical pupil in its center showed a look of despair.

BANG!

The Meatball Mutant exploded violently, its huge body shattering into thousands of pieces. As these fragmented tissues sprayed outwards, they were further burnt and dissolved by the terrible, blinding light, turning into ash before even hitting the ground.

A soft RUSTLE filled the air.

Black ashen dust fluttered down from the sky.

Chen Jixian and the Clawed Mutant halted their struggle as the figure stumbled and fell to the ground. Chen Jixian's eyes widened in shock. *It's him!*

Chen Gu was drenched in sweat, his hair wet and sticking to his forehead.

Seeing his adult son freeze momentarily, missing the opportunity to finish off the opponent, Chen Gu cursed angrily, "Idiot, get moving!"

Damn it, my "Nuclear Explosion Nun" is just a memory embodiment. "Biological Nuclear Explosion" is a half-baked skill; using it once drained me completely, leaving me unable to launch a second strike.

Chen Jixian froze again. *Was I just scolded by my father?*

This was an experience Chen Jixian had never had in his lifetime—when he was young, he actually envied his classmates who were scolded and beaten by their parents.

Chen Beiliu felt deep guilt towards his grandson and thus never scolded or beat him.

In many literary and artistic works, a father's reprimand is a form of special parental care. Although somewhat peculiar, it is indeed true.

In his astonishment, Chen Jixian failed to notice that after performing a "Biological Nuclear Explosion," Chen Gu coolly swept back his wet bangs and subconsciously made a gesture as if supporting his chest.

The Clawed Mutant charged at him again. Chen Gu's hair was practically steaming with rage. He switched to "Star Battle Instructor" mode, grabbed a rifle discarded on the ground by a guard, and leaped into the fray.

"High-Energy Combat Art" combined with this rifle was "Super Explosive Gun Combat Art."

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Powerful bullets continuously struck the same spot on the Clawed Mutant's body from various angles, the severe explosions enlarging the wound.

But the Clawed Mutant was also incredibly strong; its black tissues constantly regenerated. Just as the energy stored in the rifle reached its lowest point, a fist suddenly flew through the air, landing heavily in the wound.

The punching power was comparable to a large-caliber energy cannon.

BOOM—

The formidable force pierced straight through the Mutant's body, bursting out the other side. Shattered black tissues scattered onto the ground, HISSING as they bored deep holes into the earth.

Chen Jixian finally snapped out of it. His punch forced the Mutant to twist in pain. Then, he sprang into the air and pounced, smashing another punch into one of the Mutant's heads. The power of this blow pierced through its entire body, completely obliterating all the black tissues within the Mutant.

With a THUD, the Mutant collapsed to the ground. Its smaller remaining head still opened and closed its jaws in unyielding frustration, as if trying to bite onto something.

Sirens began to wail as a special squad quickly arrived, cordoning off the entire block.

Chen Gu dropped the rifle, slumping down against a broken wall. Chen Jixian quickly reached him, his body returning to normal as he sprinted. He scooped up Chen Gu, and in one motion, ducked into the yard and through an iron door at the back of a house, both of them slipping inside.

Behind the door was a slanted passageway leading to a secret underground chamber.

The room was filled with various high-tech devices. Chen Jixian placed Chen Gu into a special airtight chamber, closing it and pressing a button.

HISS—

Inside the sealed chamber, nano-cleansers washed over Chen Gu's entire body, quickly removing all traces of microscopic Mutant tissue adhering to him. The residue was collected into a sealed container.

After Chen Gu was cleaned, Chen Jixian pulled him out and entered the chamber himself for cleansing.

Chapter 29: Chapter 29 My Son's Inner Turmoil is Extremely Complicated

Mutants possess an extremely strong contamination ability. The slightest carelessness can lead to being inadvertently "influenced." This influence is typically imperceptible. However, each time a Professional advances, they directly confront the Endless Realm.

At that moment, these influences can erupt, causing the Professional to degenerate and become a new Mutant.

Professional Mutants... The appearance of even one causes terrible losses.

In the Endless Realm, countless demonic forms, Evil Gods, and other such entities continuously scheme to affect the real world. These Mutants are the result of being influenced and corrupted by them; they are the Evil Gods' spokespeople in the real world.

In the real world, Mutants are the greatest enemies of Professionals—their threat level even surpasses that of Professionals from enemy nations.

Even if surrounded by Professionals from an enemy nation, there's still a chance for rescue. But if contaminated by a Mutant, there is only one solution... elimination!

Therefore, after battling a Mutant, every Professional cautiously undergoes thorough cleansing.

Within the Professionals' organization, members are regularly evaluated. Those who fail face a half-month isolation treatment—a process both painful and embarrassing, one that no one wishes to endure.

Chen Gu was aware of this, so he did not resist.

While Chen Jieye was cleaning, Chen Gu rummaged around the basement; he was extremely hungry.

However, his adult son was a very disciplined man; aside from various pieces of equipment, there was nothing in the basement. Famished to the point of collapse, Chen Gu sank into a chair, quietly waiting for Chen Jixian to emerge.

After a few minutes, the isolation chamber automatically opened, and Chen Jixian stepped out.

He had returned to his usual state, eyelids half-drooped, and walked over to Chen Gu, seemingly calm. However, Chen Gu had just used the Nuclear Explosion Nun's memory attachment. Some of the Mind Belief ability lingered, granting him a pure faith and perception far beyond the ordinary.

Chen Gu could sense the enormous tumult in his adult son's heart.

The father and son stared at each other for some time, neither knowing how to break the silence. Finally, Chen Jixian said, "Wait here for me."

Then he left. Chen Gu breathed a sigh of relief. *Thankfully, the guy was succinct, not using complicated phrases like 'Stay right here and don't move.' Otherwise, with such a son, should I hit him or not?*

About half an hour later, Chen Jixian returned, holding a food box. Chen Gu snatched it and began to eat ravenously—no need for politeness with his own son.

Chen Jixian wanted to ask something but was unsure how to begin. Chen Gu had devoured nearly half the contents of the box and felt much more grounded. Only then did he say, "Your wife's cooking isn't bad."

Chen Jixian, that stoic and unromantic man, capable of cooking? I don't believe it, Chen Gu thought. There was no doubt who had prepared the food in the box.

That mention of "your wife" made Chen Jixian's left eyelid twitch.

He sat down opposite Chen Gu and asked, "Are you a Radiation Missionary?"

The Radiation Missionary is the male counterpart to the Nuclear Explosion Nun Profession in the Atomic Holy Church. Of course, it suited Chen Gu better; at least he wouldn't end up acting flirtatiously after the memory attachment.

But there was no mention of "Radiation Missionary" in **The Past of Four Hundred**.

Chen Gu still possessed a sense of shame, especially in front of his own son. He did not deny it, merely grunting in affirmation.

After all, it's not a cardinal sin for parents to deceive their own children, is it?

Chen Gu continued to eat while Chen Jixian was again at a loss for words. Chen Gu also noticed that his adult son wasn't necessarily cold by nature; he was likely just inept at conversation.

After a while, Chen Jieye finally asked again, "How did you become a Professional?"

Chen Gu had finished the food. The food box was large, but it wasn't enough to satisfy Chen Gu, not even filling him halfway.

"What about you," Chen Gu retorted, "how did you become a Professional? Your grandfather doesn't know you're a Professional, right?"

Chen Jixian fell silent again. Chen Gu did not press him, just watching silently. *What a joke! Since when does a son interrogate his father? It's always the father asking questions and the son answering honestly!*

Chen Jixian didn't dwell on it; he was choosing his words carefully. Chen Gu was right: his son truly wasn't skilled with words. Consequently, he rarely spoke, which to outsiders created an image of him as cool, steady, and reliable.

At least, back in the day, he had successfully wooed his capable wife, Xiao Jiangxia, with that persona.

After pondering for quite a while, Chen Jixian finally answered, "He doesn't know."

"In my fourth month of military service, I was selected during an army screening."

It seemed he had become a Professional while in the army.

"What Profession are you?"

This time, without much hesitation, Chen Jixian replied directly, "Abyssal Blacksmith."

"An old Profession," Chen Gu remarked, his lips curling slightly. "Not a very promising outlook."

Chen Jixian's reaction was quite strange. He showed no dissatisfaction with Chen Gu's disdain. In fact, through the Mind Belief skill, Chen Gu could even sense a certain... relief from his adult son?!

What in the world? A masochistic trait?

In that instant, Chen Gu even felt a sliver of guilt that shouldn't have been his. *It's all Dad's fault; I didn't raise you right.*

Chen Jixian's mindset was delicate. He had been stunned during the battle because Chen Gu had scolded him—for the first time in his life, he had been scolded by his real father.

Now, being mocked, he felt a sense of, "Dads really do look down on their sons' Professions." He had finally experienced what other fathers and sons went through.

Therefore, he wasn't unhappy but rather somewhat relieved and felt a sense of closeness.

The feeling was... distorted familial affection. It had arrived late, but it hadn't been absent.

"What Energy Level are you at now?"

"Second," Chen Jixian replied, then added as if by some compulsion, "Peak. I expect to reach the Third Energy Level before I turn fifty."

If any outsiders had been present, they would surely have recognized this as a son striving hard for his father's approval.

But in this basement were two individuals: one who had never been a father, and one who had never truly been a son. Neither of them realized this. Chen Gu curled his lip again. After all, Milna Katerina was at the Fourth Energy Level, and Griffin Wester was at the Fifth. He had no idea how impressive it was to reach the Third Energy Level before the age of fifty.

But now, Chen Gu felt a bit too embarrassed to continue making cutting remarks about his adult son.

"It's... pretty good, I guess." *When it comes to raising children, one should offer more encouragement,* Chen Gu mused.

But a feeling was about to explode inside Chen Jixian's chest. *Perfunctory, insincere praise! So real! This was ordinary family life, the life he had yearned for in his youth!*

Chen Jixian took two deep breaths to calm his racing heart, then said, "The Mutant's contamination is terrifying. Even though all traces of its physical form have been completely cleansed, it's best you find an opportunity for a mental examination."

As for whether Chen Gu had the means to get this examination, Chen Jixian didn't inquire further. That was just his nature.

"I... hid your existence from the Bureau of Mystic Security."

"But if you want to join the Bureau of Mystic Security, I can help you apply."

Chen Gu thought for a moment and then explained, "After I was released from Soul Imprisonment, I found that I had inexplicably become a Professional."

"After I left, the second prison was attacked by True Knowledge Sin. Their ostensible goal was to rescue Wei Jiangqi, but they secretly killed two other criminals also undergoing Soul Imprisonment."

"There are likely some secrets involved... secrets that certain parties would prefer to keep hidden."

After this explanation, Chen Jixian's typically drooping eyelids indeed flickered thoughtfully a few times. Chen Gu sighed inwardly with relief. *It seems I managed to fool him. Nitpicking so many mystery scripts in my previous life wasn't in vain after all.*

"That guard is one of my men and won't leak any secrets. However, you'd better secure an official status as soon as possible."

Unaffiliated Professionals are viewed with hostility by various organizations.

Chapter 30: Chapter Thirty: Mystifying

Chen Zili escaped a beating—his sister and mother knew it was this guy who, thinking himself clever, had invited Chen Gu to dinner. They had teamed up to chase him to the basement, pounding on the door of his "safe house." Consequently, they had safely avoided the Mutant's attack!

They didn't witness the battle between Chen Gu and the Mutant.

However, after agents from the Bureau of Mystic Security arrived and conducted a thorough check and cleanup, they also left empty-handed with Chen Jixian, preparing to move.

This area would be temporarily quarantined, publicly declared as a "biochemical agent leak," requiring three months of cleanup work.

Once again, the contamination from the Mutants was not to be underestimated.

Chen Jixian left Chen Gu in the basement, taking his family away—now, the agents remaining here were just ordinary operatives of the Bureau of Mystic Security, and Chen Gu was capable of leaving secretly on his own.

Chen Jixian's troops dispatched another 16 fully armed soldiers to protect their colonel. Sitting in the armored maglev vehicle, Chen Jixian simply told his family, "Pick a place. We're buying a house."

Xiao Jiangxia was startled, "You..."

"I'm about to retire, so I'm making preparations in advance."

The family's expressions darkened, but they didn't have the heart to say more at that moment, not wanting to discourage their husband and father.

...

Chen Gu quietly returned to his apartment, wondering: *Why would the Mutants attack Chen Jixian?*

Moreover, from the Mutants' actions, it seemed they knew in advance that Chen Jixian was a professional.

Chen Gu suddenly remembered some details he had discussed with Ossosa about professionals and muttered to himself, "Old Sosa, you sly dog. You seemed to know that son of mine is a professional."

Checking the time, it was nine o'clock in the evening, so he called Gorilla. Just as he made his request, Gorilla persuaded him in return, "It's not that I don't want to help. But about adding a trainee to the company, if you really want your... granddaughter to take this path, I can arrange it right away."

"But you know, across the entire Confederation, how many newcomers enter the industry each year? In the end, how many can succeed in releasing an album?"

"Not to mention whether they can eventually achieve fame and success; even just this very first step, the elimination rate is astonishingly high."

"Take our company, for example. Every year we recruit 50 or 60 trainees, but only one-tenth of them end up debuting."

"At the same time, each year we also eliminate 7 or 8 singers with little prospect..."

"These people have invested the prime of their youth, like a gamble, and in the end, they might be left with nothing."

Chen Gu: "Er..."

Actually, I just wanted to get closer to my granddaughter.

Gorilla, however, was quite considerate. "How about this: pick a weekend, bring the girl to the company for a visit, and I'll show her the harsh realities of this profession."

"Sure," Chen Gu agreed.

No sooner had Chen Gu hung up the phone than the doorbell rang. The captain of the security team arranged by Zhao Ji entered, his expression somewhat serious, "Mr. Chen, there are some things we think you should take a look at."

Moments later, the captain brought Chen Gu to the building opposite. In a dimly lit hallway, several other bodyguards surrounded a window, one of them holding a device.

The device was pointed at a spot below the window—where a pair of faint footprints lay—emitting a sound: CRACKLE... CRACKLE...

Chen Gu was puzzled, "What's wrong here?"

The captain first pointed at the instrument, "This is a contamination monitor."

"Contamination?"

Lowering his voice, the captain said, "Mutant contamination. We are top-notch security personnel specifically for the Tao family; we're privy to certain secrets."

"You must have been involved in a Mutant attack incident today—the cover-up methods of the Bureau of Mystic Security are recognizable to us at a glance."

The captain even indicated the bodyguard holding the instrument, "He used to be an operative for the Bureau of Mystic Security."

Chen Gu was truly surprised. He realized for the first time just how much of a freeloader Zhao Ji was! Even bodyguards from Tao Industries knew secrets like professionals and Mutants and possessed very professional countermeasures.

"Since you were involved in such an incident, and due to the need for top-tier security, we conducted a comprehensive check of the surroundings. We were planning to conduct a secret check at your school tomorrow, but we didn't expect to actually find something so soon."

Looking at the instrument and then at the pair of footprints on the floor, Chen Gu could see his room through the window. He frowned, thinking, *Were Mutants secretly surveilling me before? Could I have led them to Chen Jixian's house?*

However, the security captain said, "I'm afraid it's not so simple. The target of these Mutants might very well be Chen Jixian himself. They tracked you—perhaps to find Chen Jixian's real residence, or to assess your importance to Chen Jixian, considering whether to use your life or death to threaten him."

Chen Gu nodded. Chen Jixian was a colonel, so his protection was undoubtedly thorough. Chen Zili and the other family members likely had secret agents protecting them too, making anyone following them easy to expose.

"How will you handle this matter?" Chen Gu asked tentatively.

The security captain responded, "You don't have to worry about us at all. We're responsible only to our employer. Even if our employment relationship ends, we will not disclose any secrets related to the employer."

Chen Gu breathed a sigh of relief and pointed at the footprints on the ground, "This contamination is dangerous..."

"Rest assured, these are just residual traces; the dosage is very small, and we have the appropriate measures to deal with it. We won't leave any hidden dangers behind."

"Thank you for your trouble," Chen Gu said gratefully and then returned.

The matter became more bewildering. Although on the surface it seemed the Mutants were targeting Chen Jixian—and the security captain firmly believed this—it was because the captain didn't know the secret Chen Gu himself carried.

Could it be that these Mutants were actually targeting me from the start?

Was Chen Jixian just a decoy?

Besides that, there was another underlying concern. The captain had said they were responsible only to their employer. However, Chen Gu wasn't their employer, and neither was Zhao Ji, the great freeloader. Their true employer was the Tao family.

If Zhao Ji's marriage ever ran into trouble... Chen Gu felt his son's reminder had been astute. I need to find a way to establish a legitimate background for myself as soon as possible.