

Full Time 371

Chapter 371: The Black Chamber

Stabbed three times in succession, the aged Shaman's eyes were wide with shock. Her fingers trembled as she extended two of them to smash the heads of two traitors. All that remained in her heart were curses. Deceitful, cunning enemies! He controlled the remaining three Shamans! So, everyone he didn't kill, aside from me, was an informant!

Two Magic Wands were still embedded in her body, propping her up so she didn't immediately fall, but ghastly green blood was already gushing from her mouth and nose.

A faint ripple of energy formed around her, and Chen Gu stepped out, his five fingers outstretched as he covered her head from afar.

Invisible tendrils, like earthworms, began to crawl over her head.

The aged Shaman felt them, and it seemed she also understood what Chen Gu ultimately wanted to do. Panic-stricken, she howled resentfully at Chen Gu and then, with all her might, began to chant a spell, intending to perish together with him.

But Chen Gu simply didn't give her a chance. One hand continued to control the "Mind Tentacles" infiltrating the aged Shaman's brain, while the other snatched her Magic Wand. With a backhanded strike, he used the Magic Wand to smash her mouth, bringing an abrupt end to the incantation.

With the aid of the "Mind Tentacles," Chen Gu's "Mind Remote Control" operated even more smoothly. In the entire cave, all Subterraneans had perished. Only the aged Shaman remained, making unconscious HUFF HUFF sounds from her nostrils.

Amidst the blood-soaked corpses strewn across the ground, Chen Gu was engaged in some indescribable acts on the half-dead body of the old female, occasionally letting out sounds of satisfaction, amazement, and praise!

Chen Gu had completely stripped and copied all the memories of the aged Shaman.

The aged Shaman's memories contained more complete processes for the Shaman awakening ceremonies depicted in the murals; she had personally presided over dozens of them.

She was one of only three existing "Blood Moon Shamans" in the entire Subterranean tribe, making her one of its three highest-ranking individuals.

The murals were ancient, dating back hundreds of years. In that time, the Shaman awakening ceremony had become much more comprehensive, and its success rate had greatly increased, though this was the Subterraneans' own assessment.

To become a Shaman, one also needed to undergo considerable training, which was extremely bloody and brutal.

And that lizard-shaped behemoth, which the Subterraneans called a "Dark Dragon"—one exceeding sixteen meters in length was known as a "Dark Dragon Leader."

Hunting down a Dark Dragon Leader, extracting its ovaries, and feeding them to a rigorously trained Shaman candidate gave her a ten percent chance of becoming a Shaman.

This was the most primitive method. The improved method involved mixing the Dark Dragon Leader's ovaries with a certain poison before feeding it to the Shaman candidate.

The success rate could be raised to twenty percent.

The Dark Dragon Leader's ovaries must be highly toxic, Chen Gu mused. This might be a form of neutralization—fighting poison with poison.

Chen Gu slowly browsed through the Blood Moon Shaman's memories, his gaze gradually falling on the altar at his feet.

This was indeed the core area of Subterranean activity. To be precise, this altar was the sacred site for all Subterranean Shamans!

Every Shaman was initiated on this altar. Furthermore, within the altar was a "Black Chamber." The Dark Dragon Leader's ovaries needed to be processed there, on an immovable black stone platform, before a Shaman candidate could consume them.

Therefore, since ancient times, all Shamans believed their power was intrinsically linked to this altar. If the altar were destroyed, they would all lose their power.

If the altar were attacked, all Shamans of the tribe would immediately rush back to protect it. A slight smile touched Chen Gu's lips as he processed this information.

At the cave entrance, a head cautiously peeked out—it was Qiao Shuangyi. Seeing the situation inside, he burst out laughing and rushed in, dancing with joy. "Han Zhuangzhi, come out and see! What did I tell you? Brother Chen definitely handled it himself. We would have just been a burden if we'd stayed!

Look! Corpses everywhere, and Brother Chen is completely unscathed!"

He rushed to Chen Gu's side, his relief tinged with lingering concern. "Brother Chen, you're really okay, right?"

"I'm fine." Chen Gu stood up and moved his limbs around, showing him clearly.

Qiao Shuangyi was completely reassured. Behind him, Han Zhuangzhi and Lin Xiaochen emerged. The warriors were in awe as they entered; thousands of Subterraneans, all elite warriors and Shamans, had been killed by Brother Chen single-handedly! This was a feat of astounding military accomplishment!

But they merely felt envy and admiration, with no other thoughts. Besides Brother Chen, who else could possess such strength? To envy someone like that would just be asking for trouble, wouldn't it?

Chen Gu waved Han Zhuangzhi over. "Do you have a nuclear bomb?"

Han Zhuangzhi startled, but then shook his head. "No." They were just a reconnaissance team and did not carry such weapons.

Chen Gu pouted. Looks like I'll have to figure it out myself, he thought.

Based on the Blood Moon Shaman's memories, he constructed a map of the altar's interior and pointed out the location of the "Black Chamber." "Lead a team to break in. Be careful on the way."

"Yes!" Han Zhuangzhi acknowledged.

Chen Gu then began collecting the spoils from the ground.

The greatest prize, of course, was the adornments on the Blood Moon Shaman. Each piece was incredibly valuable to any Practitioner, far surpassing those of the previous owner of the Bone Magic Wand.

However, the other Shamans were more than a notch below the owner of the Bone Magic Wand. Most of their adornments were useless, purely ornamental.

An individual Shaman usually possessed only one truly valuable material; having two meant they were considered "very wealthy."

But with over a dozen Shamans, the sheer quantity brought Chen Gu immense satisfaction during his "harvesting" process.

Suppressing the urge to feed was quite a struggle, though. Ah, the bittersweet agony, he mused.

By the time Chen Gu finished collecting the spoils, the warriors had nearly cleared the battlefield. The few Subterraneans still barely alive had been finished off by the scouts. But as they moved to deal with the last wounded one, Chen Gu called out, "Leave that one. I have a use for him."

Chen Gu walked over and patted a warrior wearing an armband with a red cross. "Do you have any healing potions? Give me one."

The warrior immediately produced one. Thanks to Chen Gu, they hadn't suffered any casualties and still had their full supply of potions from the start of the mission.

Chen Gu plunged the potion into the Subterranean warrior's neck. As for whether a human healing potion would work on a Subterranean... well, that depended on its luck, he thought.

Fortunately, Subterraneans were indeed robust. The injured warrior screamed and thrashed in agony on the ground. Just when it seemed hopeless, about fifteen minutes later, he suddenly leaped up and bolted away at great speed!

Chapter 372: The Opportunity for Battle Appears

The scouts quickly raised their guns, but Chen Gu immediately shouted, "Let him go!"

The warriors had no doubt about his decision and immediately lowered their muzzles.

Han Zhuangzhi sent a warrior back. "Brother Chen, we've found that room."

Chen Gu nodded. "Take me there."

It was indeed pitch-black inside the dark chamber, and Chen Gu was filled with anticipation for the black stone altar—it might be another precious material!

But when he finally saw it, he was greatly disappointed. It was just a massive black rock, somewhat harder than ordinary stone.

Chen Gu inwardly criticized the Subterranean Shamans: So superstitious...

He waved his hand. "All of you, get out."

Following his orders, Han Zhuangzhi led the men out. Chen Gu started rummaging through his large backpack, which contained many beast fang materials.

He picked one up... felt reluctant, and put it back. Then he picked up a smaller one... but it seemed to lack power, so he put it back as well.

After much deliberation, Chen Gu resigned himself to the inevitable. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

He took out a beast fang bracelet that had belonged to the owner of the Bone Magic Wand and began setting it up on the black stone altar.

It was a delicate job; one false move could have blown Chen Gu and the entire altar sky-high.

After working for more than twenty minutes, he finally finished setting it up. Chen Gu hurried out and waved to Han Zhuangzhi and the others waiting outside. "Move out, quick! Wait for me at the nearest signal relay!"

The warriors had developed absolute trust in Chen Gu by then. They gathered their equipment to retreat, and one even asked teasingly, "Brother Chen, are you planning to trap the Subterraneans again?"

Chen Gu retorted with a playful scold, "I'm bringing you along so we can all earn a big bundle of military merits. Now move out, hurry!"

Qiao Shuangyi shook his head with a grin. "Brother Chen, we're taking off now. Make sure to follow quickly." He was dead set on sticking by Chen Gu; in such a "dangerous" underground cave system, he didn't feel secure without Chen Gu, his super bodyguard, by his side.

Chen Gu waved to him, signaling that he understood.

After the men left, Chen Gu quietly slipped back into the altar chamber. He sighed helplessly. Ever since I chose the Radiation Missionary profession, I was destined for hardship. He hid himself in a concealed spot.

By now, the Subterranean warrior who escaped should have notified the other Subterraneans.

Chen Gu waited for about another half hour before a series of dense rustling sounds approached from outside. He activated his Radiation Field and could clearly "see" a large horde of Subterraneans rushing into the cave.

Leading the charge was a large group of Shamans, among whom were two particularly ancient ones—Likely the other two Blood Moon Shamans.

Trailing behind them were hundreds of Subterranean warriors.

The group hurried along, appearing extremely anxious, especially the Shamans at the forefront. The lower-ranking Shamans and the warriors quickly inspected the entire cave but found no enemies. The two Blood Moon Shamans led the others straight into the altar chamber.

Their power hadn't vanished yet, so the dark chamber probably hadn't been destroyed. The Shamans felt slightly reassured. After all, this was their tribe's greatest secret. Since the humans couldn't even communicate with them, it was indeed unlikely they would know this secret.

The Shamans rushed to the front, pushing the Subterranean warriors behind them. The dozen or so highest-ranking Shamans, following closely behind the two Blood Moon Shamans, charged into the dark chamber. Upon seeing the stone altar, they collectively heaved a sigh of relief.

Outside the dark chamber, more than a hundred lower-ranking Shamans waited eagerly, anxious for news.

Nearly all the Shamans—the sole representatives of the Subterraneans' remaining "supernatural power"—had entered the altar chamber.

Chen Gu hid in an inconspicuous corner beside the black stone. A few Subterranean warriors passed by him, but he used the power of [Brain Domain Hacker] to alter their perception, making them "see but not notice" his presence.

At this moment, Chen Gu felt the time was right. He gently picked up a strand of hair—it was hair from the ancient Shaman. Dozens of these strands were tied together, forming a long fuse that extended all the way into the dark chamber.

Inside the dark chamber, the now-relaxed Shamans were kneeling beneath the stone platform, murmuring prayers.

Suddenly, a middle-aged Shaman looked up and spotted something familiar hanging from the ceiling above the stone platform—It looked like a Blood Moon Shaman's beast fang bracelet!

Immediately, all the Shamans noticed the object because, in the darkness of the dark chamber, this beast fang bracelet suddenly began to emit a brilliant light.

The Subterraneans loathed light. They shielded their eyes with their hands and hissed in annoyance, oblivious to the disaster about to befall them.

Chen Gu had used the Blood Moon Shaman's hair to create a "fuse" that connected all the way to the beast fang bracelet.

This type of beast fang bracelet was quite special. Although it couldn't compare to the remains of a super-organism, as a material for a [Biological Nuclear Explosion], it was far more potent than anything related to ordinary Subterraneans.

After "detonating" the device, Chen Gu switched to the [Quantum Wizard] profession and then used [Quantum Teleportation] to escape.

This time, he teleported far away, directly to the side of the nearest signal relay.

Han Zhuangzhi and the others, breathless from their rush, had just arrived when they saw Chen Gu appear out of thin air!

Everyone was elated, but Chen Gu waved his hand. "Get further away!"

Before they could ask him why, they felt the ground shake violently around them, making them barely able to keep their balance. Amidst dull, booming sounds, rubble and dust rained down from above, and cracks rapidly appeared on the surrounding stone walls.

"Run!"

The rapidly spreading cracks pursued them relentlessly. In some places, the very ground beneath their feet shattered and collapsed, plunging into the dark abyss below.

They fled nonstop until they reached the vicinity of the third signal relay, where the collapse finally halted, and the underground cave system quieted.

Chen Gu made a quick assessment. Thankfully, the impact range isn't much different from my prediction and shouldn't affect the other three teams. Otherwise... I'd truly be a terrible teammate, dooming everyone else.

He patted the still-shaken Han Zhuangzhi on the shoulder. "Notify the rear command center that we've eliminated most of the Subterranean Shamans. Tell them to press the attack with confidence."

"Yes, sir!" Han Zhuangzhi was overjoyed. He knew Brother Chen's big explosion this time would yield 'remarkable results'!

He immediately contacted the rear command center. Ling Yitong had been deeply anxious ever since losing contact with all the teams.

Later, when Zheng Zhixing was driven out, it further convinced him that the situation had spiraled out of his control, intensifying his unease.

So, when he suddenly received such "inspiring" intelligence, Ling Yitong's first reaction wasn't to "seize the strategic opportunity." Instead, he was highly skeptical and directly questioned Han Zhuangzhi, "Are you sure?"

Han Zhuangzhi, who had complete faith in Brother Chen, replied firmly, "General, I am absolutely certain!"

Ling Yitong pressed, "Did you see it with your own eyes?"

Han Zhuangzhi answered truthfully, "No, not personally. The operation was extremely dangerous, so we retreated first. Commander Chen Gu completed it alone. We felt the tremendous tremors from the explosion."

Chapter 373: Taking You to a Nice Place

Ling Yitong felt compelled to verify the information. If he issued combat orders based on this intelligence, the front-line troops would cease guarding against the Shamans.

If the intelligence was incorrect, the front-line combat troops would suffer heavy losses.

Chen Gu understood Ling Yitong's concerns and stepped forward. "I guarantee with my life that the intelligence is accurate."

"The General can verify it first, but please be quick."

"I speculate that once the Subterraneans react, the remaining ones will likely retreat deeper underground. We will miss a crucial opportunity to severely damage, or even annihilate, them."

Ling Yitong nodded. Chen Gu's point was valid—opportunities were fleeting. But after weighing the options repeatedly, he still didn't dare to strike rashly.

He called over an elite military officer. "Take your men and go. I need to confirm something..."

Director Xue quietly appeared beside him. "They're too slow! If you don't trust Chen Gu, let me verify."

"This..." Ling Yitong, of course, trusted a super-powerful being of the Eighth Energy Level. However, if Director Xue went and any accident occurred, the military would likely execute him to apologize to the Principal.

Director Xue didn't give him time to refuse and floated away. "Give me ten minutes."

Ling Yitong gritted his teeth. "Get all troops ready!"

Director Xue unleashed her full abilities. As a Quantum Wizard, she used Quantum Teleportation, instantly passing through the complex environments to appear beside Chen Gu!

Chen Gu was startled. "Director Xue..."

Director Xue waved her hand. Her figure, supported by an invisible force, floated into the pitch-black collapsed cave behind them.

Director Xue had requested ten minutes, but her Eighth Energy Level strength far surpassed everyone's imagination. It took her only three minutes. She then directly contacted Ling Yitong: "A large number of Subterranean Shamans are dead—approximately two hundred in total."

Ling Yitong and his men on Maoshi Star had also been collecting data on the Subterraneans. The moment Director Xue reported this number, he knew Chen Gu was right—their Shamans had almost been caught in one fell swoop!

He hesitated no longer and commanded, "Attack! Attack!"

The various units, already poised outside the cave entrance, immediately charged in.

Chen Gu breathed a long sigh of relief. He had been genuinely worried that Ling Yitong would miss this golden opportunity. Yet, due to his advanced tactical understanding, Chen Gu could comprehend Ling Yitong's caution.

He looked at Director Xue with gratitude. Thank goodness for Director Xue.

He recalled how in many movies and comics from his past life, the 'Dean of Discipline' character was often a villain, a magnet for student animosity. Clearly, Director Xue was different.

"Let's go." Director Xue gave them a slight smile and said, "You have all performed excellently in this freshman military training."

Qiao Shuangyi and Lin Xiaochen cheered, waving their arms. Qiao Shuangyi, ever the opportunist, quickly added, "Director Xue, is there a credit reward? When I enrolled, Chen Gu swiped three credits from me..."

Chen Gu's face darkened. He actually still remembers that!

Director Xue said coolly, "That depends on the final rankings." As they walked out, Director Xue continued, "I can tell you this much in advance: this freshman military training will be ranked by your combat merits. First place receives ten credits, second place five, and third place three. All others get one—however, the bottom three will receive no credits."

Chen Gu once again confirmed that the credit reward system at Huai Shan Branch School was very 'casual.' For instance, the first to report received three credits, while struggling to attain third place in combat merits was also worth a mere three credits.

He couldn't help but ask, "Director Xue, who devises our credit reward system?"

"Naturally, the Principal, Your Excellency."

Chen Gu muttered to himself, Just as I thought.

As they walked out, they encountered a troop advancing from their direction. Han Zhuangzhi and his companions spotted a few acquaintances and exchanged greetings.

The Lieutenant Colonel leading the troop shouted, "Who is Chen Gu?"

Someone pushed Chen Gu forward. "Over here."

The Lieutenant Colonel smiled at him and gave a thumbs-up. "Well done, a true Volunteer Warrior Soul!"

The surrounding warriors erupted in loud praise, enough to make even Chen Gu, an old hand at acting with exceptionally thick skin, feel a bit bashful.

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The other three squads were still out of contact with the rear command center. They were too far away and had only felt a slight tremor caused by Chen Gu's Biological Nuclear Explosion.

All attacking units had received orders: any reconnaissance teams they encountered were to withdraw immediately.

Bai Zhijin's group, with two other freshmen, had continually suffered losses. Their reconnaissance squad had already lost four members, and one of the freshmen was also injured.

They had encountered a complete blockade by Subterranean warriors. When the main attacking troops finally arrived, they were pinned down by Subterraneans on both sides, nearly out of ammunition and supplies.

Once the main force arrived, all the squad members collapsed to the ground.

Bai Zhijin lay on his back, gasping heavily. Human troops, with their powerful firepower, quickly cut down more than half of the two hundred Subterranean warriors. The rest fled in disarray, disappearing into the numerous surrounding cave openings.

Next to Bai Zhijin were the other two freshmen, Liao Mingliang and Fan Yutong. Fan Yutong was seriously injured, and Bai Zhijin and Liao Mingliang had been looking after him. The three, initially disdainful of each other, had forged a swift camaraderie through brutal combat. Now, they truly shared a 'life-and-death' bond.

Liao Mingliang, also exhausted, lay motionless and patted Bai Zhijin's shoulder. "We made it through, hahaha!"

Bai Zhijin laughed too. Fan Yutong, however, grimaced and said slyly, "Old Bai, still a virgin, right? When we get back, I'll take you to Dream Jade Pool—it's a great place, hehehe..."

Bai Zhijin scoffed, "As if I need you to take me! This time was dangerous, sure, but our gains were huge. We faced constant blockades and fought battle after battle. I bet our squad encountered the most enemies, so our combat record must be the best!"

Liao Mingliang's eyes lit up. "That's right! Our journey was incredibly fierce, with non-stop battles where we were always outnumbered. We took heavy losses, but each of us racked up a lot of kills!"

He kicked Fan Yutong too. "Bro, how many kills for you?"

Fan Yutong calculated on his personal computer. "Twenty-one for me. After I got injured, I could only hold my gun with one hand, and my combat abilities were also affected. I'm sure I got quite a few less than you two."

Liao Mingliang started to tally his. "Let me check mine." A moment later, his results were in. "Haha, forty-two!"

Chapter 374: Achievements in the Rankings

Bai Zhijin was also calculating his own, then said with a joyous tone, "I have forty-three."

"What!" Liao Mingliang exclaimed. "How do you have just one more than me? This is outrageous! Old Bai, you sly man, you've been plotting all along to surpass us and show off the strength of a student from a humble background. Now look, you've finally gotten your wish."

Everyone was well aware of this. Since they were close, Liao Mingliang didn't mind and often teased Bai Zhijin about it.

Strictly speaking, this was Bai Zhijin's ambition, which was a good thing.

Bai Zhijin still felt somewhat guilty and snorted. "Waste! You still have a magical item, yet you're not my match. You've completely disgraced the Liao family of Green Python Star."

Everyone laughed together. With so many achievements, placing in the top three was no problem, and everyone was in high spirits.

While the young men were teasing each other, a squad of warriors hurried past them. The commander, a colonel, shouted sternly, "Your mission is complete! Why haven't you withdrawn yet?"

The reconnaissance team's captain quickly scrambled to his feet and saluted. "Yes, sir! We are withdrawing now."

But while the team captain showed the colonel deference, Liao Mingliang and Fan Yutong were not so compliant. "We worked hard to clear the path for you and scout the enemy's situation! And this is how you treat your meritorious soldiers?"

The colonel glanced at them and sneered. "I know you come from extraordinary backgrounds. If you want to use your family heritage to pressure me, fine. It's not like we can choose where we're born."

"But if you're trying to pressure me with your merits, then I'm sorry. You really haven't accomplished anything worth boasting about."

The team captain couldn't help but say, "How is that possible? We advanced dozens of miles and killed several hundred Subterraneans."

The colonel asked indifferently, "What is the mission of your reconnaissance team?"

"To determine the true strength of the Subterraneans and their defensive arrangements."

The colonel countered, "So, did you accomplish that?"

The team captain was at a loss for words—they really hadn't done much. Bai Zhijin couldn't help but add, "But we have hundreds of kills!"

The colonel sneered. "A few hundred kills, and you're still bragging? Let me tell you, some teams have actually completed their missions. They not only determined the Subterraneans' strength but also killed thousands of them, including more than ninety percent of their Shamans—the three highest-ranking Blood Moon Shamans among them."

"It's because of them that we've gained an extremely favorable strategic opportunity, leading to a full mobilization! All of you, head back quickly and stop getting in the way."

Bai Zhijin and the other two nearly jumped. "How is that possible? What did they use to blow them up? Are those Subterraneans fools, just clustering together to be bombed? And over two hundred Shamans?"

Bai Zhijin couldn't help but say, "Even an elite team like Wang Chengqian's couldn't do that!"

The team captain suddenly realized something, his expression changing as he asked, "Is it... 'Volunteer Spirit'?"

Before the mission, Han Zhuangzhi and his squadmates discovered 'Volunteer Spirit' was actually on their team, making the other teams green with envy.

If anyone could achieve such a feat, it would definitely be 'Volunteer Spirit'.

This time, even the colonel showed solemn respect. "It was him. Besides him, who else could be so valiant!"

The team captain stopped arguing and hung his head in shame. "We... still have a long way to go."

But he was still somewhat reluctant to accept it and asked, "Sir, how many kills did their side get?"

"Most of the kills belong to 'Volunteer Spirit'. However, I heard he took good care of everyone, sharing plenty of the credit. Each warrior's kill count is nearly a hundred."

The squad leader and his warriors gasped. They had fought tooth and nail for only about fifty kills each, barely half of what the others achieved.

Envy nearly distorted their faces. "What did Han Zhuangzhi do to deserve that? It's all because 'Volunteer Spirit' carried him!"

The team members also complained one after another, "Exactly! If I were with His Excellency, I could have gotten two hundred kills!"

Bai Zhijin and his two companions were even more upset. Nearly a hundred kills? The most any of us three got was only forty-three!

With a final sliver of hope, Bai Zhijin asked, "Then... what about the other freshmen, aside from Chen Gu?"

The colonel glared at him. "Is His Excellency's name something you can utter so casually?"

Bai Zhijin conceded, "My mistake. It's His Excellency, 'Volunteer Spirit'."

Only then was the colonel satisfied. "I heard those two freshmen performed poorly, probably fewer kills than the warriors."

All three sighed in relief. Good, good, there's still hope. Surpassing Chen Gu is definitely impossible, but overtaking Qiao Shuangyi and Lin Xiaochen, those two slackers, should still be possible.

However, the top three... now it's just second and third, with first place out of reach. It still stings.

Bai Zhijin quickly composed himself. No matter. This is the battlefield; Chen Gu naturally excels here. Next time, in another competition, I'll surpass him sooner or later and prove that even a student from a humble background can be a prodigy!

"Let's go." The squad leader was indignant, muttering, "Han Zhuangzhi, that shameless guy!"

But if there's a "shameful" opportunity like Han Zhuangzhi's, please, by all means, save it for me!

The group moved against the flow of the main army, withdrawing from the subterranean caverns. Military vehicles outside picked them up and took them back to the command center.

Chen Gu's group had already returned, and the other teams were back as well. Bai Zhijin's team was the last to arrive.

Director Xue nodded at them. "Alright, let the military handle the rest. We'll head back to school."

Bai Zhijin, Liao Mingliang, and Fan Yutong were crestfallen, eager to find out their rankings as soon as possible. The injured Fan Yutong had given up hope, but Liao Mingliang and Bai Zhijin were still aiming for second or third place.

Unfortunately, Director Xue didn't announce the results. He led everyone to board the vehicles prepared by the military, heading for the nearest city.

On the way, Liao Mingliang looked around and found a classmate he knew relatively well. "Hey, how many kills did you get?"

The freshman he asked was named Hu Yucheng, one of Wang Chengqian's group.

Hu Yucheng looked gloomy. He glanced at the teacher sitting in front and replied in a low voice, "Wang Chengqian was too overbearing; he did most of the work. I only managed to get twenty-one kills."

Liao Mingliang and Bai Zhijin exchanged a glance, a flicker of malicious delight in their eyes. It seems the freshmen from other groups didn't do too well. Our chances for the top three have increased significantly!

Bai Zhijin didn't know many people, so Liao Mingliang had to do the probing. He quietly asked around, one by one, "Hey, how many kills did you get?"

"So-so, twenty-four."

After asking three people in a row, all with kills in the low twenties, their hopes soared!

Liao Mingliang clapped a hand onto a particularly fleshy shoulder. "Hey, how many kills did you get?"

Chapter 375: The One Who Hugs Legs

Fatty Qiao Shuangyi was sleeping. After all, fighting in those tunnels was incredibly tough. He always had to run after Brother Chen and constantly seize opportunities; if one wasn't careful, those Subterraneans would get away.

So, being woken up made Qiao Shuangyi very unhappy. He said irritably, "Only fifty-one."

And when it came to military achievements, Qiao Shuangyi was also quite annoyed. He originally thought he had a chance to surpass the Hundred-Kill achievement. If he could get just one hundred and one, Qiao Shuangyi's dad would dare to go out and boast, "My son, a Two-Hundred-Kill achievement!"

One hundred and one, round it up a bit, a Two-Hundred-Kill achievement isn't a problem, right? In a few more years, Dad could round up that two hundred to a thousand, and voila! A Thousand-Kill achievement, no problem, right?

Now, he was stuck before the Hundred-Kill achievement.

For the first time, Qiao Shuangyi felt that having a Big Brother who was too overwhelmingly protective might not be such a good thing after all. A little brother like him got no glory to claim.

He decided that when he returned, he would invite Brother Chen to a meal and seriously discuss this matter with him, to offer some "counsel."

Talk about getting ahead of oneself! Qiao Shuangyi's current state was a perfect example—absolutely, no rounding needed.

The moment Qiao Shuangyi said that, he felt the hand on his shoulder suddenly tighten its grip.

"OUCH—" Qiao Shuangyi turned his head and glared. "Does your Liao family from Qinghun Star think you're all that now?"

Liao Mingliang was completely oblivious, still gripping his shoulder tightly and asking, "How many?"

"Fifty-one, fifty-one, fifty-one! Are you freaking deaf? Let go of me now!"

Liao Mingliang did let go, but he couldn't believe it. "You? Fifty-one kills?"

Buddy, I'm not looking down on you, but this number... it's unreasonable.

Qiao Shuangyi glared back. "Me, fifty-one! What about it? You got a problem? It's all recorded on the personal terminal. Go check it! Verify it however you want! I, Qiao Shuangyi, am His Excellency of the Hundred Kills from this day forward!"

Liao Mingliang and Bai Zhijin both felt their hearts sink, especially Liao Mingliang. He had one kill less than Bai Zhijin, which meant the top three were now out of his reach.

Bai Zhijin didn't feel much better. With Qiao Shuangyi at fifty-one kills, Bai Zhijin was now third. To actually be ranked beneath a worthless scion like Qiao Shuangyi... How infuriating!

Suddenly, Liao Mingliang had a realization. The colonel said Chen Gu took good care of everyone. I know exactly what kind of person Qiao Shuangyi is. How could he possibly have so many kills? It must be because Chen Gu helped him! If Chen Gu could look after Qiao Shuangyi, he could also look after Lin Xiaochen.

He quickly asked again, "What about Lin Xiaochen? How many does he have?"

Qiao Shuangyi was even more annoyed. It was thanks to me, this Young Master, that Lin Xiaochen managed to latch onto Brother Chen's coattails, and yet his kill count is even higher than mine! Is there anyone in this world more wronged than I am?!

"Sixty-nine," he replied resentfully, before pushing Liao Mingliang away and going back to sleep. "Don't bother me again!"

Liao Mingliang and Bai Zhijin both slumped back into their seats. It's over. The top three are completely out of reach now.

They looked at each other, both extremely unwilling to accept it.

They had fought bravely and returned full of expectations, thinking they would at least make it into the top three. But all our efforts... couldn't compare to someone riding coattails! What kind of world is this? Even Liao Mingliang found himself inwardly raging about the injustice of it all.

However, unlike Bai Zhijin, Liao Mingliang's eyes glinted as a thought struck him. Riding coattails? I can do that too! It's not like it's some high-level professional skill. You all just wait! The next time there's a school event, I'll be the first one to throw myself at Brother Chen's feet!

In the vehicle, some were disheartened, others expectant, and still others were sound asleep and snoring.

Behind them, beneath the surface of Maoshi Star's Wilderness Area 64, the human army swept through the Subterraneans' defenses like an unstoppable force, utterly routing the Subterraneans, who had already lost nearly all their Shamans.

As reports from all fronts were consolidated, Ling Yitong's eyebrows rose involuntarily. He quickly realized that his task was no longer just to defeat the Subterraneans but to eliminate as much of their effective strength as possible, striving to ensure this battle would prevent the Subterraneans from causing trouble for centuries.

This task, in truth, had been half completed by Chen Gu for him. If he couldn't handle the remaining half well, he would lose all face to continue as this commander.

Orders were issued one after another as Ling Yitong continuously adjusted his deployments based on frontline reports—this was a moment that distinguished a field general's talent from that of a strategic commander. In this era, the standard was the ability to direct large troop formations in coordinated combat.

The battle proceeded smoothly, but Ling Yitong still felt a lingering unease.

In the Central Operations Room, Bai Xianya finished reporting the situation on Maoshi Star. Looking at her uncle, who could barely suppress his triumphant mood, she asked, "Why don't you call Ling Yitong and scold him? Knowing your personality, since Ling Yitong disobeyed your orders and then you sent Zheng Zhixing over, nearly ruining things, I'd expect you to at least give him an earful, even if you weren't going to formally punish him."

Bai Yunpeng glared at her. "In your eyes, is your uncle really such a petty and superficial person?"

Bai Xianya sincerely replied, "You are."

Bai Yunpeng glared again but still relented—She has the Old Man backing her.

"Ling Yitong has been an old subordinate of mine," Bai Yunpeng said. "He will take the initiative to call me."

Ling Yitong was fully aware of his old superior's temperament. If I don't let him have his moment to gloat, I'll have a hard time later. Besides, I really did mess up this time.

His "unease" was precisely because of Marshal Bai.

Ling Yitong smiled wryly to himself. Forget it. I'll call Marshal Bai and admit my mistake as soon as the battle is over. But still... who could have imagined that a college freshman could single-handedly create the perfect strategic window for a major battle? Impressive indeed. A true dragon is not meant for a small pond!

Thinking about Zheng Zhixing again, Ling Yitong shook his head, his respect for Marshal Bai growing even more. When it comes to judging character, I am far inferior to Marshal Bai. Looking at Zheng Zhixing now, while it might be a slight exaggeration to say his tactics are *purely* 'armchair strategy,' his lack of magnanimity certainly shows he doesn't have the makings of a great general.

...

The Huai Shan Branch School's dedicated aircraft slowly descended behind the school. The hatch opened, and Director Xue led the students out.

On the trip back, the rankings from the freshman military training had already been settled.

Despite Bai Zhijin's regrets, Chen Gu was the undisputed first place. It wasn't just about the number of enemy kills but also his contribution to the entire war.

Following him were Lin Xiaochen in second place and Qiao Shuangyi in third.

Bai Zhijin managed not to fall further behind, securing fourth place. But the treatment between the top three and fourth place... was worlds apart in any field.

The ancient Olympics always awarded medals only to the top three finishers.

Director Xue told everyone, "Go back and rest. School will start in a few days."

Wang Chengqian would be in charge of the subsequent procedures, and Director Xue left on her own. Fifteen minutes later, she stood next to the principal's bungalow.

The principal was enjoying a rare moment of 'leisure' today. With all his female confidantes absent, he exuded the calm and composed air of a profound master.

There was no helping it; age inevitably brought moments where his energy didn't match his desires. Even though he was a supreme expert, his 'opponents' in these matters were no weaklings either...

Chapter 376: The Nonexistent Research Direction Was Found

"Principal." Director Xue hid the admiration in his eyes well, appearing strictly business-like.

"Is it over?"

"It's over."

"Any casualties?"

"None," Director Xue replied. "It was almost exactly as you predicted, with Chen Gu first and Bai Zhijin fourth."

The fish basket beside the principal was empty. He felt a tug on his line and hurriedly reeled it in, but it came up empty.

The principal was frustrated. "These fish are becoming more and more cunning!"

He flung his fishing rod aside and began speaking earnestly with Director Xue. "I sent Chen Gu over. Even if Ling Yitong were a pig, he wouldn't lose that battle, right?"

"The situation is very favorable. I estimate that the Subterraneans won't be able to stir up trouble for the next two hundred years."

The principal nodded in relief. "That's good. I allowed Chen Gu to upgrade to the Third Energy Level, and he helped me with the Maoshi Star issue. Quite a fair trade."

Director Xue also nodded. Thinking of the girl, he added, "It's a pity about Sun Kexin."

The principal shook his head, appearing somewhat cold.

"And the items?"

Director Xue presented a collection of gemstones, beast teeth, and Magic Wands, but most were shattered, with less than twenty percent intact.

The principal's eyes widened, a pained, miserly gleam—like a treasure hoarder watching his gold vanish—flashing within them. "How could this happen..."

Director Xue explained helplessly, "Two hundred Shamans were killed by Chen Gu's Biological Nuclear Explosion. Their items couldn't escape either. I did my best to retrieve what I could, but most of them were shattered."

The principal clutched his chest in anguish.

When Director Xue had proactively gone to confirm the situation, another of his objectives was to collect these materials. The principal was well aware of the secret that Shamanic ornaments and Magic Wands were extremely valuable materials.

This freshman military training was a multi-beneficial endeavor, and the principal himself had been most eagerly anticipating these materials.

"Chen Gu—" the principal gritted his teeth.

"Alas—" He then let out a mournful sigh.

He began to meticulously sort through these materials. Then, he said to Director Xue, "I've already reached an agreement with Aviloya. This year's freshmen will cooperate closely with the Bureau of Mystic Security. Go and meet with Aviloya to discuss the specifics of the collaboration."

"Yes." Director Xue glanced at the heartbroken principal, a slight smile playing on his lips inwardly. To outsiders, the principal of Huai Shan Branch School was a lofty, revered figure. To super-powerful individuals like Aviloya, he was the anchor of the entire Confederation, perhaps even the whole human race. In the eyes of the Elders' Council, the principal was a divine dragon soaring through the clouds—someone they relied on, yet also feared.

However, to those close to the principal, like his female confidantes or Director Xue, he was actually quite an interesting person.

...

Even if I need to suck up to someone in the future, I can't just casually promise to treat Chen Gu to a meal, especially not in the school cafeteria, Lin Xiaochen quickly resolved.

Qiao Shuangyi took pleasure in his misfortune.

Sure enough, Lin Xiaochen's pocket money for the month had vanished into thin air. Moreover, Chen Gu still hadn't eaten his fill, and since they had agreed on a custom stall, the shortfall in funds was significant.

Qiao Shuangyi, with a shifty glint in his eyes, sidled up to the embarrassed Lin Xiaochen. "Need a loan? Given our friendship, we can negotiate the interest."

Lin Xiaochen lamented in distress, "Why didn't you stop me when I was making those wild promises?"

Qiao Shuangyi pursed his lips. "Have you forgotten about that night we went to the gourmet food truck? You were asking for trouble; what's that got to do with me?"

Lin Xiaochen opened his mouth, then remembered. What a miscalculation!

Qiao Shuangyi shot him an annoyed look. "A few months' allowance for second place in the freshman military training? You struck gold! If you're not satisfied, let's swap!"

"No way!" Lin Xiaochen immediately retorted. "I get it now. If you want to ride Brother Chen's coattails, you have to be willing to spend big!"

Qiao Shuangyi paused for a moment, then he also understood. "Right..."

...

As Chen Gu was returning to his dormitory and passing through a corridor, he suddenly sensed something and turned his head. On a nearby antique-style building, Ye Feileng stood with her arms crossed, watching him coldly.

Hmph. Chen Gu sneered inwardly and turned away.

After quickly tidying up in his dormitory, he went to the Bureau to report.

Director-General Aviloya naturally had no "time" for him, and Chen Gu wasn't there to see her anyway.

"You're back!" Qing Ruyan exclaimed in pleasant surprise upon seeing him. "I only heard after you left how dangerous the Huai Shan Branch School's freshman military training was. I'm so glad you're okay."

She patted her chest. Despite the Director-General's warning, Qing Ruyan didn't dare to appear overly familiar with Chen Gu, but in her heart, she truly considered him a friend.

Chen Gu smiled and nodded. "Mm... Has Chen Jixian completed his advancement?"

"Not yet." Seeing the worry on his face, Qing Ruyan quickly added, "But he's very close. The Bureau's experts estimate it'll be in the next day or two."

"And he has already passed the most dangerous phase, so you don't need to worry."

Chen Gu quietly breathed a sigh of relief. Before he could say anything more, the door to Qing Ruyan's office BANGED open. Dr. Meng Ji rushed in, his face lighting up when he saw Chen Gu. "Hahaha, I knew you'd be here! Come with me, quick! I feel like my research is on the verge of a breakthrough, and I need your help with a few more experiments!"

Chen 'Lab Rat' Gu was dragged to the laboratory. Dr. Meng Ji had built some new devices, and Chen Gu had no idea what they were for; he could only cooperate.

Then, during their casual chat, Chen Gu was astonished to realize that Dr. Meng Ji actually had a research direction!

This so-called research won't lead to any results, Chen Gu knew perfectly well, yet Dr. Meng Ji seemed utterly confident.

"Actually, I've had a sudden insight recently," Dr. Meng Ji said to Chen Gu, all while observing the experimental data. "I used to imagine this research was incredibly difficult, always trying to think along the most profound and complex lines—because, after all, this breaks centuries of common knowledge held by professionals."

"But when did this common sense first appear? I've carefully reviewed the records. It seems to have been passed down from older professions when professionals first emerged during humanity's Great Interstellar Exploration era."

"Subsequently, over a vast stretch of time, many professionals and researchers tried to overturn this common sense but ultimately failed. Thus, this common sense became firmly established."

"But that era was thousands of years ago. Since then, human technology has developed at lightning speed and is incomparable to those times. Intermittently, people have challenged this common sense,

but all have failed. However, looking closely at the reasons, it seems to be due to the challengers' own insufficient strength and a lack of invested research resources."

Chen Gu was skeptical. "Doctor, are you suggesting..."

Chapter 377: The New Generation of Silly Successors

It's quite likely that things aren't as complicated as I imagined. A problem that was perplexing thousands of years ago could now perhaps be easily solved with current human technology. It's just that so-called 'common sense' has shackled people's thinking.

Dr. Meng Ji then went on and on about his specific research plan. Chen Gu didn't understand a word and suddenly realized that for people at the doctor's level, 'relatively easy' was an entirely different concept from what he understood it to be.

Chen Gu stayed at the headquarters for most of the day. Only after Dr. Meng Ji had completed all the experiments did he contentedly let him go.

He had just left the headquarters and hadn't even gotten into his car when his phone rang again.

With a certain severity in his voice, Bai Yunpeng said over the phone, "Chen Gu, come over. Tao Tao is here too. There are some things I think you need to know."

Chen Gu felt a sudden thump in his heart. The collaboration between Bai Yunpeng and the Tao Corporation had been facilitated by him. If there were any issues now, it would be difficult for him to explain to Zhao Ji.

Bai Yunpeng gave him the address of the Central Operations Room. It was Chen Gu's first visit to this 'military "brain"' institution, but he had no intention of taking a tour. He followed Bai Xianya, who had come to receive him, matching her brisk steps until they reached Bai Yunpeng's office.

Tao Tao was indeed there too. Although her expression was solemn, she didn't look like there was a problem with the cooperation.

"Marshal Bai, I'm here. What happened?"

Bai Yunpeng gestured for him to sit down and then, with a pull of his hand, a massive holographic projection appeared between the three of them.

This was a very large and advanced military base. Chen Gu took a look. "An underground military base?" Then he noticed some details. "This isn't our style."

He glanced at Tao Tao. "Is this... the mysterious base with military code [JM662]?"

Bai Yunpeng nodded. "We have fully taken control of this base through our cooperation with the Tao Corporation. Our partnership is going smoothly. There's no cause for concern. Additionally, the level of technology within the base is very high and includes some directions we have not yet researched, which is very valuable to us."

Chen Gu let out a sigh of relief. "Then the reason you asked me to come is because..."

Tao Tao interjected, "We've only partially deciphered the language of the civilized beings who built this base. Then we discovered this base seems to have a 'maintenance log' document."

With a tap in the holographic projection, Tao Tao enlarged a section that appeared to be the main control quantum brain room.

"And this log records a maintenance that was carried out eleven years ago."

"Maintenance!" Chen Gu was also very surprised. "Had the builders of this base returned?"

Bai Yunpeng nodded. "It's highly probable. We had always thought that it was a remnant of a civilization that had perished, but what if this civilization hadn't been destroyed?"

"Judging from the level of technology exhibited by this base, it might even be slightly more advanced than ours."

"If they have returned, it would be another Alien Insect Race for all of humanity!"

Chen Gu's expression grew serious. "Do you need me to do anything?"

Bai Yunpeng said, "This matter is of great importance. I will report it upwards, and it may eventually be brought before the highest council of humanity."

The highest council of humanity was somewhat similar to the United Nations of Chen Gu's previous life. However, it was mainly used for coordinating military actions and had been established after the Alien Insect Race emerged. It was an organization whose authority could be described as either tremendously high or, indeed, somewhat negligible.

The four major Star Nations held the dominant voice in it, while the other smaller Star Nations were obsequious yet often duplicitous.

"Due to the special connection between this base and that super lifeform, your pet might help us find other descendants that have returned to this base over the years. This could be a means to decode the secrets of this base."

Chen Gu interrupted him, "Wouldn't it be more convenient to start directly with that super lifeform?"

There was a mysterious connection between the super lifeform and this base.

Bai Yunpeng said helplessly, "It's too late. Qiao Shuangmu and Shangguan Yuxie joined forces and killed that super lifeform the day before yesterday."

Chen Gu: "..."

Bai Yunpeng said with regret, "Just one day earlier. They killed it one day before we discovered the 'maintenance log'..."

Chen Gu nodded. "This is a big issue. Whatever you need me to do, I will cooperate."

"I'm just giving you a heads-up," Bai Yunpeng said. "Don't run around during this time. Once the action plan is approved, you might have to leave at any moment."

Chen Gu muttered, "I would like to run around, but the Valkyrie won't agree."

Bai Yunpeng informed Chen Gu ahead of time, of course, to ensure he was prepared. Dealing with another highly intelligent civilization, one could never be too cautious.

Actually, at this stage, Bai Yunpeng wasn't supposed to disclose these secrets to Chen Gu. His doing so showed he was really looking out for him.

After briefing him, Bai Yunpeng had Bai Xianya escort Chen Gu out. Bai Xianya whispered to him, "There's a bit of good news for you: you may get the pocket-sized Dimensional Cage even sooner."

「...」

No word about the base had leaked out. Even Qiao Shuangmu and Shangguan Yuxie are probably still in the dark, Chen Gu suspected.

Chen Gu meticulously recalled every detail of the battle, then realized there were many suspicious points surrounding the super lifeform.

He called Qiao Shuangmu several times, wanting to ask about the specific process of their slaying the super lifeform, but no one answered.

Chen Gu then turned to Qiao Shuangyi. The chubby fellow responded with complete cluelessness, "My cousin? Didn't he go to hunt the super lifeform? It's normal for his phone to be unreachable. It was a highly confidential operation..."

While Chen Gu was feeling anxious, he suddenly received a call from Mao Yisheng. Mao Yisheng's voice came over the phone, "Brother Chen! Darkray and I have arrived on Capital Star. Where are you? Let's have a reunion in the capital, HAHA!"

Chen Gu smiled, momentarily setting aside the matters of the base. "Name a place, and I'll come find you."

Mao Yisheng chose a rather classy restaurant. As soon as Chen Gu arrived, Mao Yisheng boasted cheerfully, "HEH, it's great to have a rich kid for a boss. I got three months' salary just for reporting in! I'm paying for this meal, Brother Chen. I know you're wealthy, but this is the first money I've earned on my own. You have to let me show off a bit!"

"Don't get cocky, or I might eat you out of house and home," Chen Gu laughed.

Mao Yisheng thought he was joking. Opening the menu, he said, "Order anything you like."

Chen Gu casually ordered two dishes and asked, "How's it going with you? How has the club arranged things for your new season?"

"I'm not sure. The club hasn't discussed it with me in detail yet. I guess they want to wait until the rookie training camp is over to see my performance before deciding."

Chapter 378: Mentor

Before the start of the Behemoth Alliance's annual competition, a rookie training camp is held. Of course, not just anyone can join—it comes with a fee.

The Alliance hires star players and coaches to provide intense training for the rookies, followed by group confrontations.

Doctor Mao's new boss was quite the tycoon and had signed him up.

"You'll definitely make a name for yourself at the rookie camp," Darkray confidently told his buddy.

Chen Gu casually asked, "Where's the training camp?"

"It seems to be in the Creek Mountain Nature Reserve."

Chen Gu was surprised: the Creek Mountain Nature Reserve was precisely the primitive area where the Huai Shan Branch School was located.

However, given the prestige of Huai Shan Branch School, it's unlikely the training camp is within three hundred kilometers of the school, he estimated.

The three of them reunited on Capital Star, full of spirit. Darkray accidentally drank too much, and Chen Gu and Mao Yisheng had to take him home. When drunk, the boisterous Darkray developed a peculiar habit: belting out songs at the top of his lungs!

All along the way, he roared popular songs from Empire River Star. To the pedestrians on Capital Star, these songs sounded "earthy" and straightforward, with lyrics filled with words like "brothers," "drinking together," and "shoulder to shoulder."

Of course, his singing was terrible, earning him the unanimous scorn of Chen Gu and Mao Yisheng. Yet, Darkray refused to concede, debating with them with the earnestness unique to a drunkard.

He could barely articulate, yet he thought he was making perfect sense!

After Chen Gu sent Darkray home and then saw Mao Yisheng off, he was finally alone. Suddenly, a feeling struck him: These two guys are becoming more and more like my goofy old friends, Ossosa and the others.

He sighed softly, a melancholic expression on his face.

Perhaps this was the true reason why the human race and alien species battled so fiercely, he mused.

Whether it's the Alien Insect Race or the civilization represented by the base, either could bring utter annihilation to the human race. All the people and things that bring warmth, joy, and happiness would be completely erased!

On the surface, the mysterious civilization of the base seems approachable, perhaps even open to communication. But even if communication is possible, we must secretly prepare for the worst. A single mistake in such matters could lead to irreversible ruin; this isn't a game, and there are absolutely no second chances.

「Three days later.」

Mao Yisheng entered the rookie training camp, and as it happened, Huai Shan Branch School also started its term on that very day!

The start date for higher education institutions across the Confederation wasn't unified, considering the various colonized planets' environments, climates, and customs, but the difference in timing between them wasn't substantial.

However, the Tiangong Military Division hadn't started its term yet! As a branch school... the principal had a sudden idea: Let's have military training for the new students!

So, the military training for new students began.

Then, the principal had another brainwave: Let's start the school year!

Consequently, while there were still over ten days before the Tiangong Military Division would begin classes, Huai Shan Branch School had already commenced its lessons.

On the first day of school, Ye Feileng arrived.

She was the instructor for this intake of new students—Wang Chengqian had another role: dormitory manager.

At Huai Shan Branch School, this position meant he was responsible for the logistics work for this intake of new students, but he wasn't qualified to interfere with teaching duties.

The reason was simply his low Energy Level.

Even Chen Gu was inwardly astounded when he found out. This could only happen at Huai Shan Branch School; otherwise, a dignified Fifth Energy Level individual would be a significant figure in any organization.

Ye Feileng made no effort to hide her dislike for Chen Gu. She was their instructor, and she felt she had that prerogative. So what if these new students have bright futures? I also came up through these ranks. They might be good, but compared to me, they're still far behind, she thought.

"Everyone, first choose your mentors. Huai Shan Branch School is different from other colleges; here, mentors are responsible for guiding your cultivation in your chosen profession.

"Additionally, there are various public courses. I'm warning you all not to skip classes. Public courses are an important way to earn credits, and the school mandates that every student must complete over twenty public courses to graduate. Otherwise, you won't receive your diploma."

Then, she displayed a list of professors. This list contained far more detailed information than what was available on the school's website. It included each professor's specialization, areas of expertise, significant research topics, and even the academic performance of students they had previously mentored.

Ye Feileng walked down, approaching Bai Zhijin first. She spoke to him in a low voice, advising him on which professor to choose.

Only after Bai Zhijin had made his choice did she begin to ask the other students one by one, though her attitude remained as aloof as usual.

However, when she reached Chen Gu, she walked past without a glance or a question.

Chen Gu didn't mind; he had already fallen out with Ye Feileng. If Ye Feileng were to suddenly act warmly towards me, I'd definitely be extra vigilant.

This current situation, where we can't stand the sight of each other and neither wants to bother with the other, is actually quite good.

Chen Gu remembered Marshal Bai telling him to choose Zhong Yuanbei as his mentor.

He carefully examined Professor Zhong Yuanbei's profile.

As he looked, a sense of admiration welled up within him. Professor Zhong Yuanbei is a Microscopic Analyst, a formidable Eighth Energy Level expert!

Most of the other professors were at the Seventh Energy Level.

Furthermore, according to the school's ranking system for mentors, Zhong Yuanbei was a "Preaching Master," the highest rank.

Below that were "Teaching Masters" and "Doubt-Solving Masters."

Professor Zhong Yuanbei's research subjects were even more impressive; they were all collaborative projects with the Military Division or Star Mansion, classified at the highest level within the Confederation.

And his list of research achievements was extensive...

But as Chen Gu read further, he felt something wasn't quite right. First, Professor Zhong Yuanbei had very few students.

In the two intakes before Chen Gu's, there wasn't a single one. However, a student from an even earlier intake had yet to graduate and was still repeating courses under Zhong Yuanbei; Huai Shan Branch School only had a three-year program.

Further down, there was a series of special annotations in red font: This professor has a particularly bad temper and is involved in numerous civil disputes.

To date, this "Preaching Master" had injured four neighbors, had altercations with restaurant staff eight times, argued with government officials ten times, and committed thirty-two traffic violations...

Chen Gu stared, dumbfounded. What a... short fuse this guy has.

Under such a professor... Chen Gu hesitated. He leaned over to look at Qiao Shuangyi's selection and asked, "Which mentor are you planning to choose?"

Qiao Shuangyi had already made his choice. "Hahaha," he laughed, "I found out long ago! It's definitely Professor Mu Heping. He's known as the easiest mentor to graduate under!"

Chen Gu glanced over. Good heavens! In stark contrast to Professor Zhong Yuanbei's "desolate hall," Professor Mu Heping's could be described as a "bustling marketplace."

He recruited at least two new students every year, without fail. The year before last, he even took on four students! Huai Shan Branch School only admitted a dozen or so students each year, and he alone accounted for nearly a third of them.

Looking at his other information, Professor Mu Heping's qualifications were also quite good. He was currently a "Teaching Master" and was working towards becoming a "Preaching Master."

As for his research projects, they were quite "eclectic." They spanned all sorts of levels; some were very impressive, while others... clearly looked like vanity projects for show, with little practical value.

Chapter 379: Teacher Zhong Seems to Have a Lot of Influence (Three in One)

Chen Gu thought of his past life and some university professors, shaking his head secretly, deciding not to hang around at Teacher Mu Heping's place.

Qiao Shuangyi asked him, "Whose class did you sign up for?"

"Zhong Yuanbei." Chen Gu still decided to follow Bai Yunpeng's advice.

Qiao Shuangyi let out a strange cry, "Are you crazy? Do you know why nobody signs up for that guy? He's a madman. For the past three years, he has injured his students so badly that they ended up in the hospital with serious wounds. If it weren't for his close friendship with the school director back in the days, he would have been expelled long ago."

Chen Gu was astonished. So that's how it is.

Qiao Shuangyi kept trying to convince him, "Brother, don't make things hard for yourself. I specifically inquired about this. Zhong Yuanbei is really harsh with his physical punishments. Those students he injured would have been disabled if not for the director secretly intervening."

"This person seems to have been injured here in the early years..." Qiao Shuangyi lowered his voice and pointed to his temple. "For some reason, it's impossible to cure with the current medical technology, so a lot of the time, he simply can't control himself."

Chen Gu remained silent throughout. Qiao Shuangyi thought he had been convinced, but unexpectedly, Chen Gu smiled. "Then I really chose the right person. If Teacher Zhong has the school director's backing, it means I have the school director's backing too!"

Did he even need to worry about Ye Feileng anymore? Humph, a mere clown!

Of course, this was just a joke to amuse himself. The real deciding factor was his willingness to trust Bai Yunpeng.

Qiao Shuangyi was speechless. "Having a backer is good, but you need to be alive to enjoy the benefits it brings."

Chen Gu was resolute, unmoved by persuasion.

"Alright." Ye Feileng walked back to the lectern. "After you have made your choices, report to your mentors this afternoon. There's one more public class this morning, and attendance is mandatory!"

The morning's public class was on "Professional Combat Cooperation," a very practical course. The stand-in professor was a tall, lean, and competent-looking teacher with bright eyes and a faint scar on his neck.

With the current medical techniques, the fact that this scar hasn't completely faded indicates how severe the injury must have been at the time.

Clearly, he was also a "tough character," making him a very persuasive instructor for this course.

Apart from the new students, there were also seven or eight older students who had to retake the class.

After class at noon, everyone went to the canteen to eat. Compared to the time of the freshman military training, the school was much more "lively." All the students were back, and the canteen was bustling with over a hundred people.

Chen Gu maintained his composure as he followed behind Lin Xiaochen and Qiao Shuangyi, who wore gloomy expressions. However, since they had promised earlier and didn't dare go back on their word—for fear that if there was some "event" at school and Brother Chen didn't cover them, disaster would strike.

Luckily, Chen Gu wasn't insistent on eating his fill. He was satisfied with just half a meal today. Wool can't be shorn all at once; it needs to last.

A large group gathered around Chen Gu to eat, all of them classmates who had gone to the nightclub together last time.

These students, with their outstanding family backgrounds, were all very pragmatic. Chen Gu performed excellently during the freshman military training and was willing to look out for his own, so naturally, they were happy to befriend him.

To these climbers, Chen Gu harbored no moral purism. He joked and laughed with everyone, as ultimately, they were all potential meal tickets.

Suddenly, an older student approached them.

He tapped on the table. "Chen Gu, right? Come over here for a second."

Chen Gu, who was eating, looked up in confusion, gazing at the older student as if he were an idiot, then lowered his head and continued with his meal.

Bullying new students was something high schoolers played at, right? And just because you tell me to come over, I should come? Who do you think you are?

The older student snickered coldly, "You really are a greenhorn who doesn't know how high the sky is."

He pushed the student sitting next to Chen Gu, who glanced at the group of older students and got up to make room. The senior sat down. "It's Andreyao who's calling you over."

Chen Gu took a peek over there. Among the older students, one guy clearly looked like the "leader" and inclined his chin slightly towards him.

The color drained from the faces of Chen Gu's classmates, clearly aware of this "Andreyao's" status.

Qiao Shuangyi gritted his teeth. "Chen Gu is a friend of the Qiao Family. What does Andreyao want to do?"

The older student sneered, "Qiao Shuangyi, are you sure you want to involve your entire family in matters at Huai Shan Branch School? Do you have the authority to make such decisions?"

Qiao Shuangyi's face turned red, but he was at a loss for words.

Chen Gu continued to eat, then disdainfully said, "Scram!"

The older student thought he had misheard. "What did you say?"

"Scram!" Chen Gu repeated. "That damn Andreyao, if he wants to say something to me, he should come over himself. Whoever he is, he's not qualified to send a lackey to summon me like I'm some underling."

The older student laughed angrily. "Fine, fine, fine! You've got guts; just wait!"

He stormed off, and after reaching Andreyao, he seemed to add fuel to the fire with his words. Andreyao's gaze turned frosty, and the older students around him also looked enraged.

Qiao Shuangyi didn't know whether he was trying to reassure Chen Gu or psych himself up. "Don't worry, this is Huai Shan Branch School. Andreyao wouldn't dare do anything for real."

Several older students from Andreyao's group stood up, looking ready to charge over, and Qiao Shuangyi involuntarily drew back, less certain about his own words.

Here at Huai Shan Branch School, his status couldn't offer him enough protection. Most of the students here came from families no less influential than his.

Chapter 380: Teacher Zhong Seems to Have a Lot of Influence (Three in One)_2

But Andreyao raised his hand to stop them, stood up, and with a cold glance at Chen Gu, straightened his clothes and walked out of the school cafeteria.

Lin Xiaochen looked worried, "Brother Chen, it's safe inside the school, but be very careful once you leave the premises."

"How about I lend you some people?"

Lin Xiaochen had come in second during the freshman military training by chance, which greatly increased his standing in his family. Consequently, his allowance significantly increased, and the security detail assigned to him was also strengthened.

This group of personnel constituted the foundation of Lin Xiaochen's future power base. Most of them were fiercely loyal to him, allowing him to command them with ease.

Qiao Shuangyi also immediately said, "Right, I'll lend you some people too. Don't be fooled by Andreyao's pretentious demeanor in school because he's really a nasty piece of work behind the scenes and will resort to any despicable means."

However, Chen Gu simply smiled and shook his head, "No need."

Lin Xiaochen and Qiao Shuangyi continued to persuade him for a while, but Chen Gu didn't agree. They both thought it was because Chen Gu was very confident in his own strength. However, knowing that Andreyao had powerful professionals under him, they couldn't help but still worry secretly.

But in reality, Chen Gu was very aware of his own "situation." Andreyao thinking of ambushing him? Hehe, go ahead, make your move quickly, no need to hesitate!

Chen Gu didn't believe that before Dr. Meng Ji uncovered the secret of his ability to hold multiple positions, Aviloya would leave him unattended.

As long as I'm not at Huai Shan Branch School, I'm probably under some form of "protection." It's likely carried out by powerhouses to prevent me from noticing.

If Andreyao doesn't dare make a move inside the school, then outside... Hehe, I'm actually quite looking forward to it. I want to know who exactly is "protecting" me in the shadows.

Great Actor Chen guessed it might be his old acquaintance, Lord Gong Shuxu.

「...」

In the afternoon, following his plan, Chen Gu went to report to his advisor, Zhong Yuanbei.

The Huai Shan Branch School itself did not have many students, but there were plenty of teachers. The three cohorts of students, along with those extending their graduation or applying for graduate studies, totaled less than a hundred people. However, the number of teachers and other staff—including dormitory heads like Wang Chengqian—actually exceeded one hundred and fifty!

There were also a full seventy teachers at the advisor level! This meant that many teachers didn't even have a single student.

And these advisors were all high Energy Level professionals! Chen Gu felt that even the Bureau of Mystic Security couldn't compete with Huai Shan Branch School when it came to high-end combat strength.

Not only was the school environment beautiful, but the treatment of the teachers was also top-notch. Each advisor had their own "branch palace." And the higher the advisor's rating, the larger the scale of their branch palace.

Zhong Yuanbei was of the highest category, a "Preceptor," and when Chen Gu stood in front of the "Yuanbei Palace," he was truly astonished by its grandeur and antique charm.

He waited at the door for a little while before a young man quickly walked out of the palace. Upon seeing him, Chen Gu's mind was filled with intense suspicion.

The young man, upon noticing Chen Gu, grew incredibly excited, rushed over, grabbed Chen Gu's hands, and shook them vigorously, "Junior Brother, I've finally waited for you to come!"

He pulled Chen Gu along, "Come on, let me give you a proper introduction to everything here, and from now on, you'll look after our advisor."

"Oh right, let me introduce myself. My name is Bai Shengyuan. Actually, we are already quite close; Bai Yunpeng is my uncle, and Bai Xianya is my cousin—though she is only older than me by a dozen days or so."

Chen Gu responded with a cheerful smile, "That's really great. I will be counting on you, Senior Brother, to cover for me from now on."

But Bai Shengyuan said somewhat apologetically, "I am afraid I won't be able to look after you for long, as I'll finally be able to graduate now that you're here."

At this point, Chen Gu also voiced the question that had been on his mind, "Senior Brother, you've reached the Fifth Energy Level, right? Why haven't you been able to graduate?"

Bai Shengyuan's energy fluctuations weren't perfectly concealed, probably because he had recently advanced. Chen Gu noticed it at first glance.

With capabilities like Bai Shengyuan's, he would be an outstanding student even at Huai Shan Branch School. Remaining as a teaching assistant would be no issue. How could he possibly not be able to graduate?

Bai Shengyuan's face immediately turned gloomy. "The teacher wouldn't let me graduate. His temper is bad, and he has trouble attracting students. Since he needs assistance with his research projects, he keeps holding me back..."

"Hold on..." Chen Gu suddenly realized something. I initially thought that Bai Yunpeng suggesting I report to Zhong Yuanbei had some profound meaning, but now it seems like I was just set up to take his nephew's place?

Bai Shengyuan hurriedly added, "However, Junior Brother, don't be disappointed. The teacher indeed has some shortcomings, but he really takes good care of his students."

"First off, the teacher insists that only he gets to discipline his students. If anyone else dares to hit his students, even if it's the dean, the teacher will find a way to help you get even."

Chen Gu wasn't particularly impressed; after all, Zhong Yuanbei was known for being heavy-handed, hospitalizing his own students.

"Moreover, the teacher is really generous when it comes to the students' advancement. Every time I advance, the teacher provides additional sponsorship with very precious resources. I've calculated. Over the three-plus years I've been with the teacher, the resources he has specifically prepared for my advancement totaled over one and a half billion!"