

## Full Time 261

### Chapter 261: I am a Hero (2)

Chen Gu genuinely felt like a hero. Having just done such an awesome deed, how could he not be a hero?

But just as I've become a hero, I'm apparently destined to degenerate and transform. If discovered, execution will be my only fate.

And then what? Later generations would say, "Chen Gu was a tragic hero, so and so, such a shame."

But I don't want that! What tragic hero bullshit? I want to be a comedy silver bear—ugh, comedy hero! Damn this transformation; even my tongue isn't listening to me anymore.

I want to enjoy my twilight years amid the adoration I receive as a hero!

The word "hero" suddenly became like an anchor, temporarily steadying Chen Gu's little boat that was wavering in the tempestuous sea of mutations.

After that, a glimmer of light suddenly ignited in Chen Gu's consciousness. In an instant, he felt his consciousness detach from the boundless darkness and return to his own body.

He could sense his body again, and in his consciousness, that ancient book, "The Past of Four Hundred," was flickering with light.

Chen Gu chuckled hoarsely, "Is this... Am I able to turn to the fourth page now?"

"The Past of Four Hundred" revealed its fourth page at a critical moment, ultimately saving Chen Gu from the brink of danger.

However, if not for Chen Gu's prior determination and his clinging to the notion of a "hero," he might not have lasted long enough for "The Past of Four Hundred" to rescue him.

Chen Gu exhaled a long breath. I've advanced to the Second Energy Level, meeting the basic condition to turn the next page. Plus, thanks to my recent surge in unlocking abilities, I also have enough experience.

He flipped past the first three pages, and the fourth page appeared before his eyes, filling Chen Gu's heart with anticipation!

This page, similar to the previous layouts, had a character portrait in the center with textual explanations on both sides.

After Milna Katerina, the second female Professional appeared in "The Past of Four Hundred."

She was dressed in a tight black leather suit, perfectly showcasing her slender and well-proportioned figure. Her skin was snow-white, her features delicate, and a pair of dark sunglasses concealed her eyes.

At the same time, her right hand was raised, palm up, supporting a sealed glass vial filled with liquid. Submerged inside was an octopus-shaped brain glowing with blue light!

Her entire presence exuded mystery and untouchability. Any creature that laid eyes on her wouldn't be initially attracted by her beauty or figure. Instead, they would have a subconscious reaction: I wouldn't wish to be her enemy!

Yet her aura was perfectly balanced: intimidating, but not terrifying.

While the outcome might seem the same, these two states are entirely different.

In prominent positions on either side of the character portrait, large swaths of mysterious text provided descriptions.

On the left:

Name: Isabella Wu

Profession: Brain Domain Hacker

Origin: Ancient Kingdom Conglomerate

Abilities: Mind Storm

Mind Remote Control

Mental Tentacles

Wishful Reality

...

On the right:

She was the product of a political marriage. Her father hailed from the powerful Wu Clan of the Ancient Kingdom Conglomerate, while her mother was the sole heir of an age-old aristocratic family. The Ancient Kingdom Conglomerate had always been conservative, adhering to its own bloodlines. This made them subjects of suspicion by the rulers of the major Star Nations.

Thus, her father married her mother. After the marriage, the Wu Clan obtained the relatively relaxed external environment they desired. Her mother's family received a vast fortune, sufficient to maintain the dignity of the old nobility.

However, the two individuals involved did not find happiness.

She was reclusive from a young age, possessing a strong sense of vigilance and self-preservation.

At the age of twelve, she became the youngest Professional in the Ancient Kingdom Conglomerate.

Of course, she might also have been the youngest Professional in the entire Confederation at that time.

After that, she advanced rapidly, and by the age of thirty-six, she had been promoted to the Sixth Energy Level.

There was no doubt she was a genius.

Ever since she had become a Brain Domain Hacker, she no longer had any enemies—her enemies would "forget" they were her enemies.

No one would harbor malice towards her, because as soon as such "malice" appeared in their minds, it would be gently erased like a cobweb.

No one had secrets from her, but she only liked to "collect" these secrets, never sharing them with anyone.

This was her little hobby.

She's actually a Brain Domain Hacker, and at the Sixth Energy Level!

The same profession as Qing Ruyan, but her Energy Level must be far higher.

"Mind Storm!"

"Mind Remote Control!"

"Mental Tentacles!"

"Wishful Reality!"

So powerful! But isn't this Isabella Wu's quirk a bit... unethical? Liking to peek at the embarrassing little secrets in people's minds.

Chen Gu figured, Well, I can use this memory often in the future. Peeking isn't the goal. The main thing is to help my Professional friends around me check if their spirits are at risk of degeneration and transformation!

So as long as the intention is good, the means and the process don't matter, right?

Chen Gu then estimated that by using Isabella Wu's memory possession, he could wield the power of a Third Energy Level Brain Domain Hacker. This would give him an almost crushing advantage over any Professional with a lower Energy Level.

In his presence, they wouldn't even be able to make a move.

A lower-level Brain Domain Hacker might have some resistance, but the outcome would likely be no different.

But Isabella Wu's memories explicitly told Chen Gu that Psychological Spies have strong resistance to the abilities of Brain Domain Hackers.

There are no useless skills, nor any truly weak professions.

Take Psychological Spies, for instance. The first Professional Chen Gu defeated was a Psychological Spy. Back then, even Marcus told him that Psychological Spies had weak combat capabilities.

But after meeting Gong Shuxu, Chen Gu understood that this profession is all about power in the later stages.

In fact, even those so-called "budget version" professions had their unique features; it's just that they weren't widely known.

Chen Gu quickly figured out these Brain Domain Hacker skills after the memory possession from Isabella Wu. Drawing on Isabella Wu's experience, he could use them flexibly.

"Mind Storm" is likely the most frequently used ability by Brain Domain Hackers in combat. It targets consciousness and thought, unleashing a terrifying assault that can leave the opponent utterly stunned. If the difference in Energy Levels between the opponent and oneself is too great, or if a Professional uses it against an ordinary person, it can turn the opponent into an idiot on the spot.

This ability can be launched as a group attack or concentrated on a single target, making it a very powerful and practical skill.

Chapter 262: Chu-Xiang Mixed Brigade

"Mind Remote Control" is the ability of "Brain Domain Hackers" to manipulate their opponents like marionettes after controlling their minds.

This skill is incredibly powerful. Many unimaginable espionage incidents in history were actually accomplished by "Brain Domain Hackers" using this very skill.

This ability is somewhat similar to that of "Psychological Spies." However, "Psychological Spies" achieve control over the human mind through psychological suggestion, whereas "Mind Remote Control" is undoubtedly more domineering and direct.

"Mental Tentacles" is an interesting ability that condenses a Brain Domain Hacker's powers and extends them beyond their body.

This ability can be used directly for exploration or sensing. If one's own abilities are blocked by an opponent, this power can forcibly extend to the target. Then, using "Mental Tentacles" as a medium, those abilities can be unleashed.

"Wishful Reality" is a high-level ability impossible to execute below the Sixth Energy Level; even those at the Sixth Energy Level can only manifest simple items this way.

To truly master this ability, one would probably have to reach the Ninth Energy Level.

This ability is just too broken.

After Chen Gu understood the basics of "Brain Domain Hackers," he trembled slightly, preparing to stand up. However, his entire body ached, and he was utterly exhausted. He opened his eyes and looked around; the space was empty, with nothing in sight.

A strong wind blew above him. He lay at the bottom of the pit, sheltered from it, and closed his eyes to rest for a while.

Unexpectedly, he drifted off to sleep—the toll on him this time had been too great. His body's instincts overcame his wariness.

When he woke up, Chen Gu rose to his feet. Everything around him was still quiet. He breathed a sigh of relief and checked his body. His two wounds had already scabbed over. He tried using "Atomic Life" on himself, and his injuries were mostly healed.

While Chen Gu was using "Atomic Life," he also covertly checked his professional status. It was far from its peak, but it was at least an improvement from the previous "exhausted" state, at roughly forty percent of his peak strength.

That he had recovered only this much strength after merely sleeping underscored how perilous his situation had been.

Chen Gu gave a wry smile, climbed out of the large pit, and looked around. The landscape was vast and featureless. From the surrounding rocks, Chen Gu deduced he was still on that planet, but as for his exact location and how far it was from the cave stronghold, he had no idea.

He tried to contact his mechanical eye, but there was no response.

It seems I've run too far and am now beyond the effective connection range.

Chen Gu couldn't help worrying. I wonder how Andrew and the others are doing.

He trudged onward, crossing mountains and ridges, but his pace was slow. Since he had no clear destination, there was no need to hurry and needlessly expend his energy.

Along the way, he kept checking his electronic devices; any response would indicate human activity nearby.

However, after more than ten hours, Chen Gu sank wearily onto a rock. The hard stone made his backside ache. Then he heard a long BEEP from all his electronic devices as their power depleted and they shut off...

「...」

Meanwhile, in the Central Operations Room, Aviloya and Chen Jixian still hadn't left.

Aviloya's attention was on Gong Shuxu, an important figure in the Bureau of Mystic Security. She, along with other military personnel, was advising Chen Jixian to leave first.

But Chen Jixian didn't budge; he insisted on seeing Chen Gu's body, even if it might be a mangled heap of mutant flesh!

Bai Yunpeng and the others respected Chen Gu and didn't drive him away. But soon after, they had no time to pay attention to him, as the battle between the Human fleet and the Insect Race army raged in full swing.

After gaining the upper hand, the fleet immediately dispatched landing forces. Tens of thousands of troops embarked on Close Range Attack Ships to begin rescuing the warriors on the planet.

However, in the following hours, one unexpected development after another occurred, leaving Bai Yunpeng deeply unsettled. What the hell do these disgusting insects want?

The insects suddenly reinforced their numbers!

Three more space blisters arrived, almost making one suspect the Insect Race had already prepared these three, holding them in reserve and ready to reinforce at any moment.

The Human fleet, which had previously held a favorable position, was now locked in a fierce battle.

And on the planet's surface, it was initially thought that with Close Range Attack Ships, the ground battle would proceed very smoothly. Unexpectedly, the Insect Race had hidden a dozen "Skyrocketing Insects," which fought the Close Range Attack Ships to a standstill. Now, both in the Star Sea and on the ground, the two sides were locked in a grueling stalemate.

Bai Yunpeng ordered his staff to immediately assess the situation, and they quickly concluded: The Confederation was likely to be dragged into a prolonged war without any warning.

Not daring to delay, Bai Yunpeng immediately left Aviloya and Chen Jixian to convene a secret military meeting. He began mobilizing troops and preparing supplies. Though it would be difficult, he was determined to win this battle!

More than ten hours later, at a high-level military meeting, Bai Yunpeng was listening to a combat report with another highly respected marshal.

In front of them on the holographic map, the relative strengths of the Human and Insect Race forces were clearly marked. Several routes were also displayed on the map.

"According to the scans from our war satellites, there are at least sixty Troop Nest Beetles in the Insect Nests, and nearby are thirty Skyrocketing Insect cocoons.

"If these Skyrocketing Insects hatch, it will be very disadvantageous for our ground forces. It is estimated that the 120,000 troops we have currently deployed on this planet could be wiped out entirely!"

The situation was not optimistic. But both Bai Yunpeng and the veteran general had witnessed such scenarios many times before. We've turned around plenty of dire situations, haven't we? This disadvantage is just a minor setback.

The combat staff officer continued his report. "The [Gonggong Mechanical Corps] completed the first phase of their operational objectives thirty-seven minutes ago," he stated, pointing to the map. "They thoroughly defeated those insects in the [6-451 region] and opened up Route No. 3 to the Insect Nests."

"The [Roaring Mecha Brigade]," he went on, "has also crushed the swarm attacking them and is currently sweeping away Insect Race stragglers lurking on Route No. 2. They are moving quickly."

"The [Chu Xiang Mixed Brigade] is the fastest, having already advanced nine hundred li on Route No. 1. Our satellites have detected a large number of insect swarms hatching from the Nests. These swarms

have just left that valley and are preparing to intercept the [Chu Xiang Mixed Brigade]. As long as they defeat this wave of insects, they will be only seven hundred kilometers from the Insect Nests."

On the holographic map, three red lines pointed straight to the Insect Nests. These were the Human army's routes of attack.

In the established battle plan, the [Gonggong Mechanical Corps] was designated as the main assault force, possessing the greatest strength. Yet, unexpectedly, the [Chu Xiang Mixed Brigade] had made the most rapid progress.

Chapter 263: Mind Remote Control (1)

Bai Yunpeng laughed and said to the old general, "Commander Nan, the Chu-Xiang Mixed Brigade truly lives up to the unit you once served with. They fought beautifully in this battle, leaving the Gonggong Machinery Legion with egg on their faces, hahaha!"

He continued, "If the Chu-Xiang Mixed Brigade really can be the first to break into the insect nest, I'll immediately airdrop troops to support them. Our tactics are very flexible; there's no absolute main force. Whoever performs well is the main force this time!"

The old marshal, Nan Zhendong, naturally took pride in the Chu-Xiang Mixed Brigade's good performance but didn't get overly complacent. Instead, he cautioned Bai Yunpeng, "The bugs are cunning; they must have more than one nest. We can't let our guard down."

Bai Yunpeng nodded. "There are one hundred and twenty war satellites in the sky above this planet. No matter where those backup nests are hiding, we will root them out!"

「...」

Chen Gu stood bewildered atop a mountain peak. Where should I go next?

He had already used Mind Belief several times, hoping to find a "feeling" to guide his direction, but perhaps because he was too far from his own kind, it was fruitless every time.

But now, with no other options, Chen Gu had no choice but to activate Mind Belief again.

Then he turned around on the spot, and this time he suddenly felt an indescribable sensation in a particular direction.

Finally getting a response, Chen Gu hesitated a bit because he couldn't tell whether the feeling was good or bad. What if I plunge right into a swarm of insects?

However, after hesitating for only a second, Chen Gu unhesitatingly walked in that direction. Staying put meant certain death, and if he did find the Insect Race, following them could lead him to his own kind.

He crossed mountains and valleys, and then more mountains and valleys. With each step, the sensation from his Mind Belief grew stronger.

After an unknown number of hours, Chen Gu licked his dry lips beneath his face mask and carefully hid behind a strangely shaped rock.

He heard familiar hissing and squeaking sounds not far away—the sounds of an insect swarm!

He peeked out stealthily and saw several Ghoulish Claw Bugs restlessly crawling back and forth on a steep stone ridge diagonally ahead.

Sentinels? Chen Gu figured.

The bugs were irritable. Staying in one place for a long time made them extremely impatient, but they dared not defy their species' orders. Thus, they would impatiently scurry about even while on "guard duty."

Chen Gu observed other areas and noticed a few more sentinels further away, but Griffin Wester's memories allowed him to quickly spot a loophole in this battlefield arrangement.

Crouching low and using the surrounding terrain for cover, he followed a carefully pre-selected route, winding his way forward. He avoided the Ghoulish Claw Bugs' line of sight and slipped between two of their posts.

For the last stretch, Chen Gu had to crawl slowly on the ground.

He had to be very careful not to make any noise; the more agitated the Ghoulish Claw Bugs were, the more sensitive they became.

When Chen Gu reached a mountain col, he cautiously poked his head out to look, and the corner of his eye couldn't help but twitch: in the wide valley below, thousands of specialized insects were patrolling in an orderly fashion.

These members of the Insect Race were entirely different from the Ghoul Claw Bugs outside. If judged by human standards, the Ghoul Claw Bugs outside were a "ragtag army," while those inside were an "elite force."

The patrol covered every angle. Even with Griffin Wester's insight, it was very difficult to find a way to sneak in quietly.

What truly astonished Chen Gu, however, was not these insects, but that among their ranks were hundreds of Troop Nest Beetles!

Around the Troop Nest Beetles, several dozen long, white insect cocoons were scattered in an orderly fashion.

Chen Gu recognized them. These are... the cocoons of the Skyrocketing Insect.

Chen Gu lay motionless on the ground, yet everything before his eyes reminded him: The situation seems to have changed... Has there been large-scale ground combat?

Merely eliminating the humans from the escape ships wouldn't have required the Insect Race to mobilize on such a large scale. They even deployed the mightiest Skyrocketing Insects of their terrestrial forces.

Chen Gu frowned and pondered repeatedly. To the Insect Race army, we are just a few who slipped through the net, yet they've turned this pursuit into prolonged combat.

Since their appearance in the Star Sea, all their actions have been very strange. What on earth are they trying to do?

Suddenly, Chen Gu noticed some newly dug caves atop the hills surrounding the valley. Horrific insect creatures, resembling vastly enlarged fleas, periodically crawled out from them. They opened their mouths and sprayed a stream of bioluminescent bubbles into the sky.

After recalling several times, Chen Gu was startled and thought to himself, This is a new type of Insect Race! It has never appeared in the military's top-secret records.

Chen Gu very much wanted to record what these special insects were doing. If he could make it back, he would submit it to the military for advance research.

But all the electronic devices on him were out of power.

Such a massive nest, with numerous Skyrocketing Insects, poses a huge threat to our forces!

Chen Gu thought about messing with it, but the elite insects below would certainly not allow it.

Hundreds of Troop Nest Beetles could also hatch a large number of bug soldiers in a short time.

If it were before, Chen Gu could at most use Quantum Teleportation to get in, set off several Biological Nuclear Explosions, and then swiftly escape using Quantum Teleportation again. He could really only manage a hit-and-run.

But now... Chen Gu curled his lip. Let me see just what a Third Energy Level Brain Domain Hacker can do!

The pale blue energy ripples, with which Andrew and the others were quite familiar, slowly began to surge. On two outposts, the irritable and sensitive Ghouls Claw Bug sentinels abruptly stood erect, their ferocious heads swiveling around. When their gazes swept over the spot where Chen Gu had been, it was already empty.

Chen Gu appeared beneath a huge cocoon.

From a distance, these cocoons appeared "slender," but colossal warriors were being nurtured inside them, capable of contending with humanity's most powerful Close Range Attack Ships!

Even though they had not yet grown to their maximum size, these cocoons were over two hundred meters long.

Chen Gu hid within a gap between the cocoon and the rocky ground. Isabella Wu's memories took over! In that instant, a chilling, detached emotion permeated Chen Gu's consciousness.

He suddenly understood why Isabella Wu had become a Brain Domain Hacker. It was because she was too reclusive, never liked talking to others, always finding it "such a hassle."

Well then, I won't talk to you either. I'll just stuff what I want to express directly into your brain.

It was simply the "perfect" social solution for the antisocial! A wry smile crossed Chen Gu's mind.

He had no time to delve into Isabella Wu's personality; after all, a great enemy was at hand. He focused his mind, stared directly at the cocoon, and used the ability of a Brain Domain Hacker for the first time.

Chapter 264: Mind Remote Control (2)

[Mind Remote Control]!

A mysterious connection, inexplicable by the existing knowledge system, had been forcibly established. Chen Gu was the active controller in this link with the Skyrocketing Insect inside the cocoon.

The Skyrocketing Insect, not yet fully mature, possessed no independent consciousness at this stage. As soon as Chen Gu's [Mind Remote Control] established the connection, he could control the entire insect.

After brief contemplation, Chen Gu made a decision: this particular Skyrocketing Insect would begin to absorb energy more intensely.

The Skyrocketing Insect was so massive that it had to be cultivated outside the body of a Troop Nest Beetle. However, the Troop Nest Beetles supplied all its nutritional substances and energy.

Two Troop Nest Beetles supplied one Skyrocketing Insect, connected to it by large biological cavity tubes. As the Skyrocketing Insect under Chen Gu's control increased its absorption rate, the Troop Nest Beetles distinctly sensed something was amiss.

However, such sudden accelerations in growth were common within the Insect Race and were termed "mutations."

For the Insect Race, mutations were positive occurrences, leading to the birth of more powerful kin.

Therefore, the two Troop Nest Beetles ceased all other incubation activities to fully support the Skyrocketing Insect.

Chen Gu, hidden beneath the cocoon, watched as the over two-hundred-meter cocoon grew to more than three hundred meters in just two hours!

He couldn't help but secretly marvel. Human technology has advanced so much, yet the Insect Race can still hold an edge in our wars. They're truly extraordinary.

The cocoon, now over three hundred meters, had surpassed the normal standards for Skyrocketing Insects. Yet, Chen Gu noticed it could still absorb more.

According to military data, Skyrocketing Insects were typically around three hundred meters. Clearly, they can grow bigger, but this size is already sufficient to deal with human Close Range Attack Ships. Anything larger would be a waste.

But Chen Gu didn't care. He controlled the Skyrocketing Insect to continue absorbing energy. As it neared five hundred meters, he was shocked to find the two Troop Nest Beetles starting to shrink!

The energy they drew from the planet was no longer sufficient to sustain this huge Skyrocketing Insect.

Chen Gu felt no pity for the two Troop Nest Beetles and, without hesitation, made the Skyrocketing Insect drain them dry.

The purpose of Troop Nest Beetles was incubation, so they could not refuse any requirements for "incubation"—even if it meant sacrificing themselves.

After efficiently draining the two Troop Nest Beetles, the cocoon's length finally broke through five hundred meters. Then, under Chen Gu's control, the creature tore open the cocoon with its sharp fangs, vibrated its wings powerfully, and thunderously took flight.

This insect had a centipede-like body, four pairs of dragonfly-like wings, and ten long, grasshopper-like legs. It was fully armed, equipped with no fewer than seven acid energy cannons of various sizes!

When this five-hundred-meter colossal creature appeared in the valley, it silenced the other insects. Even the "elite troops" guarding the area dared not act rashly. They moved far away, curling up on the ground in submission.

Chen Gu lay on the Skyrocketing Insect's back, unseen by the insects below. He controlled the giant, flying it around the valley. Instead of using the acid energy cannons, he activated twenty organs on both sides of its body, unleashing a torrent of flames toward the ground!

These flames were similar to those of the Blazing Mammoth Bug but far more intense.

On the ground, both lesser forces and elite troops screamed in fear, scrambling to escape. They couldn't understand why one of their own kind would slaughter them so mercilessly.

Hundreds of Troop Nest Beetles trembled within the flames. Lacking direct combat ability and faced with a suddenly rebellious kinsman, they had no idea what to do.

Only when the Empress, hidden in the shadows, sent her command through the air did they stop all hatching. They then devoted all their effort to supplying the other Skyrocketing Insects, intending for these to emerge first and deal with the large traitor.

But how could Chen Gu possibly give them that chance?

The five-hundred-meter Skyrocketing Insect flapped its wings in the sky, unleashing acid energy cannons and flame jets in tandem. The unhatched cocoons, with no ability to protect themselves, were instantly left in a tattered, broken shambles.

Meanwhile, the Troop Nest Beetles could only continue to execute the Empress's orders. They supplied energy to Skyrocketing Insects that could no longer hatch, rather than actively switching to incubate the larvae within their own bodies.

Chen Gu's ability to control such a massive Skyrocketing Insect was at its limit. However, he was handling it with ease, and it was more than sufficient to unleash havoc upon the valley.

He and his "alter ego," the great insect, wreaked havoc for over half an hour. The valley became a gruesome sight, littered with the blasted, burnt, and corroded corpses of insects. Many of these were "half-finished products" still incubating inside the Troop Nest Beetles.

Disfigured Skyrocketing Insects emerged from the shattered cocoons, mostly fully formed, lacking only the final step of maturation.

Chen Gu made another loop around the mountain peak, delighting in the slaughter of a new type of insect that resembled oversized fleas.

These insects had mediocre combat power. Despite their large size, they posed no threat to Skyrocketing Insects.

Then, Chen Gu, content with his work, rode off on his alter ego, drifting away.

However, after flying for dozens of kilometers, Chen Gu cursed silently. My [Mind Remote Control] is almost at its limit!

If the skill ended, he would lose control of this massive creature. After all, it belonged to the Insect Race and would soon regain its self-awareness. Facing a five-hundred-meter behemoth, he was certainly no match for it!

I got carried away! Chen Gu admitted to himself, his ego slightly inflated after single-handedly destroying an insect nest.

He hurriedly used the last moments of control to make the Skyrocketing Insect violently crash into a mountain peak, while he jumped off its back in advance.

**BOOM!**

The mountain peak collapsed by half. Chen Gu landed on the ground just as the impact seemed to make the whole world shake.

The Skyrocketing Insect crumpled awkwardly to the ground.

Chen Gu still didn't feel reassured. He turned and ran for tens of minutes. Looking back and seeing the behemoth remained motionless, he finally breathed a sigh of relief. It's truly dead.

The powerful combatants within the insect nest had been slaughtered. Since Chen Gu had already escaped dozens of kilometers away, he shouldn't have to worry about being chased by insects for the time being. He relaxed. Then, suddenly, a bizarre sensation surfaced in his mind.

He cocked his head, looking at the massive insect corpse. His nose twitched, and he couldn't resist licking his lips.

It seems... rather appetizing!

Chen Gu was startled by this thought but quickly realized the sensation came from Elizabeth Wu.

At least it's not me.

Is this... pica?

Chapter 265: Human Delicacies

This was a rare condition. However, in the case of the high-Energy Level professional Isabella Wu, her immense power blurred the lines, making it unclear whether it was an ability or a malady.

From Isabella Wu's memories, Chen Gu found many instances where she had reaped great benefits after consuming strange and unusual things.

But there were also times when, after eating something she shouldn't have, she was so unwell that she couldn't move for days.

At this moment, under the influence of memory embodiment, Chen Gu was surprised to discover that this special "condition" had undergone a further "evolution" within him.

He could accurately and clearly locate the most "delicious" part of this massive insect corpse.

Beneath one section of its carapace, hidden among several organs, was a piece of insect meat roughly the size of half a cow.

Chen Gu shuddered. Why is this happening?

Could it be... a combination of the [Radiation Field] ability and [Pica]?

What Chen Gu was experiencing was unprecedented in the history of professionals; there was no past experience to draw upon.

This was because no one had ever held multiple professions before, nor had there ever been a case where an individual's various unique professional abilities merged.

As Chen Gu analyzed his own professions and abilities, he seemed to continuously hear a voice whispering seductively in his ear, That must be an exquisite delicacy!

Look at that fine piece of meat! Even from this distance, you can almost feel its tenderness and succulence. To not eat it would be a great regret in life!

Pan-fried, stir-fried, boiled, deep-fried, cold-tossed, or eaten raw—every method is utterly divine!

What are you still hesitating for, you fool?

Suddenly, Chen Gu shrugged. "Yes, what am I hesitating for? I haven't eaten in a long time. It's not that I can't resist this temptation; it's just that I genuinely need to replenish my energy."

As he spoke, he casually drew the [Riverwash Sword] and walked toward the insect corpse. At first, he was composed, his pace unhurried. Then, his salivary glands seemed to savagely seize control of his legs. Great Actor Chen transformed into an afterimage and pounced onto the insect corpse. His [Riverwash Sword] moved with incredible speed. In little more than ten seconds, he had carved open the massive insect corpse and sliced out that piece of meat.

Even through his face mask, Chen Gu felt as if he could smell the enticing aroma of the insect meat!

A wail of despair echoed in his heart: It's over. I've developed another strange habit.

But the question is, why did every professional in \*The Past of Four Hundred\* have their own 'quirk'?

Or perhaps, this is the 'nature' of the powerful?

Chen Gu, cradling the insect meat, began to "cook."

Keep in mind, there were no cooking utensils available here. Yet, drawing upon Isabella Wu's supreme obsession with 'gourmet food,' Chen Gu managed to rig up the means for 'pan-frying, stir-frying, boiling, and deep-frying'!

He split insect wings to use as firewood, chiseled a flat stone into a makeshift pan, and rendered oil from the insect's brain...

Chen Gu was also deeply affected, finding himself unable to exercise "self-control."

On such a desolate planet, a gourmet meal had unexpectedly materialized.

As Chen Gu cooked, he inwardly scoffed at himself: What am I doing? Dangerous insects could appear at any moment. I should be finding my people as quickly as possible, not playing chef here.

But after the first bite of the delectable food, Chen Gu was utterly ensnared.

Indeed, as the saying goes, food is the most important thing.

Chen Gu devoured the entire piece of insect meat, roughly the size of half a cow, yet he still felt somewhat unsatiated.

However, when he looked at the rest of the insect carcass, an expression of disgust crossed his face. He would rather remain slightly hungry than eat that 'garbage food.'

A moment later, Chen Gu felt a wave of drowsiness. He pondered for a bit, then staggered over to the insect carcass, found a crevice in its carapace to hide in, and fell into a deep sleep.

At this point, Isabella Wu's memories receded. Chen Gu's heart lurched; he had a nagging feeling that this sudden drowsiness was related to the insect meat he had consumed. The sleepiness was overwhelming. He cursed inwardly, That reclusive freak has really done me in! Could the insect meat be poisonous? And in such a dangerous place...

Then his eyelids grew heavy, and he drifted off to sleep.

「...」

The vast wasteland was deathly silent. Suddenly, an insect emerged from between the rocks. It swiveled its head, looking around, and soon, a dozen more insects appeared behind it.

CHITTER. CHITTER. CHITTER. A dense chorus of sounds arose as the Ghost Claw Bugs poured out like a black tide.

Within the massive swarm were powerful Blazing Mammoth Bugs, Giant Armor Bugs, and large Ghost Claw Bugs. In the sky, swarms of Vicious Mosquito Bugs flew reconnaissance, keeping watch.

Further away, several insects, even larger than the Blazing Mammoth Bugs, were roaring, seemingly driving the entire swarm to accelerate.

Those insects, larger than the large Ghost Claw Bugs, were the most powerful Giant Ghost Claw Bugs in the entire swarm.

According to the latest military intelligence, a new variant had emerged among them. It possessed far greater intelligence than its peers and was evolving towards the role of a 'battlefield commander.'

The Alien Insect Race had long recognized the disadvantage of lacking battlefield commanders. However, the Insect Queen was very cautious on this point, as a highly intelligent Insect Race commander might break free from her control and seize command of the insect army.

This swarm numbered at least tens of thousands and was undeniably a formidable force.

But as they advanced, a missile suddenly streaked from an unknown location and detonated in the center of the swarm with a deafening BOOM. The ferocious power swept through, instantly tearing the vast majority of the Insect Race to shreds!

If Chen Gu had been there, he would have recognized this familiar power: a nuclear explosion!

On planets like this, nuclear weapons could be used without restraint.

A single low-yield nuclear warhead inflicted devastating losses on the Insect Race. Then, waves of Mecha and maglev combat vehicles charged out, their furious firepower mowing down the remaining insects.

The entire battle was brief, lasting only half an hour. The powerful human battalions had completely steamrolled the Insect Race. They reformed their ranks and continued their advance, not sparing a single glance for the insect corpses littering the ground.

At the head of the entire column was a colossal war machine, one hundred fifty meters long, forty-five meters wide, and fifty meters high!

At its apex was a 600mm caliber main energy cannon, mounted in a triple-barreled turret.

On each of the war machine's four corners, there was also a secondary turret, likewise triple-barreled, with a caliber of 300mm.

Additionally, various other weapon systems were arrayed across its frame. The nuclear missile that had initiated the battle was launched from a unit at the vehicle's rear.

Among humans, this enormous war machine had a very descriptive designation: Land Cruiser!

Chapter 266 Hive Number Two

This wasn't even the largest land-based war machine. To counter the formidable Insect Race, humans had crafted an even more massive "Land Battleship," whose main cannon bore an outrageous caliber of 1,000mm!

Inside the land cruiser's main control room, the seat of highest authority, akin to a throne, was perched high upon a platform.

Surrounding it were twelve seats, with another eight seats in each of the four directions further outward.

In the central position sat a young and promising officer, Nan Minghuo, the brigade commander of the Chu-Xiang Mixed Brigade.

The thirty-two individuals on the outermost layer were the drivers of the land cruiser and were also responsible for the weapon systems of the entire massive war machine.

Naturally, authorization from Nan Minghuo was required for attacks such as firing the main cannon or launching nuclear missiles.

Around Nan Minghuo, the twelve seats were occupied by mid-tier staff officers of the mixed brigade. They compiled all intelligence and operational data for the entire brigade, reporting crucial information to Nan Minghuo; they could handle other matters on his behalf.

Many high-ranking military officials knew Nan Minghuo was Old General Nan Zhendong's grandson. However, among the many grandsons, he wasn't the most favored.

Therefore, the Chu-Xiang Mixed Brigade was not considered a main force unit. This land cruiser, a prized asset, had been acquired through Nan Minghuo's own efforts after his assignment to the brigade.

This was achieved not with Nan Zhendong's support, but rather with the aid of Nan Minghuo's maternal family.

Among the men of the Nan family's current generation, Nan Minghuo's appearance... well, how to put it? There was a rather face-saving way to describe it: he was "unconventional."

The chair seemed too small to contain his massive, robust frame; he stood two point two meters tall, with a full beard, looking as mighty as a brown bear.

His troops rumbled over the corpses of the Insect Race, and his staff officers continuously reported victories, putting Nan Minghuo in high spirits.

However, because of his "unconventional" appearance, when he got excited, his eyes seemed to flash with a fierce light and his grin looked like a "bloodthirsty, gaping maw," making him appear exceptionally ferocious.

But his subordinates were already accustomed to their leader's appearance. Some even took the opportunity to flatter him: "Commander, whether we're part of the main force or not, with a fierce general like you in command, we are even stronger than the main force."

"Where has the Confederation Mechanical Corps advanced to now? By the time we've cleared out this Insect Nest, they'll probably still be over a thousand kilometers away."

Nan Minghuo had always been "active and restless" since childhood. Although he'd changed some habits after joining the military, he still couldn't sit still—it was as if he had ants in his pants, and that wasn't his fault! He twisted and turned in the seat of highest authority, causing the sturdy composite material to CREAK under his considerable weight.

"Enough chatter! We're still hundreds of kilometers from the Insect Nest. Everyone, push harder! We'll take it down within twenty-four hours! With the merits from this operation, we'll have accumulated enough for expansion. I'm going to lead you all, fighting our way forward, until we expand into a full army—a main-force army!"

"Yes, sir!" his subordinates cheered. A few of the junior staff officers felt a little uneasy. We're supposed to be a regular army of the Confederation, so why does this suddenly feel a bit like we're a band of outlaws?

Could this be the legendary... charisma of a true commander?

But these were thoughts the junior staff officers dared not voice aloud.

Just then, a series of urgent BEEPS rang out, and Nan Minghuo's expression immediately turned serious.

He *\*was\** serious, but in the eyes of others, that translated to "a terrifying demon about to wreak havoc."

A staff officer reported, "Commander, a call has come through from the Central Operations Room. Old General Nan Zhendong wishes to speak with you."

A holographic image flashed before Nan Minghuo. He snapped to attention, saluted, and greeted loudly, "General!"

Nan Zhendong's expression was grave. "Dispatch a reconnaissance cavalry unit thirty kilometers northeast of your brigade's current position. I'm sending you the coordinates now. Immediately!"

Then the communication cut off. Nan Minghuo was puzzled. What was that abrupt order all about? The old man never shows me any particular favor.

He secretly curled his lip but faithfully executed the order.

Meanwhile, in the Central Operations Room, the request from Nan Zhendong and Bai Yunpeng was also being handled with utmost gravity. The operations staff were already tasking one spy satellite after another to sweep over those coordinates. A wealth of images and reconnaissance data was being transmitted back. Bai Yunpeng, banging his fist on the table, demanded, "Why wasn't anything detected before?!"

"The Chu-Xiang Mixed Brigade almost suffered complete annihilation!"

Nan Zhendong felt a wave of lingering fear, but his face remained cold and solemn, betraying none of the affection he held for this grandson to those around him.

In this era, reconnaissance cavalry came in two types: one utilized heavily armed magnetic levitation motorcycles, and the other employed single-soldier propeller-driven flyers.

With Nan Minghuo's bear-like demeanor, the reconnaissance cavalry under his command, naturally, used the heavily armed magnetic levitation motorcycles!

Soon, accompanied by the heavy HUM of their magnetic motors, a twelve-member reconnaissance cavalry unit detached from the main brigade and sped towards the coordinates.

Nan Minghuo stroked his thick beard, considered for a moment, then ordered, "Temporarily slow your advance. Maintain a speed of thirty kilometers per hour."

"Yes, sir!"

For the swift magnetic levitation motorcycles, thirty kilometers was a distance covered in mere minutes. Real-time footage was patched directly into the land cruiser's main control room. Nan Minghuo, perched high on his "throne," watched, dumbstruck, at the valley carpeted with Insect Race corpses!

The entire main control room was deathly silent. Hundreds of Troop Nest Beetles, dozens of Skyrocketing Insects, and countless Ghost Claw Insects, Armored Beetles, and more lay dead...

Nan Minghuo felt a chill run down his spine. He quickly asked his scout, "Are you certain this Insect Nest has been eradicated?"

The scout confidently replied, "Confirmed, Commander! The site has indeed been cleared!"

Before he could finish, an insect resembling a massively enlarged flea suddenly leaped into the video feed, roaring and howling, looking as if it were about to devour someone.

The reconnaissance cavalry were elites among elites, their heavily armed magnetic levitation motorcycles equipped with top-notch gear. This huge insect's appearance startled the staff officers watching in the control room, but the cavalrymen on site remained calm and collected. They strategically retreated to create distance while unleashing a continuous barrage of focused fire. Under a relentless barrage from vehicle-mounted missiles and ray grenade launchers, the giant flea shrieked in agony and soon collapsed.

Seeing the creature, several dozen meters long, collapse, the reconnaissance cavalrymen could hardly believe it. Is this beast feigning death? Playing a trick?

But after they tested it a few times with their ray grenade launchers, it was confirmed: truly dead!

The captain drove his motorcycle forward, kicked the giant insect, and remarked disdainfully, "So it was just a flashy weakling, all bark and no bite."

But Nan Minghuo, observing on the main screen, had a different take. Although that large insect looked ferocious when it lunged, it didn't seem like a genuine attack... More like... it was terrified!

## Chapter 267: Slight Improvement

Nan Minghuo was a burly man, exuding an aura of straightforwardness. However, after he joined the "Chu Xiang Mixed Brigade," the unit managed to achieve military success time and again, including this time when they approached the insect nest ahead of the real main forces.

He was a man who seemed crude but had a finesse to him.

He might not be highly intellectual, but he always managed to grasp the crux of the matter at critical moments.

Without hesitation, he made an angry call to his grandfather in the Central Operations Room. "Old Z... With hundreds of war satellites flying overhead, how is it possible that such a huge insect nest went undetected?!"

This wasn't the insect nest they had set as their target.

"If the nest hadn't been breached inexplicably, we could have been annihilated this time! Inside that nest, not to mention the rest, there were dozens of Skyrocketing Insects. Just one of them could wipe out my mixed brigade!"

He roared, almost letting slip a self-referential "I" in his rage.

Bai Yunpeng couldn't help but glance at the old general. Had his grandfather not been there, that particular "I" would probably have burst out.

But he understood; this was typical of fierce warriors. Besides, anyone who had been tricked like this would fly into a rage.

Nan Zhendong spoke sternly, "What are you yelling about? What are you complaining about? You're a soldier! We need you to investigate this matter. Our military satellites completely missed this insect nest."

The Central Operations Room had designated this particular nest as "Nest 2," distinguishing it from "Nest 1," which was their operation's actual target.

This type of "yin-yang nest" arrangement had been seen before, as well as other configurations, such as "serial nests" and "star system nests."

In the past, a yin-yang nest setup typically meant a large nest on the surface with a smaller-scale nest hidden underground.

The underground nest couldn't hatch Skyrocketing Insects due to spatial constraints.

Yet this time, it was uncertain how the Insect Race had managed it. The nest was right there on the ground, but the war satellites had completely failed to detect it.

"Me?" Nan Minghuo said with a reluctant look. "I was planning to score big by hitting the main nest..."

Nest 1 was mere hundreds of kilometers away, the greatest accomplishment of the battle within easy reach—who would willingly give that up?

Nan Minghuo's eyes darted around, looking menacingly formidable.

After some thought, Bai Yunpeng said, "Investigate this thoroughly, and I promise that your 'Chu Xiang Mixed Brigade' will become the 'Chu Xiang Independent Division.'"

A direct promotion in organizational rank!

Nan Minghuo was overjoyed. "Really? You're not kidding?"

Bai Yunpeng frowned. Do I look like someone who jokes about these things?

"Not only do you need to thoroughly investigate how the Insect Race concealed this nest, but you also have to figure out how it was breached. Our forces haven't engaged it!"

"This issue is equally important!"

Nan Minghuo snapped to attention. "Yes, sir! I guarantee the completion of the mission!"

After ending the call and having secured the desired advantage, Nan Minghuo chuckled sinisterly. His staff officers, somewhat begrudgingly, said, "Commander, Nest 1 is within close reach..."

"Idiots!" Nan Minghuo cursed. "If the bugs can hide Nest 2, they can hide Nest 3, 4, and 5! Who knows how many more are lying in ambush near Nest 1? If we blunder into it, there would be no place to bury our dead!"

"It's best to let this merit go."

"Anyway, as long as we get to the bottom of this, we'll become an independent division afterward, heh heh heh!"

Nan Minghuo was in high spirits. "All troops, turn towards Nest 2!" he commanded.

"Find out who took care of this nest. Goodness, they are a great benefactor to our Independent Brigade!"

The benefactor had just woken up from a deep sleep. He crawled out from the shell of the Skyrocketing Insect and secretly felt fortunate that nothing had happened while he was asleep.

He also cursed Isabella Wu under his breath. It was all her fault. It goes to show that gluttony is undesirable, as fish meet their end by greedily swallowing bait.

However, as Chen Gu moved his body, he froze. Hmm? It seems like my physical fitness has greatly improved?

Chen Gu's physical fitness had already far exceeded that of other professionals at the same Energy Level. He had hit a bottleneck or, to put it another way, reached the ceiling of the Second Energy Level in terms of physical fitness. To improve significantly again, the only option was to advance to the Third Energy Level.

But now, he clearly felt that he was practically a monster!

Chen Gu's eyes roved around. Beside him was a massive boulder weighing thousands of kilograms. He walked over, pushed with some effort, and the rock rolled dozens of meters away!

It has indeed improved a lot.

Chen Gu instantly realized, That piece of insect flesh was the essence of this extraordinarily powerful Skyrocketing Insect.

Isabella Wu's "weird eating habits" were hard to define as a disease or an ability; she always managed to consume odd things that were greatly beneficial to her.

However, this often resulted in stomach trouble, confining her to the restroom for many days.

Fortunately, this time Chen Gu had gotten the good stuff.

Even so, Chen Gu couldn't help feeling a tinge of fear. Forget it. I'd better not use this ability if I can avoid it in the future.

Chen Gu looked around, chose a direction opposite to that of the nest, and took off running at full speed—his pace was also much faster than before.

Across the wasteland, a gray line quickly stretched far into the distance.

It didn't take long for Nan Minghuo to find out. Giant flea-like insects were responsible. These insects had essentially no other abilities and were weak in combat, but they could spew out a bioluminescent fog with exceptional camouflaging effects, which had concealed Nest 2.

Having clarified this, it was almost certain that the "Chu Xiang Mixed Brigade" would be promoted to the "Chu Xiang Independent Division."

However, it was still a mystery who had breached this nest.

Soon, his subordinates had completed inspecting the entire valley for traces of battle. After the staff had consolidated the information, they came to a shocking conclusion. "Commander... according to the traces of battle, a Skyrocketing Insect did it all!"

Furthermore, they presented some images to Nan Minghuo. "It's very likely this one."

Out of over thirty insect cocoons, only one had hatched successfully; the rest were killed directly inside their cocoons.

"Only traces of the Skyrocketing Insect's attacks are found around, with no signs of damage caused by human weapons."

"Moreover, this Skyrocketing Insect seems to be a mutant variant, having grown to an astonishing five hundred meters!"

Nan Minghuo found it all very fantastical. A mutant Skyrocketing Insect rebelling?!

But soon, scout cavalry found this mutant Skyrocketing Insect dozens of kilometers away. Nan Minghuo swiftly arrived at the site, then stood dumbfounded. Suicide by crashing into a mountain???

Benefactor, why did you choose such a tragic end...

Chapter 268 Mechanical Lung (1)

In the command center of the [Gonggong Mechanical Corps], Commander Qiao Dingfang was giving his generals a vicious tongue-lashing.

"Shameful! Our vaunted main force sequence, an army group with heavy equipment, was outpaced by a small detachment led by that greenhorn, Nan Minghuo!"

"Now, to preserve the dignity of our main force sequence, the Central Operations Room had to intervene. They assigned an additional mission to the [Chu Xiang Mixed Brigade], all so we could be the first to breach the bug nest!"

"You all hold ranks higher than Nan Minghuo, have more seniority than Nan Minghuo, and possess richer experience than Nan Minghuo, yet what's the result? Hesitating, dragging your feet—it's a disgrace!"

"Get out, all of you!"

"I've already laid out the next phase of the combat plan. Take it with you. And whoever doesn't fight bravely, I'll strip them of their command!"

The subordinates fled with their tails between their legs. When they received the operational plan, they discovered... It's not as aggressive as expected; in fact, it's even more cautious and careful...

Qiao Dingfang had learned about the newly named [Hallucinatory Phantasm Worms] from the Central Operations Room. He was furious that Nan Minghuo had gotten ahead of him and had vented his anger on his subordinates. However, he was determined to fight this battle as it should be fought, not allowing emotions to cloud his judgment.

Who knows if there are hidden bug nests nearby? Therefore, I must proceed with utmost caution, advancing slowly and thoroughly scouting all suspicious locations.

「...」

Chen Gu was truly famished!

It had been a long time since he last ate that piece of bug meat. All his electronic devices, including his timer, had run out of power.

Therefore, he had no idea how much time had passed, though it felt like at least three days.

Since the rotation period of this planet was unknown, he couldn't judge time by the cycle of day and night.

But with nothing on this planet, Chen Gu couldn't help but feel a twinge of fear. Have I survived a state of extreme uncontrolled conditions, only to become the first Professional in history to die of starvation?

That would be absurdly ironic.

Suddenly, the starving Chen Gu saw a snake slither through a crack in the rock before him.

A snake! A fat snake! Snake meat is delicious!

Chen Gu sat down. That's it, I'm so hungry I'm hallucinating. How could there be snakes on this kind of planet?

Yet, he saw another snake slither by, producing a scraping sound of metal against rock.

"Hm?" Chen Gu rubbed his eyes and took a deep breath to suppress the intense hunger.

Then he truly saw an Energy Gathering Mechanical Snake passing through the crack in the rock, followed by a fourth, a fifth, a sixth...

Not good! Chen Gu thought in alarm and quickly hid.

He had no sooner concealed himself than a dense swarm of Energy Gathering Mechanical Snakes climbed up the rock wall. With a RUSTLE, they poured into the narrow, elongated crevice.

Strange, Chen Gu thought. He had always believed there was no indigenous life on this planet. Could it be that I just hadn't discovered it before?

The survival of mechanical species on such a harsh planet wasn't entirely surprising. But now Chen Gu wondered: Could these Energy Gathering Mechanical Species... be eaten?

They would shatter all my teeth!

But Great Actor Chen was so hungry he was nearing madness. Coupled with the lingering influence of Isabella Wu's 'peculiar dietary habits,' an idea sparked in Chen Gu's mind: I should at least try—maybe they're edible! That's got to be better than starving to death!

So, after the thousands of Energy Gathering Mechanical Snakes had passed, Chen Gu waited a short while. Then, he followed them toward the narrow crevice.

The crevice was too narrow for Chen Gu to squeeze through.

My 'fat snake' might have managed, though.

He searched for a while and finally found a wider spot, then quietly crawled in. The crevice hadn't seemed like much from the surface, but it grew more spacious the deeper he went. Soon, Chen Gu achieved a major milestone in personal—if not human—history: he transitioned from crawling to walking upright!

The light inside was dim, and the air stiflingly hot, but these were not issues for a Professional.

Tracking the thousands of Energy Gathering Mechanical Snakes was easy. As Chen Gu followed their trail, he wondered: Why are these Energy Gathering Mechanical Species so rarely seen on the surface? Do they all live underground?

That didn't make sense. There were no terrifying disasters on the surface; the living conditions seemed similar to those underground.

For some reason, just thinking about those Energy Gathering Mechanical Snakes made Chen Gu's salivary glands work overtime.

Lost in thought, he quickened his pace. Suddenly, he spotted an Energy Gathering Mechanical Snake, as thick as an arm and three to four meters long, lazily coiled on a stalagmite.

Chen Gu really wanted to go over and catch it to see if there were any edible parts.

He forcefully suppressed the urge and hid to the side, observing covertly. The mechanical snake's behavior was strange; it seemed to be in great pain, its body writhing and rubbing against the stalagmite.

Something occurred to Chen Gu. Molting?

No way, do Energy Gathering Mechanical Species need to molt?

After a moment, however, with a series of soft POPS, a string of metallic snake eggs emerged from behind the mechanical snake!

It dawned on Chen Gu.

This Energy Gathering Mechanical Snake was a large one within its group. It laid more than twenty eggs in one go, then callously abandoned them and slithered away, seemingly much lighter.

Chen Gu stared at the eggs, his eyes practically bulging. The moment the large snake departed, he rushed over and snatched them up.

"CRACK!" He bit down hard.

It wasn't Chen Gu's teeth that shattered, but the snake egg. The taste was indescribable. These eggs were peculiar: their shells had a metallic sheen but weren't actually metal. The Energy Gathering Mechanical Species here might be somewhat different from those on Empire River Star, he mused.

Chen Gu devoured all the eggs in one go, his hunger finally abating. His mind felt sharper as a result.

I should follow them and see, he decided. This planet isn't as ordinary as it appears.

The deeper he went, the more egg-laying snakes there were.

Chen Gu didn't miss a single clutch of eggs, but eventually, he could eat no more. Thousands of snakes, each laying dozens of eggs...

This experience did confirm one thing for Chen Gu: he could digest these snake eggs. Otherwise, he would have surely been stuffed to death by now.

After the snakes finished laying their eggs, they returned the way they came, disappearing with a collective WHOOSH back through the crevice.

Chen Gu had intended to continue tracking the Energy Gathering Mechanical Snakes. However, just as he was about to leave, he suddenly heard a deep, heavy breathing sound emanating from deeper within the cave!

What's that? Chen Gu tensed, activating Mind Belief.

Yet, he felt no sense of danger.

Chen Gu hesitated for a moment but decided to follow the sound, moving stealthily. The cave system was extensive. After navigating another relatively narrow passage, a vast abyss suddenly yawned before him.

A faint, dark red glow emanated from below. As Chen Gu reached this spot, another heavy breath rose from the depths of the abyss.

And with this breath, the dark red light suddenly brightened.

#### Chapter 269: Mechanical Lung (2) Fourth Update

Chen Gu's "Mind Belief" still gave no warning. But Chen Gu didn't dare to be careless; it was highly possible that the existence beneath the abyss was too high-level, or possessed some special ability that concealed itself from his "Mind Belief."

He quietly approached the edge of the abyss and cautiously peered in. A wave of fierce heat rose up to meet him. Chen Gu saw a viscous, dark red liquid rippling within the abyss, similar to magma yet clearly distinct—more like a thick grease.

A vast, dark red ocean lay below, and soaking within it was a massive... mechanical lung!

Chen Gu was stunned. No wonder he hadn't sensed any danger.

But what in the world was it? An organ of a powerful Energy Gathering Mechanical Species? And why was it soaking here?

While Chen Gu was puzzled, his "Mind Belief" suddenly sounded an alarm. From the midst of that red, viscous expanse, like a chrysanthemum blooming, burst forth hundreds, even thousands, of metallic flexible shafts, which latched onto the massive lung and slowly dragged it down into the depths.

This time, the warning from "Mind Belief" wasn't because the other side held any malice toward Chen Gu, but purely because the "thing" that appeared was too powerful!

As the metallic flexible shafts and the energy-gathering lung melded together, Chen Gu had an inexplicable feeling: Even if the current powers of the Human and Insect Races on this planet were combined, they would be no match for this "thing."

After that massive organ sank, the dark red viscous expanse started to bubble and gurgle before calming down once more.

Chen Gu was suddenly struck by a thought: Could that organ be part of some Super Life?!

How were Super Lives formed? To this day, there was no definitive answer, but the general consensus was that it was directly related to the Super Substances within their bodies.

Perhaps the reason those Energy Gathering Mechanical Species snakes made the long journey to lay their eggs here was to be closer to this suspected Super Life, to draw from its power.

A Super Life! Chen Gu was secretly excited but dared not probe further. He quietly backed away, preparing to return the way he came.

However, halfway back, he discovered a side passage. Previously, upon hearing the heavy, immense breathing, he had gone straight towards the source, ignoring this fork.

The entrance to this passage was also very well hidden, concealed behind three overlapping layers of massive shale. The opening was narrow, barely allowing one person to pass.

Chen Gu listened intently. Hearing nothing from within, he ducked and squeezed inside.

But he quickly withdrew, first returning to where the Energy Gathering Mechanical Species snakes had laid their eggs, and packed up some of them. What if I get hungry on the way? he thought.

Chen Gu then passed through the passage entrance into complete darkness, but the rocks around him seemed to contain some kind of mineral that gave off a faint, pearly white glow.

He walked for an unknown amount of time until he genuinely felt hungry. He took out the snake eggs, ready to feast, but this time, CRUNCH! He almost broke his teeth.

He grimaced in pain and spat out the snake egg, only to find that the other eggs had all turned into an incredibly hard metal as well.

Chen Gu was baffled. What was going on? Had the eggs softened because they were near the Super Life, or had they hardened because they'd been laid for a while?

Since they were inedible, Chen Gu regretfully discarded the eggs. After a moment's thought, however, he picked one up and put it in his pocket as a souvenir.

The cave here had become quite spacious. Small side tunnels, only a few dozen centimeters high, began to appear on the surrounding rock walls—too small for Chen Gu to enter.

It was then that Chen Gu discovered a "benefit" from the snake eggs he had consumed: he could now see clearly in the cavern.

As he continued onward, Chen Gu began to feel 'famished' again. He was somewhat troubled by this. Ever since he turned the page that was Isabella Wu, I seem to have developed another peculiar eating-related ailment: binge eating disorder, he mused.

He got hungry easily, and once hunger struck, he desperately craved food. If he didn't eat his fill, he felt an unbearable discomfort—unlike before, when even starving, he could rely on his powerful physique to endure for a long time.

Now, Great Actor Chen's eyes once again gleamed with a feral hunger as he scoured his surroundings for food.

In this empty underground cavern, with nothing but stones, what food could there possibly be?

Driven by extreme hunger, Chen Gu even took the snake egg from his pocket and tried again to see if he could possibly chew it!

Of course, he failed.

He considered pressing on a bit further. If he still couldn't find anything edible, he would immediately turn back and feast at the snake nesting site.

However, so much time had passed that Chen Gu didn't know if the snake eggs left there were still edible.

He walked on for an unknown duration. The sheer scale of the underground cavern system was astonishing, making Chen Gu wonder if the entire planet might be 'hollow.'

Suddenly, a gust of hot air blew in from ahead. Chen Gu's spirits lifted. An exit! He immediately headed in that direction to find it.

Strangely enough, since squeezing through that stone crevice and walking for so long, Chen Gu hadn't found a single other entrance or exit to the cave system.

The hot air WHOOSHED in. Chen Gu rushed forward a few steps then froze, an intense wave of dread suddenly washing over him.

He quietly crouched behind a nearby boulder, concealed his presence, and then activated the "Radiation Field."

Within a fifty-meter radius, he had a grasp of everything.

Chen Gu's perception spread out like a blind man's hands, extending bit by bit from his position. The area within thirty meters ahead consisted of ordinary rock formations—uneven and rugged, but no different from what he had already traversed.

But beyond thirty meters, the rock surface became uneven, with metallic protrusions attached. At forty meters, these protrusions grew denser, and further on, the ground seemed to be entirely covered by them.

Focusing his senses through the "Radiation Field," Chen Gu discovered these metallic protrusions were actually fist-sized metal eggs.

However, compared to the snake eggs he had encountered, the shells of these metallic eggs were very thin. Despite being metal, they looked as if they could be punctured with a single poke.

Inside each metal egg, a viscous, dark blue liquid enveloped an Energy Gathering Mechanical Species that resembled a piranha but possessed four curved, hook-like claws.

Chen Gu had never seen such creatures before, but his first thought was: Can I eat this?

Energy Gathering Mechanical Species... probably not edible. What a pity.

From what he could perceive, the quantity of these metal eggs was enormous—there had to be tens of millions, perhaps even hundreds of millions!

Chapter 270: Be Pious to Gourmet Food (1)

CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK...

Chen Gu suddenly heard a dense sound. Quickly, through his Radiation Field's perception, he realized a swarm of Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranhas was approaching.

Their numbers were indeed terrifyingly huge. Like a tidal wave, they swamped the metal eggs.

However, they were only there to care for their offspring, and Chen Gu had not been discovered. He calmly hid in place. After the swarm of piranhas had left, he thought for a moment and moved forward stealthily, advancing to the edge of the metal eggs. At this point, his Radiation Field's perception extended further, and he happened to "see" a group of newly hatched Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranhas feeding.

A gigantic Energy Gathering Mechanical Python, tens of meters long, was dragged in by the large swarm, and the small piranhas swarmed over it. Due to their sheer numbers, the piranhas at the front opened their tooth-filled mouths and bit fiercely. In no time at all, they submerged the mechanical python.

The small piranhas at the back, unable to eat, became anxious and kicked off, jumping up. Their curved claws hooked onto the Energy Gathering Mechanical Python, greedily eating away at it.

An Energy Gathering Mechanical Python was picked clean in just a few breaths, not leaving behind even a speck of metallic residue.

Afterward, the large swarm of piranhas dragged in one Energy Gathering Mechanical Species after another, all the results of their hunting.

The small piranhas swarmed over them once again.

At this moment, Chen Gu felt a myriad of emotions. How I envy their teeth! If I had such steel-like fangs, why would I fear mere snake eggs?

Chen Gu quietly peeked out. The metal eggs emitted a faint light, so the large cavern before him was bathed in brightness.

The multitude of Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranhas made one's scalp tingle, but Chen Gu's attention was drawn to a high stone platform in the center of the swarm.

There was one particularly massive Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranha on top.

An adult Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranha was about the size of a basketball, while those just hatched were the size of table tennis balls.

This one on the stone platform was two stories tall!

This Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranha was painfully laying eggs. Egg after egg continuously popped out from behind it, and the larger piranhas dutifully carried these eggs away to be placed in open spaces within the cave.

The cave was as large as seven or eight football fields and was nearly filled with fish eggs.

For some reason, when Chen Gu saw the Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranha King, a strong craving surged within him.

Chen Gu knew it must be a lingering effect of Isabella Wu's memories.

But why, when facing other Energy Gathering Mechanical Species, am I only hungry, yet I feel such an intense craving for this Piranha King?

He silently flipped through \*The Past of Four Hundred\* and drew upon Isabella Wu's memories, triggering an "exotic craving." He "saw" a part of the Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranha King's body—an organ that was incredibly delicious!

This only made his craving uncontrollable. Chen Gu's eyes glowed green, fixating on the Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranha King. What started as a mere craving had now become an irresistible biological instinct!

Eat it!

I must eat it!

Otherwise, all the hardships I've undergone to become a Professional would be in vain!

So, let me ask: how many steps are needed to eat a fish?

For the Radiation Missionary, it consists of two steps: first, blow up all the Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranhas, and second, eat the Piranha King.

For the Star Battle Instructor, it involves four steps. First, gather all subordinate warriors. Second, command the warriors to use exceptional tactics to defeat the swarm of piranhas and capture the Piranha King. Third, kill the Piranha King and distribute other parts to subordinates. Fourth, eat the portion that belongs to oneself.

For the Quantum Wizard, it involves two steps: first, to teleport oneself to the position of that organ inside the Piranha King, and second, to bite down hard.

As for the Brain Domain Hacker... Oh, it seems this time there's no need for the Brain Domain Hacker to take action; the Quantum Wizard is more suitable indeed.

Chen Gu felt an almost uncontrollable instinctual urge, making him want to switch to the Quantum Wizard immediately and teleport himself over.

But he quickly thought of another problem. If the Piranha King dies, wouldn't this huge school of piranhas go into a frenzy? What if I can't get away?

Use Quantum Teleportation to escape far away, so the school can't find me.

Yet, to eat such a delicacy raw and uncooked would be a sinful waste.

Another option is to teleport over, cut off that organ, and then make a quick escape to hide and slowly cook this ingredient.

If he were in a normal state, Chen Gu would never have so many disorganized thoughts.

But now, I truly feel that I should completely deal with the school, and then enjoy the delicacy in peace. Besides, even cooking the delicacy in hiding would feel like a desecration!

Knowing that this was actually the best choice, Chen Gu's stubborn "conviction" still led him to choose an even more difficult path.

I still need the Brain Domain Hacker, Chen Gu sighed inwardly. He was several hundred meters away from the Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranha King. At this distance, with his current strength, none of the Brain Domain Hacker's skills could affect the Piranha King.

I must get closer to it...

But between Chen Gu and the Piranha King was a dense, teeming mass of Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranhas. These creatures seemed very xenophobic; everything apart from themselves was considered food.

Chen Gu looked up, thinking about crawling over from the top of the cave. However, the area above the Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranha King was the highest point of the entire cave, over five hundred meters away from the Piranha King...

Chen Gu, swallowing hard, quickly racked his brains. I'll use Quantum Teleportation to get next to the Piranha King. Such an act will undoubtedly reveal my position. Then, I'll use Mind Remote Control to take over the Piranha King and order its school not to attack me.

Then, eat the Piranha King!

Perfect!

Chen Gu was already struggling to refrain from taking action, but the last bit of his rationality held back the impulse.

What if Mind Remote Control can't take over the Piranha King immediately? I'll be subjected to the school's frenzied attacks.

Chen Gu thought about it. Well, then I'll immediately teleport back and quickly run away.

At worst, I can try a few more times.

But there's another problem. If I eat the Piranha King, without its control, the school will still launch a frenzied attack on me.

Chen Gu stroked his chin and thought, then came up with another idea.

Let's do it!

He promptly switched to Derek Kun Shen's memories. A pale blue ripple of energy emerged, teleporting Chen Gu next to the Energy Gathering Mechanical Piranha King. As expected, the moment he appeared, the massive school of piranhas in the entire cave went into a frenzy and charged at him.

Those responsible for feeding, those caring for the fish eggs—they abandoned everything and madly rushed towards him.

Chen Gu immediately switched to Isabella Wu's memories and activated Mind Remote Control. An invisible, special fluctuation spread out towards the Piranha King.