

Full Time 451

Chapter 451: New Official Takes Office and Makes a Start_2

Liang He had completed the "hardware" upgrades and then established a series of strict rules and regulations for anyone entering or leaving the base.

He publicly declared that "the law shows no mercy." Under his management, everyone was treated equally. No one was allowed to break his rules, or they would certainly be "dealt with by the law."

However, the day after he announced these rules, Chen Gu came to him requesting leave.

"The Beast League?" Liang He glared, thoroughly dissatisfied.

Chen Gu shrugged. "I have a match tomorrow night against 'Barbarian Bear' Aurora."

Yes, that was the same Aodora who had double-killed the Alliance's number one player, Boraruz, last season.

Following his outstanding performance last season, Aurora was already showing signs of becoming the "Alliance's number two." Although he had lost to Boraruz early this season, allowing Boraruz to defend his top player's throne, Aurora had since maintained an increasingly steady performance. In personal rankings, his record was now tied with Chen Gu's, both undefeated—the loss to Boraruz had been in a team match.

Chen Gu emphasized his opponent, partly to convey the match's importance to Liang He, and partly because the Beast Battle Competition had many fans. If Liang He also enjoyed it, getting leave might be easier.

However, Liang He snorted disdainfully. "What kind of garbage competition is this? What's so interesting about two beasts tearing each other apart? I really don't understand how such a competition could be liked by so many brainless people."

Chen Gu: "..."

Well, true to form for someone who could be alienated by all his colleagues, he's just managed to completely offend the countless Beast fans across Star Sea.

Chen Gu had no choice but to say, "The Director-General is also aware of my participation in the Beast League, and he hasn't objected before. I can't possibly withdraw now—it involves hundreds of millions of Starshields in income."

Liang He shot him a sharp look. "Not every decision made by the Director-General is without fault."

Chen Gu: "..."

Great, another remark to offend his immediate superior.

Chen Gu, his patience wearing thin, said, "Please grant the leave. Whenever I've competed, there has never been an incident. I've always been very cautious; you can be assured of that."

Even with Chen Gu's humble approach, Liang He was still somewhat reluctant. He mulled it over before finally saying, "I'll consider it."

Chen Gu: "..."

He didn't want to say anything more and turned to leave.

After leaving, Chen Gu felt worried. What if Liang He stubbornly refuses to let me go? Judging from the man's "performance" earlier, Chen Gu believed he was capable of doing just that.

He went to Dr. Meng Ji to ask for help. The doctor seemed quite impatient but still called Liang He in front of Chen Gu.

Unexpectedly, Liang He berated Dr. Meng Ji over the phone. "Dr. Meng Ji, I think you fail to realize that the serious accident last time occurred precisely because of your lax and complacent attitude! You are being irresponsible with your own life and to the entire Bureau of Mystic Security!"

SNAP!

Dr. Meng Ji hung up without hesitation. He then looked at Chen Gu and spread his hands. "I'm at my wit's end too."

Chen Gu had a bad feeling. Liang He's attitude clearly showed he didn't want to let him go.

However, the importance of this match was self-evident; he absolutely could not miss it.

Just as Great Actor Chen was fretting, his phone suddenly rang. It was Gorilla.

"I remember we once mentioned me acting as your agent temporarily, didn't we?"

This so-called agent agreement dated back to Chen Gu's assessment by the Tiangong Military Division.

Chen Gu thought for a moment. "Right. I think when I was filling out the Alliance documents, I casually put your number down in the agent field."

On the other end, his silly friend put on the airs of a "big shot." "Ahem, do you have any idea how much commission my agency contracts stipulate? Do you know the caliber of artists I manage?"

Chen Gu said calmly, "Don't hang up. I have something to show you."

Chen Gu quickly sent him the photo of "man on top of man."

"Your Majesty, what are your commands? Your humble agent, Gao Mengjiu, is at your service! I will dedicate myself completely, even unto death!" Gorilla instantly knew his place.

"That's more like it," Chen Gu huffed. "So, what did you call me about?"

"Over the past few days, several manufacturers have approached me about you doing endorsements."

Gao Mengjiu was indeed very capable in business matters. He first analyzed Chen Gu's "positioning" as a rising star in the Beast League and outlined his future development. Then, he analyzed the profiles of these manufacturers, offering advice on which endorsements to accept, which to decline, how to mitigate risks in contracts, and so on.

Chen Gu was satisfied with Gorilla's "service" and decided to delegate. "You handle these business matters. I trust you."

Finally, Gao Mengjiu said, "You must perform well in tomorrow night's match. Your current momentum is excellent. At times like this, you need to push forward aggressively. Any setback now could lead to a slump you might not recover from. You absolutely must avoid that."

Gorilla's emphasis made Chen Gu even more anxious. What if Liang He doesn't let me go, and I can't make it tomorrow night?

Chapter 452: New Official Takes Office and Makes a Start_3

He could also choose to ignore Liang He's so-called "ban" and selfishly leave the base to go back and compete. However, becoming a star of the Giant Monster League was not Chen Gu's dream, but rather a means to earn funds for his promotion. There was no need to create drama with the agency over this.

Because of the Director-General, Chen Gu had no doubt that if he ever conflicted with Liang He, he would definitely be the one punished by the agency—this wasn't Chen Gu's fault, nor Aviloya's; it was solely the fault of their original form.

Since the "root cause" was Aviloya, Chen Gu bit the bullet and sent her a message explaining the situation.

This message was over a hundred words long. Chen Gu wanted to clarify the complete context in great detail to avoid misunderstandings. In reality, a phone call would have sufficed, but Great Actor Chen was simply too timid; he didn't have the courage to call Aviloya.

And he also guessed that Aviloya, nine times out of ten, wouldn't pick up his call anyway.

After sending the message, there was no response, as if throwing a clay ox into the sea. Chen Gu quietly grew somewhat disgruntled. He felt he had been considerate enough, giving both Aviloya and Liang He, this pair of "monarch and minister," sufficient respect.

He shook his head. Indeed, the so-called diplomatic and non-offensive way of dealing with the world simply didn't suit him. Tomorrow, he would compete as scheduled; they could do whatever they wished.

After all, as the first person to hold multiple professions, even if Aviloya wanted to punish him, the punishment couldn't be too severe. Besides, he also had Marshal Bai and the Principal as two protective umbrellas.

But when evening came, Liang He unexpectedly sent a message approving his leave!

Chen Gu guessed that Aviloya must have spoken to Liang He. His dissatisfaction lessened significantly. At least, judging from this outcome, Aviloya clearly still "bore a grudge" against him, but in professional matters, she had, at best, managed to be impartial.

「...」

Inside the base, Liang He's room was one of the four largest and highest-ranking ones. Before him, neither Gong Shuxu nor Kang Gesi had occupied any of these four rooms.

However, when Liang He arrived, he unapologetically took one of them for himself.

Liang He's unpopularity within the agency wasn't just because of his bad temper; it was also due to his extreme arrogance and selfishness.

Liang He had just ended a call with Aviloya. He grudgingly approved Chen Gu's leave request, clenching his teeth. Furious, he made a mental note of the incident.

In the message to Chen Gu, he strictly stipulated the time Chen Gu had to return to the base: within two hours after the competition ended.

This meant that right after the competition finished, Chen Gu had to immediately pack up and leave, with only two hours to rush back to the base—a very tight schedule.

If Chen Gu didn't have the Dimensional Prison Ring, just settling the Combat Rooster would take more time than that.

The next day, Chen Gu and Liang He didn't run into each other. Liang He was meticulously inspecting the entire base. He was also personally leading a team to conduct a dragnet search within a three-hundred-kilometer radius of the base.

Furthermore, he planned to install three thousand surveillance probes within that area to detect any suspicious individuals as early as possible.

Qing Ruyan was right; Liang He was very capable at his job.

After lunch, Chen Gu started packing his things to leave. Chu Zheng really wanted to accompany her instructor, so she went to ask Liang He for leave. But without the Director-General's support, the girl with a slight build was ruthlessly rejected by Liang He and subjected to a harsh reprimand.

The competition that day was even more popular than the last. Fans had even started speculating on various forums and discussion boards: when would Chen Gu and the Combat Rooster suffer their first defeat?

Many fans predicted that tonight's match between Chen Gu and Aurora would be a fifty-fifty bet. This was already a recognition of Chen Gu's strength, unlike previous times when, upon facing a strong opponent, public opinion would overwhelmingly conclude that Chen Gu was bound to lose.

While Chen Gu was driving to the venue, a well-known commentator from the Alliance, Xiao Bu Yi, released an influential article on his online column. He had analyzed Chen Gu's previous competitions and drawn what seemed like an "impossible" conclusion: Chen Gu's Combat Rooster was using martial techniques in competitions!

He listed numerous comparative movements, even deducing that these martial techniques evolved from the widely propagated "Ancient Martial Great Nine Forms"!

While Chen Gu was on his way, this article went viral, and the comment section below it erupted into chaos.

To teach a Giant Monster to fight using martial arts—this had once seemed a very promising idea, and many had attempted it.

But it was later deemed a "false proposition," as the Giant Monsters simply couldn't learn them. Even if they barely managed to, coordination issues with the players would arise.

Xiao Bu Yi's article attracted countless criticisms: "Sensationalist!"

"Sucking up to Chen Gu for attention!"

"This crosses the line for a commentator!"

Despite Xiao Bu Yi's arguments appearing quite reasonable, people struggled to break free from their preconceived notions, subconsciously believing it was still just a "coincidence."

In the comments section, Xiao Bu Yi replied, "The intelligence of Energy Gathering Mechanical Species was originally higher than that of biological Giant Monsters. They are unfit for Giant Monster Combat because they are more volatile and cannot coordinate with players. Since Chen Gu can make the Combat Rooster obey, why couldn't he teach it the 'Ancient Martial Great Nine Forms'? Furthermore, Chen Gu's 'Ancient Martial Great Nine Forms' is clearly a modified version, perfectly suited for Giant Monsters to use."

Chapter 453 - New Official Takes Office and Makes a Start_4

But soon, there were no more responses to the torrent of abuse.

Previously, countless teams, gathering experts from all fields, had studied this issue but failed to solve it. Chen Gu was just a contestant. How could he and a single Energy Gathering Mechanical Species solve this problem of the century?

Anyway, the prevailing notion among most people was: if I can't do it, there's no way you can do it either.

When Chen Gu arrived at the venue, he was suddenly surrounded by a horde of reporters. He had initially assumed they were there to interview him about tonight's match, but the first question left him dumbfounded: "Did the Combat Rooster use the 'Ancient Martial Arts Grand Nine Forms'?"

"Huh?" Chen Gu blurted out, "You figured it out that quickly?"

The reporters had anticipated Chen Gu would flatly deny it. They expected he would then thank Xiao Bu Yi for his vote of confidence, while humbly suggesting it was all a coincidence. However, they never imagined Chen Gu would admit it right off the bat!

For a moment, they were as stunned as Chen Gu. But then, excitement surged through them. True or not, this was big news!

Big news was their lifeblood! Even if Chen Gu was later proven to be bluffing—perhaps just to attract attention or intimidate his opponent—the initial buzz from the news would have already been harvested. Plus, they could later expose Chen Gu's deception, generating another wave of sensational headlines!

Perfect.

A barrage of detailed questions immediately followed. However, before Chen Gu could reply, he was whisked away by Alliance officials who had just arrived.

Only after following the Alliance officials into the stadium did Chen Gu manage to ask, "What's going on?"

The official gave a wry smile and sent him Xiao Bu Yi's article. After reading it, Chen Gu couldn't help but exclaim in admiration, "This Xiao Bu Yi really knows his stuff!"

The Alliance official led him directly to the on-site manager's office for the competition. The manager pointed to the tremendous uproar outside and said to Chen Gu with a smile, "Mr. Chen, you've certainly stirred up another huge news story. All the fans are waiting for an answer."

Then, he asked Chen Gu seriously, "So now, on behalf of the Alliance, I hope to get a sincere answer from you, Mr. Chen: is everything Xiao Bu Yi said true?"

The official who had brought Chen Gu in remarked, "Mr. Chen already admitted to this during an interview outside just now."

The manager's mouth fell open. He then shook his head in resignation. "Young man, you're too impulsive. With something like this, if you had experience, you would have consulted with the Alliance and your agent first. Now we need to figure out how to salvage the situation..."

Chen Gu glanced at him. "You asked me for a sincere answer, but you'd already made up your mind, hadn't you? It's just that my answer wasn't what you expected."

"Don't trouble yourself thinking about how to 'salvage' anything. You can announce to the public that before my match with Olado, the Combat Rooster and I will perform a demonstration of the colossal beast version of the 'Ancient Martial Arts Grand Nine Forms' for everyone!"

The manager was aghast. "Ah? This... Mr. Chen, this is no joke! The Alliance has many experts. They'll be able to tell at a glance whether it's truly adapted from the 'Ancient Martial Arts Grand Nine Forms'."

This was almost a clear warning: kid, don't think you can just show up with some shoddy imitation, strike a few random poses to try and bluff your way through; you'll be exposed.

Chen Gu chuckled. "Go ahead and arrange it. If you can't, I can call Mr. Wei Kaitai."

Wei Kaitai was the official who had initially introduced Chen Gu to the Alliance. He was a high-ranking official at Alliance headquarters, his status far surpassing that of the on-site manager.

"No need, I'll arrange it," the manager conceded, though he couldn't help but cast a doubtful glance at Chen Gu. This guy is so certain... Is he really confident he can pull it off?

Soon, the official Alliance website posted the announcement. Although very little time remained before the match was due to start, this news quickly generated another wave of intense interest.

Chapter 454 Crooked and Evil Influences

The Alliance's top brass, people like Wei Kaitai, couldn't help but smile crookedly when they saw this situation. A player like Chen Gu was simply a gift from heaven to the Alliance. Just look at him—he'd only been with the Alliance for a few days, and almost every match he was involved in managed to bring in a huge wave of attention!

As for whether it was real or fake, who cared?

The difference in vision between the executives and the grassroots on-site managers was immediately apparent.

It was only now that Gao Mengjiu, still groggy, called Chen Gu. "I drank too much last night and was sleeping soundly until Man Suling dragged me out of bed. My beard, oh my! It's true what they say, a daughter's heart eventually belongs elsewhere. What mess have you gotten yourself into again, you idiot?"

Chen Gu cursed, "How did someone as lazy as you become a top-tier agent?"

He detailed the situation to the "gorilla." As a close friend who loved to tease him, and had for decades, the gorilla naturally didn't miss any opportunity to take a jab at him. "Look at you, still so green. This kind of thing is just a small scene. Chill out. I, Ninth Master, have seen bigger storms than this. You think I'd be afraid of this little creek?"

Chen Gu snarled, "I'm still chewing Green Arrow!"

Gao Mengjiu asked, "What did you say?"

"Nothing." People in this era simply didn't get the reference. Chen Gu then asked, "So what should I do now?"

"You're doing well," said Gao Mengjiu. "However, if I were managing this, I'd have you push back the deadline for revealing the answer. Give public opinion enough time to ferment—whether people believe it or not, everyone is most interested before they get the final answer. During this time, you can maintain a very high level of hype."

"During tonight's match, you'll still use the 'Ancient Martial Nine Forms.' All sorts of speculation about the match will push this hype to a climax. After that will be the best time for you to reveal the answer."

Gao Mengjiu added, "But your approach is a safe choice. The scenario I mentioned, although it maximizes gains, is predicated on you being able to defeat Aodora."

"With your approach—admitting it suddenly before the match and demonstrating the 'Ancient Martial Nine Forms' right in front of him—even Aodora will be thrown off balance. Your chances of beating him will greatly increase. After all, he is the Alliance's second-best; defeating him would also count as a great achievement."

Chen Gu was stunned, realizing all the twists and turns involved. Then, with a serious expression, he said solemnly to Gao Mengjiu, "Exactly! That's what your old man here planned all along."

Gao Mengjiu cursed, "Get lost! I'll wash up now, and we'll go to the match site in a bit. Keep your private box reserved for me."

After hanging up, Gao Mengjiu, his hair a mess and his face showing hangover fatigue, looked helplessly at Man Suling. "Happy now?"

"Sigh, I spent the whole night entertaining clients, getting drunk for whose sake? Wasn't it all to pull in resources for you guys? And you, you can't even let me sleep peacefully..."

But Man Suling looked at him with disdain. "Last night, President Yao of Kailai Media left at 8:30 p.m. to go home. I'm good friends with President Yao's wife, you know. Then, on the social media platforms of seven or eight new singers, I saw they posted 'party all night' pictures. And guess what? I think I spotted you in them, my oh-so-hardworking and dedicated President Gao!"

Gao Mengjiu's heart tightened. It felt as if his own daughter had caught him red-handed, and his grand, illustrious fatherly image had instantly crumbled...

"HMPH!" Man Suling turned away haughtily, sending him a series of links from the interstellar net. "Besides, as for Chen Gu's latest incident, whether it's a 'little creek' or not, see for yourself."

Gao Mengjiu casually opened the links. He immediately shivered, his gaze turning blank. "My God... I, Ninth Master, have never dealt with an event this big in my entire life!"

But he quickly adapted. I absolutely can't show weakness in front of that idiot Chen Gu! Time for some self-hypnosis: It's just a small event, a tiny creek. I, Ninth Master, can wade through it with my eyes closed!

Can I really wade through it?

Yes, I can. I definitely can. I absolutely can.

I definitely can...

The players from the first six matches had gloomy faces, feeling like they had been thoroughly screwed over.

In the future, before entering any matches, I'll need to make sure I'm not grouped with that guy Chen Gu, they thought. They had fought with all their might for a victory, only to seem "dispensable" in the eyes of the audience.

At this time, the entire audience was already stirred up by that kid. They felt the first six matches were a complete waste of time and were nearly ready to wave their hands and tell the players, "Just finish up and get off the stage!"

After the matches finally ended, they went online only to find no one discussing the contests that had just concluded. Everyone was anticipating the upcoming "Beastly Martial Exhibition."

They were so angry they smashed their personal terminal devices.

Gao Mengjiu, with Man Suling in tow, was late despite rushing. Because of this, the "gorilla" hadn't stopped being nagged by "his little padded jacket" the entire way.

The old man felt utterly miserable. Had his little padded jacket been soaked through with cold water?

As soon as he entered the private box, Marshal Bai challenged him, "You're late for such an important match? You are not a true fan of the Alliance, nor a genuine friend of Chen Gu!"

Gao Mengjiu was rendered speechless.

Alright, this was a real big shot. None of my identities matter in front of him, Gao Mengjiu thought. He slumped sullenly to one side, poured himself a cup of "revival liquor," and drank quietly.

Chapter 455 Crooked and Evil Influences_2

Man Suling beamed as she chatted with Chen Qingyu, engaging in some close girlfriend topics, firmly taking the "family route."

Then, from the corner of her eye, she spotted Bai Xianya sitting quietly and elegantly beside Marshal Bai, wearing a silk evening gown with blue and white porcelain-style embroidery. Her slender, smooth fingers held a champagne flute, displaying undoubted aristocratic grace.

Feeling a significant threat, Man Suling became even more enthusiastic towards Chen Qingyu.

Chen Zili finally managed to invite Yang Yaoyao out, but Yang Yaoyao was accompanied by an annoying third-wheel girlfriend. The three of them got along harmoniously, but Man Suling, an old fox... well, a wily she-wolf of a thousand years, instantly noticed the subtle air of a "bitch" in Yaoyao's friend. She clearly had designs on the "extraordinary" Chen Zili.

"It's started!"

"It's started!"

"It's started!"

On the star internet, these three words began to uniformly flood the screen as the previous six matches "finally" came to an end—the fans had never before been so eager for the matches to conclude swiftly.

In the past, they always felt there weren't enough matches to watch. Today, for the first time, it seemed that having six matches before the main event was simply too many.

Now, the seventh match had finally arrived.

But if you were to ask who was the most frustrated at this moment, it would undoubtedly be Aodora, "the Savage Bear."

As the undisputed "second in command of the Alliance," even in a battle against Boraruz, he was without question one of the highlights. When had he ever been overshadowed in popularity to this extent in a match against someone else?

Now, many had even forgotten that Chen Gu's opponent was the esteemed "second in command of the Alliance." An absolute lack of presence!

He didn't want to be merely Chen Gu's backdrop, but fate had made him an unwilling "prop."

The plan was for both contestants to enter the arena together, after which Chen Gu would stage a little skit before the match, allowing his beast to "perform" for the audience.

However, Aodora didn't show up. The second in command of the Alliance has his pride! Hmph!

While the entire internet was uniformly flooded with the message "It's started!", Xiao Bu Yi finally revived, promptly popping up and making a domineering declaration: "Those who've badmouthed me, line up to apologize later!"

Soon, the comments below were unanimously:

"HEH!"

"HEH!"

"HEH!"

Inside the arena, Chen Gu had already entered with his Combat Rooster. He gave a fist salute to the audience around him and then left the Combat Rooster behind as he himself stepped into the connector.

The entire audience instinctively held their breath, and then the quiet stadium filled with a powerful, stirring melody that instantly resonated with the audience, making their blood pump.

"With pride I face the surging waves, my blood as fiery as the sun's rays..."

As the music played, the Combat Rooster began its routine, its movements precise and fluid, its power generation masterful—truly like a martial arts grandmaster!

The whole audience's eyes went wide, unable to believe the sight before them.

And on the star internet, someone started:

"Holy smokes!"

Then the comments below followed suit:

"Holy smokes!"

"Holy smokes!"

"What the hell!"

"You're wrong, dude above!"

"Holy smokes!"

In the box, the gorilla, Man Suling, and Chen Qingyu jumped to their feet. Compared to the Combat Rooster, the song had shocked them even more.

If anyone from the Mother Planet's era were alive today, they would undoubtedly curse Chen Gu for his shamelessness. Chen Gu, however, had realized long ago that the Mother Planet was destroyed. In the ensuing millennia, a significant civilizational gap had formed, and many cultural achievements from humanity's past had not been passed down.

This included poems, literary masterpieces, music, movies, and more.

So, with a flick of his wrist, a classic was "recreated"!

Gao Mengjiu's voice trembled in disbelief, "Is this sung by Chen Gu?"

Marshal Bai, staring unblinkingly at the Combat Rooster's martial demonstration, rebuked, "Shut up!"

Indeed, it was sung by Chen Gu. He hadn't joined everyone in the box during the few hours before the match; instead, he was fussing over this song.

The Great Actor Chen, originally clueless about music, now possessed the powerful abilities of the Brain Domain Hacker. Every single detail of the song's arrangement was clearly reflected in his mind.

In the Immeasurable Stadium, there wasn't much in the way of music equipment, but the DJ room had some professional gear. With the advanced technology of the era, Chen Gu managed to create the entire song's accompaniment using electronic equipment.

As for Great Actor Chen's singing talent... while he couldn't compare to professionals like Man Suling and Chen Qingyu, he had been known as the "KTV Prince" in a past life. If the investor were a woman, he could have accompanied her from start to finish.

So, singing a song well enough to fool a non-professional audience was not a problem at all.

The Combat Rooster's martial demonstration wasn't even halfway through when many experts had already stated in their online columns: "No doubt about it, it's the 'Ancient Martial Nine Forms.' Chen Gu continues to surprise us."

As the martial demonstration was about to end, the comments on Xiao Bu Yi's column had unanimously become:

"You shallow mortals owe Lord Xiao an apology!"

What? I owe Lord Xiao an apology too? Can't hear it, can't hear it, the wind's too strong up on the mountain, the signal's bad!

Inside the stadium, gasps of amazement and shouts of praise rose continuously. People marveled that someone had actually taught an Energy Gathering Mechanical Species martial techniques. Moreover, the creature was able to employ them proficiently in the match, achieving astonishing results!

This martial demonstration didn't actually take much time. By the end of the song, the Combat Rooster had just finished performing, closing with a flourish that exuded coolness—adhering to the long-standing style of Great Actor Chen: no matter what, it had to be cool.

Chapter 456 Crooked and Evil Influences_3

Cheers from the crowd!

The host stepped onto the stage, ready to kick off the match, but his microphone was consistently drowned out by the roaring cheers. He tried to start several times, only to be forced into a wry smile each time and pause.

It wasn't until seven or eight minutes later that the audience's excitement finally subsided, and the match was able to begin smoothly.

But in Chen Gu's box, Marshal Bai slammed down a large glass of strong liquor, thumping the glass onto the table before him. "The match is already over. Aodora winning? Pigs might fly!"

And the outcome was just as Marshal Bai had predicted. Aodora was completely overwhelmed. Combat Rooster, already extremely strong, had become a bug in the entire Behemoth Alliance after adopting the 'Ancient Martial Arts Nine Styles' tailored for behemoths. Consequently, Aodora, outmatched in every aspect, only lasted ten minutes before admitting defeat.

Such a result surprised no one; instead, it seemed utterly expected. Aodora was so frustrated he couldn't utter a word. I am the second strongest in the Alliance! And you're not surprised by this huge upset?

Inside Immeasurable Stadium, the cheers nearly lifted the giant dome, yet Chen Gu had no time to savor this moment of glory. He hurried to his box, greeted Marshal Bai and the others, roughly explained the situation, and then announced his immediate departure back to the base.

Marshal Bai was especially dissatisfied. "A day like today is worth a three-day bender!"

"The Bureau of Mystic Security mistreats talented people and is short-sighted!"

"Chen Gu, turn against them and come to our military. I have a position for you in the Central Operations Room!"

Gao Mengjiu also tried to hold onto Chen Gu to talk about the song from earlier, but Chen Gu simply couldn't stay, rushing off in a hurry.

Because time was tight, Chen Gu didn't bother with his usual concealment efforts. He left the truck at the stadium, placed Combat Rooster into the Dimensional Cage Ring, and then sped off to the base in the "Palace on Ground Model 4."

After a rush, he made it back within the time frame set by Liang He.

Back at the base, Liang He sat in his room, watching the surveillance feed as Chen Gu's car entered the base. He then glanced at the time. Chen Gu's punctual return took away his excuse to blow up, making him feel even worse.

Chen Gu returned to his room and spent two whole hours reading comments praising him on the Stellar Net before he went to sleep contentedly.

「 」

The next day, when Chen Gu saw Chu Zheng at the training field, the girl was pouting, but not at Chen Gu. "Decades from now, people will consider last night a classic moment recorded in the Alliance's history books! I should have been by your side, Instructor, experiencing it all, but because of Liang He, I ended up snacking in front of the live stream all evening..."

"With that kind of attitude, it's no wonder he's ostracized and friendless at the Bureau." It was apparent Chu Zheng had also heard some rumors about Liang He.

Chen Gu smiled, soothing her. "Liang He's intentions are good; he's also looking out for your safety. The harder you train, the sooner you'll gain strong abilities, and the sooner you'll achieve your freedom. Then, you won't be restricted by anyone and can do anything you like."

Chu Zheng nodded vigorously, like a pecking chick. "You're right, Instructor."

While Chen Gu was making excuses for Liang He, Liang He himself sat in his office with a dark expression. During a routine patrol in the base earlier, he had overheard two researchers gossiping about him. They called him arrogant, narrow-minded, vengeful...

The researchers were already miserable dealing with Dr. Meng Ji; now with Liang He added to the mix, their misery had doubled, becoming almost unbearable.

Liang He pondered. Who leaked the truth? No, who's been slandering me behind my back?

He zeroed in on Chen Gu as the prime suspect. His reasoning was twofold. First: I can't stand Chen Gu, and I'm sure he feels the same way about me. If it were me, I would also do everything possible to attack someone I find 'disagreeable.'

Second: Chen Gu has substantial connections at headquarters; he'd have ways to catch wind of these whispers. As for these researchers being from headquarters originally... they're 'too low-level.' They shouldn't be qualified to hear rumors about me.

His bias led him to completely overlook the possibility that the researchers themselves, despite being from headquarters, could have spread the rumors.

After "careful consideration," Liang He snickered coldly to himself. He searched for news about Chen Gu on the Stellar Net, and a plan began to take shape in his mind.

「...」

Chu Zheng indeed trained very hard today. She became more adept at controlling the skills for her two professions. Chen Gu was pleased; it wouldn't be long before she was ready to graduate.

Approaching noon, Orangutan called him. "I've pushed back the endorsement deal again. The timing is not right yet. Your value will increase even more. Signing now would be a loss. After all, you have me, a top-notch agent working for you!"

Chen Gu asked him seriously, "Do you have a rare disease called 'I Die If I Don't Brag'?"

For once, Orangutan didn't argue. Instead, with a somewhat ingratiating tone, he asked, "The song Combat Rooster used during the demonstration yesterday, did you write it?"

Chen Gu wasn't that shameless and plainly said, "No, that should be a classic song from the Mother Planet era. I suppose you could say I compiled and revived it."

"It doesn't matter," Orangutan said. "Now the song is yours! Let me tell you, Man Suling really likes it. Since you're not planning to make a career in music, sign an authorization agreement. Let her sing it."

Chapter 457 Crooked and Evil Influences_4

Chen Gu cursed, "You're even trying to fleece your own dad?"

Gorilla gave a few dry laughs. "How about a friendship discount then?"

"In your dreams!" Chen Gu said. "If you want that song, no problem, but pay me the standard royalty fees, fair and square."

Gorilla replied helplessly, "You're so rich, and yet you care about this little bit of money?"

Chen Gu snorted. "You know I have plenty of places to spend money."

"Alright, I'll have to discuss this with the others in the company."

After hanging up, Chen Gu went online to check. Sure enough, classics always possess a powerful magic; that song, "A Man Should Strengthen Himself," had also blown up online, rapidly becoming the top background music choice for giant beast battle videos.

By that time, the buzz from last night's competition, the giant beast combat skills, and the song had all fermented together, pushing Chen Gu's fame to new heights.

Moreover, Chen Gu found a link. On the largest social platform of the era, someone had dug up the fact that Chen Gu was a high school valedictorian, leading countless people to wail in the comments: Feeling the pain of being crushed by a genius!

Good looks, ability, and they're extra hard-working—these kinds of people should all be burned! Do they even leave a chance for others to live?

Chen Gu felt that his entire day would be cheerful.

He was asking Gorilla for money because the company was surely not owned by Gorilla alone. It was no problem for his silly friends to take advantage of him, but why should the other shareholders of the company benefit as well?

The price should be what it is; business is business. As for him and Gorilla, he would help his silly friend when it came to promotions.

For Gao Mengjiu, things were a bit fantastical. Gao Mengjiu was Chen Gu's manager, and Chen Gu's external contacts were almost entirely through him.

Many record companies that wanted this song had to contact Gao Mengjiu first.

Gao Mengjiu himself also wanted the song. In the span of just one day, he had received dozens of phone calls from competitors looking to buy it, driving the price higher and higher.

Gorilla urgently convened a meeting. After internal discussions within the company, Gorilla decided to offer Chen Gu a very high price: 1,200 Starshields!

It was an astronomical price in the industry, surpassing all other companies' offers.

Then, in the evening, Gorilla directly wired the money into Chen Gu's account. He followed up with a blunt and direct phone call, "Kneel down! Daddy's going to smash you to death with money!"

Chen Gu laughed and obediently said, "Okay."

Gorilla didn't need to tell Chen Gu all the "twists and turns" of what happened in between, nor did Chen Gu want to know. Between silly friends, there was this kind of trust and understanding.

But, feeling good, Chen Gu casually said something that he would later regret terribly. "A Man Should Strengthen Himself isn't suitable for Man Suling. I've also sorted through some classic songs from the Home Planet era, and some of them would fit her. I'll pick one out for you later."

After discussing this with Gorilla, it was also time for Chu Zheng's training session. The instructor was calling the flat-chested girl over to announce the end when, suddenly, a DING-DONG notification sound rang out. Chen Gu casually pulled it open and got such a shock that he hurriedly closed it again.

You little she-wolf, getting bolder and bolder!

Man Suling had sent him an extremely provocative photo. The top had a very low neckline, and the bottoms were cut very high! Although nothing was explicitly exposed, the pose was full of temptation.

Chen Gu's heart began to pound fiercely. I wonder where all that extra blood being pumped is going.

Then he suddenly noticed Chu Zheng looked somewhat downcast. After saying something to the instructor, she walked away, her spirits drooping.

She had caught a glimpse of that photo. Comparing herself to the future queen of pop, Chu Zheng felt a bitter sense of inadequacy. She looked down, only to see her own ankles!

Feeling a little guilty, Chen Gu returned to his room, sticking close to the walls all the way. He couldn't help but open the photo again and critically reviewed it with an artistic and critical eye for several minutes.

Then he used his hacking skills to hide the photo deep within his email.

Just then, DING-DONG, DING-DONG, DING-DONG! A series of notification sounds rang out, showing the sender was Man Suling. Chen Gu swallowed and gritted his teeth. Looks like I need to intensify my criticism to thoroughly wipe out this crooked influence in the entertainment industry!

Then, with a righteous stance, he opened the messages.

Chapter 458 Emergency Conscription

Liang He's plan to expand the patrol area, install detection probes, and establish a large early-warning zone proceeded smoothly. Three days later, all the early-warning probes were operational.

On that same day, Chen Gu observed Chu Zheng. For some unknown reason, she had recently become exceptionally determined and diligent. He watched her smoothly switch between two professions and release four skills in succession, then said with satisfaction, "Chu Zheng, you can graduate now."

Chu Zheng, however, didn't feel much excitement. She asked, "Does that mean your task as my instructor is over?"

Chen Gu smiled and nodded, finally relieved. But to be considerate of the girl's feelings, he said, "We are colleagues at the Bureau of Mystic Security. There will be plenty of opportunities to meet in the future."

Chu Zheng nodded seriously. "Definitely."

After being awestruck by the superstar's grandeur that day, the girl had returned to her room. Like a little hamster, she hid under her blanket, nibbling on snacks all night. Finally, she understood her advantage: she was a dual-career professional. As long as she matured quickly, she would undoubtedly be able to "add points" for herself.

Chen Gu reported Chu Zheng's "graduation" to Dr. Meng Ji and then went to bid farewell to Liang He. His mission on this project could finally come to a close.

Unexpectedly, however, Liang He's expression turned stern, and he said gravely, "During this period, no one is allowed to leave the base without permission!"

"Our early-warning probes detected abnormal activity early this morning. I suspect Star State spies!"

Chen Gu frowned. "The Empire just suffered a major setback here; the Star State must have heard something about it. How dare they come?"

Liang He argued with conviction, "Couldn't the Star State do the exact opposite? Exploit that kind of thinking to catch us off guard?"

"Luckily, I'm in charge of the base now. If it were you, the Star State would probably have succeeded."

Chen Gu was annoyed by his disdain. However, he reasoned that once Liang He confirmed everything was safe and lifted the ban after some time, he would be able to leave the base. Therefore, there was really no need to argue with such a narrow-minded person at this final juncture.

He turned and left without a word.

On the way, he received a call from Ken. "Find some time in the next few days; I've arranged a very important interview for you. Take advantage of your current popularity; you need to maintain your visibility."

Chen Gu asked, "When? Today definitely won't work; I can't leave now."

Ken, also an advisor for the Bureau of Mystic Security, didn't press further. "Today or tomorrow would be best. If today doesn't work, I'll arrange it for tomorrow."

Chen Gu thought about Liang He's temperament and shook his head. "Forget it. Don't arrange anything for now."

Liang He definitely wouldn't relent in just one day.

Ken complained, "Now is the best opportunity! Many stars might not get such a good chance in their entire lifetime. Status is intangible but real. If you miss this opportunity, you might not only stagnate but even regress..."

Chen Gu gave a wry smile. "I'll try to think of a way then." He still didn't dare to give Ken a definitive refusal.

However, what Chen Gu hadn't expected was that Liang He declared the entire base to be in a state of combat readiness. Two days passed quickly, yet there was still no sign of this status being lifted.

Liang He remained adamant, arguing that an early-warning probe had indeed sent back an abnormal signal.

The two-day lockdown meant no one could leave or enter the base. Without supplies, they could only eat the nutrient paste produced by the base's material synthesis machines—which, to put it mildly, was a far cry from their previous meals in terms of taste.

Although the base wasn't exactly seething with complaints yet, people were quite dissatisfied.

Nearly everyone could see that while Liang He was capable and strict, his strictness was often not entirely for the public good but rather targeted at people or things he disliked.

This wasn't just affecting Chen Gu. Liang He and Dr. Meng Ji had already argued in the office several times.

By the third day, with Liang He showing no intention of lifting the state of combat readiness, Chen Gu began to feel that something was amiss.

His next match was scheduled for the following day. Could Liang He be intending to keep him trapped in the base, deliberately making him miss it?

With an undefeated record, he was at the top of the individual competition leaderboard, and his prospects looked very promising.

Although team competitions traditionally held more weight than individual ones in the Alliance, for a newcomer like him, missing a match due to Liang He's obstruction and having his undefeated streak broken would be a real shame—not to mention infuriating!

Putting the entire base on combat readiness because of a single early-warning probe report is, to say the least, an overreaction.

After three days on high alert without so much as a rustle, even the most cautious person should consider it sufficient.

Liang He is indeed not an easy person to get along with, but deliberately targeting me like this seems somewhat unnecessary...

Early-warning probes were only sensory detectors; they didn't transmit audio or visual feedback. Certain animals in unusual postures, such as apes, orangutans, or even a large lizard rearing up to run, could trigger a report from the probe.

Moreover, an isolated report like this, uncorroborated by other probes, had a greater than ninety-nine percent probability of being a false alarm.

Chen Gu decided to wait a bit longer. But by that evening, Liang He had still not lifted the base's state of combat readiness.

Unable to sit still any longer, Chen Gu went to find Liang He. "Your Excellency, I have a match tomorrow evening. I've come to request leave; please permit me to go out tomorrow at noon."

Chapter 459 427 Emergency Conscription_2

He still fulfilled his duty as a subordinate, treating his superior with respect and politeness. However, upon hearing him, Liang He immediately stood up and dashed over to Chen Gu, like an enraged lion. "What did you say? At a time like this, you still think of going out because of some damn contest? You're disregarding the safety of the base, caring only for your petty personal interests!"

"We are in a state of combat readiness; no one is to leave the base! This state of readiness will continue until the cause behind the probe's reports is determined!"

"If you go out without permission, it is insubordination and disrespect! As a special agent of the Bureau of Mystic Security, you know full well the consequences!"

"Now get out of my office! I don't want to hear another word related to taking leave!"

Chen Gu turned and left.

Exiting Liang He's office, Chen Gu came face to face with Dr. Meng Ji, who was cursing angrily, "Three days and no supplies can get in! Volunteers can't get enough training resources, their progress is extremely slow, severely affecting the project's schedule! What the hell does this bastard think he's doing!"

Chen Gu wanted to greet the doctor, but Dr. Meng Ji, seething with anger, brushed past him, pushed open the office door, and soon after, the sounds of an argument echoed from within.

Chen Gu's eyes were deep and dark as he wondered to himself, Yeah, what exactly is Liang He trying to do?

「...」

At eleven o'clock at night, Chen Gu quietly left his room. It didn't take long before he arrived at an empty, unoccupied dormitory.

Chen Gu turned the knob and entered, sitting down against a wall, then overlaid Isabella Wu's memories onto himself.

In the dormitory next door lived Arlington, a senior special agent Liang He had brought from headquarters. He had been with Liang He for many years and had accompanied him to the special prison when Liang He was "exiled" there.

When Liang He made his "comeback," he brought Arlington back with him as well.

Arlington was Liang He's true confidant and, being at the Fourth Energy Level, was someone Chen Gu could handle.

Chen Gu easily used his Brain Domain Hacker abilities to infiltrate Arlington's brain, beginning the search for memories related to the incident.

It wasn't long before Chen Gu slowly withdrew his "mental tentacles" and let go of Isabella Wu's memories. He gritted his teeth. I really did think too highly of people. People like Liang He think differently than normal people; what others can't bring themselves to do, he considers perfectly justifiable!

In Arlington's memories, there was a section detailing their collusion. He and Liang He had fabricated the probe reports, using this as grounds to declare the base in a state of combat readiness.

During this process, Liang He had been very clear in telling Arlington that he wanted to "teach" Chen Gu a lesson.

Chen Gu returned to his room quietly, but the situation before him had become complicated.

The intelligence he obtained using his Brain Domain Hacker abilities could not be presented as evidence to Aviloya.

Moreover, using his professional skills to secretly investigate his colleague was misconduct. This was even considered taboo within the Bureau of Mystic Security.

If he told Aviloya about it, Valkyrie would likely deal with him, Chen Gu, first, rather than Liang He and Arlington.

But if he let someone as despicable and shameless as Liang He interrupt his winning streak, he wouldn't be Chen Gu anymore.

Although it was getting late, Chen Gu still called Bai Yunpeng.

Bai Yunpeng was excited. "Chen Gu, tomorrow you're facing 'Cataclysm' Memphisto; I'll be there to cheer you on!"

Chen Gu said, "It's precisely because of this matter that I need Marshal Bai's help."

He didn't hide anything from Bai Yunpeng. He informed him that he had used his Brain Domain Hacker abilities to investigate Arlington. Then, he asked Marshal Bai to use military channels to submit a "wartime" application to the Bureau of Mystic Security for his emergency requisition.

Bai Yunpeng pondered for a while. "While this could get you out, if you show up at the competition tomorrow night, Liang He will definitely seize on it..."

Chen Gu said, "I know this puts Marshal Bai in a difficult position..."

Bai Yunpeng cut him off. "I'm not in the slightest bit troubled. What can Aviloya do to me? It's you I'm worried about. If I were you, I would just leave the Bureau of Mystic Security and come to the Central Operations Room." He was revisiting an old suggestion.

And this time, Chen Gu didn't refuse outright. "If things really come to that, I'll have no choice but to seek refuge with Marshal Bai."

"Hahaha!" Bai Yunpeng laughed heartily. "Alright then, just wait for my good news."

「...」

The next morning, a convoy of heavy armored vehicles dashed up to the base, and elite warriors clad in light Mecha quickly disembarked.

A few warriors were visibly excited. "Soon, we're going to meet His Excellency 'Volunteer Spirit', right?"

"He's a legend! I must get his autograph later."

"Should I get him to sign 'Volunteer Spirit' or 'Fist of Justice'?"

The officer in charge of the team was a colonel, not particularly tall but with the seasoned air of a battle-hardened warrior. He and his men stood at the entrance of the base. Displaying his electronic authorization certificate to the surveillance camera, he then loudly declared, "This is a military operation. We urgently require Chen Gu. Any delay or obstruction will be considered treason!"

Liang He was in his office. He had just gotten up when he received a call from Aviloya. The Director-General informed him of this development, to which Liang He immediately objected, "Such a sudden influx of soldiers at this time! If the spies from the Star State really are outside, we'd be alerting them!"

Chapter 460 Emergency Conscription_3

Aviloya coldly said to him, "This is a military draft order. Even I cannot defy it."

After a pause, the Director said, "Hand Chen Gu over to them."

The call had come just thirty minutes prior. This meant the military's convoy had already departed before Liang He even received the call—such was their confidence and overbearing nature.

Liang He felt unbearably stifled, but seeing that the colonel had begun to time him, he could only press the button to open the door.

The soldiers headed straight for Chen Gu's location. Liang He, accompanied by Arlington, intercepted them. "I need to check the draft order!"

The colonel shoved the electronic authorization order in his face. Liang He scrutinized it three times, looking for procedural or formatting flaws, but the military personnel were more adept at this than he was; it was truly flawless.

The colonel asked curtly, "Have you seen it clearly? This is an urgent military draft. I will report truthfully that you deliberately checked the draft order twice, raising suspicion of intentional delay. This will be recorded in the military's database. As a high Energy Level careerist, your assessment in the military's database will be marked [Untrustworthy]!"

Liang He was stunned and then felt even more depressed.

The Bureau of Mystic Security was fully in charge of careerists and Mutants within the Confederation. However, in any nation, whether during the Mother Planet era or the current interstellar era, the military always had its own intelligence system, and the same was true regarding careerists. For high Energy Level careerists, it was well-known that the military maintained a database. But just because I looked at the draft order one extra time today, I've become [Untrustworthy]?

Has the military always been so direct and domineering?

Although it seemed to have no immediate effect on me, this was a label from the military nonetheless. Should war tensions rise someday, this designation could determine my fate!

He bristled and asked, "What military intelligence is so urgent that you've come to pick someone up this early in the morning?"

The colonel immediately adopted a "vigilant" expression and said even more impolitely, "This is a top-secret military matter, and you don't have the clearance to know! Furthermore, I am now even more suspicious that you are attempting to probe into military secrets! Your label should be downgraded from [Untrustworthy] to [Highly Suspicious]."

He silently handed the draft order back to the colonel and walked away without a word.

Moments later, the convoy left the base with Chen Gu. He casually carried a small bag containing all his personal belongings, making it clear he had no intention of returning.

In the office, Arlington watched Chen Gu get into the vehicle and drive away on the surveillance feed. He couldn't help but ask Liang He, "Your Excellency, what... what do we do next?"

Liang He's face was ashen with anger. He had already crushed a handprint into the alloy table in front of him!

Inside the vehicle, the colonel, who had been so serious in front of Liang He, suddenly smiled. "Your Excellency [Volunteer Spirit], I finally have the honor of meeting you! My younger brother was among those you rescued in that space battle. My father has always wanted me to find an opportunity to thank you in person, so when Marshal Bai mentioned this mission, I immediately volunteered."

It dawned on Chen Gu. He replied with a wry smile, "I've been thoroughly schemed against by some petty individuals this time. My hand was forced, and I apologize for the trouble this has caused everyone."

"No trouble at all, no trouble at all!" the warriors chimed in. "Being able to help Your Excellency is something we can boast about for the rest of our lives!"

"Could you sign an autograph for me?"

Chen Gu took the notebook. "No problem. But how could an autograph possibly be enough? Would you all like to come to the match tonight?"

The warriors were ecstatic. "Really? Can we?"

"Tonight's match is in high demand; it's likely impossible to get tickets now. We shouldn't trouble His Excellency," the colonel chided his subordinates.

Chen Gu smiled. "I'll have a private box. Marshal Bai will be there too. Let's all go together."

The colonel was clearly tempted but also a little hesitant. The warriors, however, couldn't contain their excitement and urged him, "Boss, His Excellency has extended such a kind invitation! It would be rather ungracious to refuse."

"Exactly! Not going would be like slighting His Excellency!"

The colonel gave a wry smile. "Alright then..."

"Oh yeah!" The warriors cheered.

Arlington had been keeping an eye on the Alliance's official website.

Tonight's match was being promoted with Chen Gu as a highlight.

His opponent tonight was also a rookie, a relatively rare female contestant named Shangguan Na. Apart from Chen Gu, she was the most outstanding performer among this year's rookies, with a personal match record of six wins and three losses, ranking her thirty-first.

Usually, rookies didn't participate in individual matches in their first year; they were expected to gain experience in club team matches first, as Mao Yisheng was currently doing.

Being a wildcard contestant without a club, Chen Gu focused on individual matches.

However, Shangguan Na was an exception. There were rumors of her extraordinary background, which allowed her to "do as she pleased" within her club.

But Shangguan Na's tenacity in battle was remarkable. Most of the matches she won were hard-fought struggles lasting over thirty minutes, where she managed to grind out a victory against her opponents.

After each match, the fees for her treatments were astronomical.

Coupled with her cool and elegant demeanor, outstanding looks, tall stature, and long legs, Shangguan Na had already become a goddess in the hearts of many otaku fans.