

Full Time 501

Chapter 501: The Secret Prison of Pu Mountain

For Professionals of the same Energy Level, the one with stronger spiritual power could activate their professional skills in less time, and the power of their skills would also be greater.

Suddenly, Chen Gu stopped. I ate a No. 4 Ore Crystal before, and my body didn't have any adverse reaction. This time, I ate both a No. 4 Ore Crystal and raw silicon earth—which means the raw silicon earth is the culprit behind my extreme discomfort! But that's not the main point. The key issue is that after eating the No. 4 Ore Crystal last time, I didn't notice a significant increase in my spiritual power. This suggests the enhancement effect was brought about by the raw silicon earth. The mimetic spacecraft Sacred Mountain also frequently flew to mining areas that produced raw silicon earth. True Knowledge Sin must really want the raw silicon earth on this planet!

Chen Gu exclaimed, "True Knowledge Sin has a method to enhance Professionals' spiritual power with raw silicon earth!"

No doubt they don't eat it directly like I did...

Chen Gu didn't even bother washing up. He pushed the door open, rushed straight out, and barged directly into Chen Jixian's room. He discovered Gong Shuxu and Marcus were also there. Before the three men, Director-General Aviloya stood on the holographic call.

Gong Shuxu said, "You've come at the right time. We were about to send someone to call for you. The Director-General has important matters to inform us."

I also have very important matters to report, Chen Gu thought, but Aviloya had already started speaking. "Just fifteen minutes ago, the Prophet Wei Jiangqi of True Knowledge Sin escaped from prison!" She paused for emphasis, then continued, "Our special forces found traces of the Mutant Insect Race in the prison he escaped from!"

Several people were shocked. "What?!"

Chen Gu's body trembled slightly. "I understand. It's Wei Jiangqi—he needs this raw silicon earth."

The others, including Aviloya, cast puzzled looks at him. Chen Gu quickly shared his conjectures, and everyone's expression turned grave.

Chen Gu quickly added, "I've actually always suspected that even though Wei Jiangqi was held captive by us, he could still contact the outside world and secretly command all of True Knowledge Sin's operations. For example, when he was confined in Wuzhaoyin City's Second Prison, its defense forces weren't very strong. Any Angel Envoy could have stormed in and rescued him."

Aviloya glared at him fiercely. The outsiders present, except for Chen Jixian, didn't understand why.

Aviloya spoke slowly. "Since Wuzhaoyin City's Second Prison was attacked, our Bureau of Mystic Security also vaguely realized this. This resulted in constant prison transfers for Wei Jiangqi, with the security level getting higher and higher. We analyzed that the recent drastic reduction in True Knowledge Sin's activities was likely due to these actions, which completely severed Wei Jiangqi's contact with the outside world, leaving True Knowledge Sin without a leader."

Gong Shuxu asked in confusion, "But how did True Knowledge Sin establish a relationship with the Mutant Insect Race? And how did those evil bugs infiltrate human society?"

Marcus didn't even know of the Mutant Insect Race's existence, but he understood this wasn't the time to ask.

Chen Gu immediately said, "I request to participate in the investigation of Wei Jiangqi's prison escape!"

Aviloya nodded slowly. "I was intending to entrust it to you anyway. You and Wei Jiangqi were previously detained in the same prison, and you and Gong Shuxu witnessed the birth of the Mutant Insect Race firsthand. You two are the most suitable for this task."

Marcus was startled and sneakily observed Chen Gu. This kid has been to prison? Hmm, seems like there's a story here.

The mature and cautious Gong Shuxu asked, "Then how will we wrap up the situation on this planet?"

Aviloya had already made plans. "Those long-headed people... named Colin, right? Contact their family and let their family handle it themselves."

She continued, "Before that, use the equipment at the base to erase all their memories regarding the great true god."

"Understood," Gong Shuxu acknowledged.

For Colin and the others, it was essentially a death sentence. Those royals, who only knew pleasure, would surely panic and kill them to show loyalty to the Confederation.

Aviloya added, "As for matters concerning the great true god... Chen Gu's previous plan is feasible."

She clearly spoke with great reluctance, loath to utter any words that might be perceived as acknowledging Chen Gu.

"Chen Gu, leave your bio-muscle exoskeleton here," Aviloya continued. "I will arrange for other special agents to take over the remaining tasks. The Confederation will strongly support this plan. It won't be long before this planet turns into a society where theocratic authority reigns supreme over royal power."

After a pause, she added, "The Bureau will find a way to improve the conditions for those low-ranking believers."

Chen Gu didn't speak but approved of the arrangement.

In the eyes of all the believers and followers, the image of the Prophet was actually that of Chen Gu's bio-muscle exoskeleton. Whether Chen Gu was there or not didn't matter much.

The special agents taking over are Professionals. And who among them wouldn't know how to use their professional skills to put on a show?

"The people taking over for you will arrive in seven hours, so you can come back early," said Aviloya. "Head directly to Falthur VIII. There's a Pumoya secret prison there where Wei Jiangqi was previously confined."

"Understood!" everyone replied in unison.

After Aviloya finished delivering the mission, her holographic image vanished, and the communication was cut off.

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After a brief silence, Gong Shuxu was the first to ask, "Why is Wei Jiangqi so willingly staying in the Confederation's prison?"

"He had numerous opportunities to escape before but chose not to; why does he now want to flee?"

Chen Jixian kept his eyelids drooped and said nothing. Chen Gu thought for a moment, speculating. Maybe he needed to find something in prison, or perhaps he was using the Confederation's prison as a form of protection, hiding from some powerful enemies. "In any case," he said, "let's first head to the Poshan secret prison and see for ourselves. Speculating here could lead us completely astray."

Just twenty minutes later, a spaceship lifted off from the base. After accelerating to escape the planet's atmosphere, it then engaged its main engines and shot into the Star Sea at maximum speed.

After sixteen hours of interstellar travel, Chen Gu and their group landed their spaceship on this desolate planet.

No sooner had they landed than Chen Gu's phone suddenly rang, this time through an encrypted military channel.

Bai Yunpeng solemnly informed him, "The Mutant Insect Race just raided one of our research bases and stole three experimental 'Nebula Bombs'!"

Chen Jixian was the first to react, his face changing color. As a military man, he was well aware of the power of the secret military weapon, the 'Nebula Bomb'—a kind of antimatter bomb with annihilation capabilities strong enough to utterly destroy an entire nebula!

This was a weapon of mass destruction in the interstellar age. Nuclear bombs were now even standard issue for ordinary warriors, but due to their prohibitive cost, they were only used by special mission forces and not widely distributed.

Chen Gu, unable to comprehend, asked, "How could this have happened? How could such a weapon be stolen so easily?"

Everyone knew the importance and danger of such unconventional and potent weaponry. The military guarded it under strict secrecy and with heavy protection. Contingency plans were in place, ensuring a swift response to any attack.

Such weapons absolutely could not be stolen as effortlessly as portrayed in literature and films.

Bai Yunpeng said disheartenedly, "There was a traitor inside the research base—several deep-cover Mutants. They coordinated with the Mutant Insect Race, swiftly breached the facility, seized the weapons, and fled."

He continued, "Aviloya and I have shared information, and we know the Mutant Insect Race helped Wei Jiangqi escape. Therefore, it's highly probable that True Knowledge Sin is also involved in the theft of the Nebula Bombs. You should understand the dire consequences if weapons like these fall into their hands!

"We must share information promptly, capture Wei Jiangqi before True Knowledge Sin acts, and retrieve the Nebula Bombs!"

"Alright!" Chen Gu immediately agreed.

This news weighed heavily on everyone's hearts. The joy they had felt from their success on the Sparta No.11 planet dissipated in an instant.

The environment of the Farseer VIII planet, where the Poshan secret prison was located, was extremely harsh. Everyone had to wear light individual Mecha suits for protection to move freely on the planet's surface.

As they stepped out of the spacecraft, a squad of guards already in light Mechas awaited them. The one in charge stepped forward, "Greetings, I am Hou Yinan, the warden of Poshan secret prison, assigned to meet you all!"

The site where the spacecraft landed was a deserted, unmanned base, not inside the prison—obviously a security measure taken by the prison authorities.

Everyone boarded Hou Yinan's vehicle. The warden said with utter helplessness, "This time... we really are innocent."

He quickly added, "It's not that I'm trying to shirk responsibility. You'll understand once you see for yourselves."

Thirty minutes later, they arrived at the Poshan secret prison. After passing through several stringent security checks, they finally entered the special jailhouse, constructed hundreds of meters underground and almost inescapable.

Gong Shuxu stepped forward to ask, "Exactly how did Wei Jiangqi manage to escape?"

Hou Yinan answered earnestly, "This prison incarcerates many special criminals. Many, like Wei Jiangqi, are not allowed any contact with others.

"Including Wei Jiangqi, there are seven inmates whose identities even I, the warden, do not know.

"The cells where the prisoners are kept are constructed with special technological materials designed to shield against almost all professionals' abilities.

"Moreover, the cells are filled with surveillance cameras, even under the beds."

Hou Yinan said helplessly, "But we really don't know what went wrong. Jiang Qi simply strolled out as if it were nothing."

The group was stunned. Before they could ask more, Hou Yinan had already activated a holographic projection. "Let me show you the entire process," he said.

On the screen was a hallway between cells. Guards, in pairs, performed their routine inspections, peering through finger-sized observation holes to check on the condition of each inmate in their cells.

Everything appeared normal until they reached Wei Jiangqi's cell. There, for some reason, the guards inexplicably opened his cell, allowed Jiang Qi to walk out, and then unshackled him from the highest level of security restraints.

Seeing this, Marcus couldn't help but exclaim, "It's not the work of a professional's abilities! How exactly did he do this?"

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Hou Yinan was utterly unable to answer the question; he himself was completely baffled.

Wei Jiangqi stretched his limbs a bit and then simply walked out. He paused by one of the cells, and two prison guards immediately stepped forward, unlocked it, and let out another prisoner.

Hou Yinan said, "This person is an Angel Envoy of True Knowledge Sin, sent here not long ago. His name is Diopolis."

Chen Gu recognized him at once. "He's one of the group that attacked Marshal Bai... Now I understand!" He realized the attack on Marshal Bai, which had seemed like a frenzied, all-or-nothing gamble by True Knowledge Sin, was actually intended to locate Wei Jiangqi's place of detention.

On the screen, Diopolis fervently followed Wei Jiangqi. With his hands clasped behind his back, Wei Jiangqi walked out proudly. Along the way, they passed through numerous security checkpoints, but the guards at these posts, as if under a spell, helped him open the passages. And so, Wei Jiangqi swaggered out of the Pu Mountain secret prison!

Chu Zheng couldn't believe it. "Just like that... he escaped?"

Chen Gu immediately said, "Contact headquarters. I need the detention status of all True Knowledge Sin participants from the attack on Marshal Bai."

Hou Yinan promptly sent over a document. "It's already prepared."

The attackers themselves were highly dangerous, and the prisons where they were detained had high security levels. However, almost all of them began causing trouble shortly after incarceration, and all incidents were serious. Consequently, per prison regulations, they were transferred to facilities with even tighter security. Their assessed danger levels rose, and the prisons they were transferred to became increasingly covert. The same had happened with Diopolis.

Chen Gu affirmed his earlier judgment. "These people were indeed looking for Wei Jiangqi... But if Wei Jiangqi allowed himself to be found by the Confederation and imprisoned, then he must have anticipated this situation. What could possibly be the reason he took such a risk?"

Gong Shuxu said to Hou Yinan, "We need to talk to all the involved prison guards."

Hou Yinan replied with a wry smile, "They've been detained ever since the incident. But I'm afraid you'll be disappointed; they genuinely can't tell you anything." He stood up. "Come on, I'll take you there."

There were twenty-six prison guards involved in total. Even with all members of the special operations team conducting separate interrogations, it took over an hour. The outcome was just as Hou Yinan had predicted.

None of the prison guards had any idea what had happened. They possessed clear memories of the events: they recalled seeing themselves release Wei Jiangqi and Diopolis. Yet, at that moment, they were completely unaware of what they were doing. They just felt it was all perfectly natural! Afterward, when they suddenly came to their senses, they were filled with immense regret but still couldn't understand why they had acted that way.

Everyone regrouped to discuss. "It's some form of mental control," was the consensus.

Chen Gu said, "Remember the raw silicon soil on Planet Falset VIII? I speculate that True Knowledge Sin wanted to control the Long-headed People to mine it for them, likely because they've mastered some secret technique that uses this soil to enhance spiritual power."

"The techniques for using spiritual power employed by Long-headed People like Colin, I suspect, were taught by True Knowledge Sin—or quite possibly by Wei Jiangqi himself."

"That mimic spacecraft arrived at Planet Falset VIII decades ago."

"Wei Jiangqi's mental control is likely different from the abilities of us Professionals, which is why it could bypass the security shackles."

The crowd nodded in agreement. Chen Gu then said to Hou Yanan, "Take us to their cells for a look."

Inside the cells of the two men, special agents from the Bureau of Mystic Security, having arrived earlier, had already conducted a technical examination. Faint "lines"—traces left by Mutant contamination—were clearly visible in some hidden corners.

"They're very tiny Mutant Insect Race bugs," Gong Shuxu sighed. "The last time we saw Boles, the Mutant Insect Race under his command still consisted of those enormous Alien Insect Race creatures. In this short time, they've already bred these minuscule bugs, which are incredibly hard to guard against. Given time, the harm caused by this traitor could surpass that of the Alien Insect Race itself!"

Chen Gu tracked these traces leading outside. In many places, the path followed the prison's internal piping, completely inaccessible to humans but easily traversed by those tiny bugs.

He mapped out the entire route taken by the bugs. "These bugs left the prison twice and returned both times."

Hou Yinan said helplessly, "The surface environment of this planet is extremely harsh, with frequent, terrible storms. Any traces of the bugs outside the prison would have been obliterated long ago, making them untraceable."

Chen Gu continued his analysis, "If Wei Jiangqi had the ability to escape on his own, he would have done so long ago, without waiting for Diopolis and his group."

"And for Diopolis and his group to seek out Wei Jiangqi—they must have needed to deliver something to him. The first time the Mutant bugs left the prison, they were likely transmitting a message: Wei Jiangqi has been found."

He inquired of Hou Yinan, "The prison has a jamming system, doesn't it?"

"Very comprehensive," Hou Yinan confirmed. "Any form of communication would be intercepted and detected."

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"So, the bug needs to come out first to pass on the message. Then, someone is dispatched to bring that item over. The bug emerges a second time, collects the item, and delivers it back to Wei Jiangqi." Chen Gu gestured with a wave of his hand. Before him, a complete structural diagram of the prison materialized, the Mutant bug's movements highlighted in red. "On its way out, the bug took the most

direct path. But on its return journey, it used a different route. The narrowest section of this particular pipeline is only slightly larger than an egg. That implies the item itself must be roughly that size."

Hou Yinan listened quietly. This special agent might indeed be very meticulous, but what's the use of analyzing so much? There's no substantive gain; isn't it just as hopeless as I am in the end?

In an ancient cave, hundreds of people wearing hoods and rough hemp clothes knelt silently.

The cave was massive, reaching hundreds of meters in height. Grooves were carved into the surrounding stone walls and filled with lamp oil. Thick wicks burned, emitting a unique fragrance and flickering black smoke. This smoke stained the cave ceiling with dark patches resembling mysterious murals.

Oil lamps—such ancient devices were exceedingly rare in this era.

The cave was silent. Then, the sound of footsteps approached from outside the entrance, causing a slight stir among the robed figures, yet no one spoke.

The footsteps entered the cave. All heads lifted, and pairs of eyes, full of anticipation, peered out from beneath their hoods, watching the newcomers.

Only four people entered, walking in a line. They were also clad in hemp clothing with hoods covering their heads. However, one of the four wore a snow-white hemp robe.

They ascended the stone steps within the cave, steadily making their way to a natural stone platform at the center. The other three knelt on the platform while the person in white slowly lifted both hands to push back their hood.

"Prophet!" The cry erupted in unison throughout the cave. Everyone kowtowed deeply, their fervor instantly soaring to its peak.

Wei Jiangqi offered a slight smile, his eyes filled with a profound sense of pity.

The fervent welcoming ceremony lasted over an hour. Each follower knelt and shuffled forward to express their "longing" for the Prophet and recount their steadfast devotion during his absence.

When it finally ended, the entire upper echelon of True Knowledge Sin—thirteen individuals in total—followed Wei Jiangqi into a series of smaller caves behind the main cavern.

These smaller caves were ancient and spartan, clearly the setting of an ascetic order, an image that severely contradicted the one True Knowledge Sin projected to the outside world.

Wei Jiangqi casually sat on a rock and asked, "How is the progress?"

One of the thirteen stepped forward. "Very smoothly."

"You set up Gu Bu's maze in the Pu Mountain Secret Prison," the man continued. "I expect those pompous, yet dim-witted special agents of the Bureau of Mystic Security are still floundering like headless flies, utterly unaware of our true objective."

"Our partner has obtained the Nebula Bomb, but there's one final safety mechanism they can't disable, preventing them from using the weapon for now."

Wei Jiangqi nodded. "We should thank the Bureau of Mystic Security. Without their protection, I couldn't have completed the final step so smoothly."

All thirteen laughed together. They took great pride in the plan, masterminded by the Prophet and executed with their assistance, which had allowed them to toy with the mighty Bureau of Mystic Security as if it were in the palm of their hand.

However, one person stepped forward and said, "Your Excellency, one of your prior arrangements was disrupted by the Bureau of Mystic Security."

Wei Jiangqi asked indifferently, "Where?"

He had made multiple arrangements before his imprisonment, all crucial to his subsequent plans. However, given the extensive timeline of the overall plan, each of these arrangements had multiple contingencies. Even if one was compromised, others were in place to supplement it.

"Planet Farsar VIII."

Wei Jiangqi's composed expression instantly turned grim. "How severe?" he asked, his voice like ice.

The man clearly sensed the Prophet's anger. He dropped to his knees, his voice trembling as he reported, "Planet Farsar VIII has been completely seized by the Bureau of Mystic Security. Our painstakingly cultivated Saint's Assembly... has been entirely... entirely wiped out."

CRACK!

His head exploded on the spot. Flesh, bone fragments, blood, and brain matter splattered all over the others nearby.

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"Trash! How can you still have the face to live!" Wei Jiangqi couldn't contain his anger. In him, tranquility and fury could switch in an instant, his moods as fickle as the ocean waves.

The remaining followers instantly dropped to their knees in unison, bowing their heads deeply, not daring to utter a word.

Wei Jiangqi stood up, pacing back and forth in the cave with his hands clasped behind his back. His eyes were filled with fear and anxiety, and he muttered to himself, unclear of his own thoughts, until he suddenly stopped and gritted his teeth. "Summon our partners."

"I want to hire them for another big job!"

At last, he couldn't help but add with hatred, "Why did it have to be 'Farser VIII'?!"

Other arrangements could have alternatives, but the raw silicate from 'Farser VIII' was of utmost importance to him. Given the massive amount needed, there were no other reliable sources besides 'Farser VIII'.

The incident with the Long-headed people was a severe blow to Wei Jiangqi, making the ambitious Prophet, who had broken out of prison, extremely anxious and angry.

The call connected quickly. Boles, shrouded in his pitch-black robe, appeared on the screen. The moment he appeared, it seemed as though an evil force capable of driving people into madness and corruption was transmitted through the screen.

"HEH HEH HEH..." His voice carried an indescribable malignancy, making every cell in one's body feel as if it were splitting apart. "My friend, what do you need my help with this time?"

The twelve followers instinctively took several steps back, retreating from the influence of Boles's voice.

But Wei Jiangqi seemed oblivious. "Do something for me, and I'll give you a place where you and your children can thrive peacefully until you have sufficient strength to contend with the Alien Insect Race."

Boles's blood-red eyes emitted a fierce glow. "Wei Jiangqi, do you realize what you're saying?"

"My children and I need to proliferate, which requires abundant food and mineral resources."

The "food" he referred to included various forms of living beings, not limited to humans.

Wei Jiangqi snorted coldly. "You know nothing of the depths of our True Knowledge Sin, an ancient and grand sect! Do as I say, and you will get what I promised you!"

Boles asked coldly, "What do you want to do?"

Wei Jiangqi sent him coordinates. "I want all the raw silicate there!"

Boles opened the coordinates. "This is one of the Confederation's military factories for producing starship mainframes. You want me to attack it?"

"They only produce starship mainframes there; the defenses won't be very strong. You have a chance, don't you? Besides, I'll find ways to coordinate with you. This deal is definitely worth it for you."

Boles suppressed the mania and insanity within him, struggled against the temptation, and said, "Let me think about it."

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After ending the call with Boles, Wei Jiangqi's resentment over the destruction of the Holy Church lingered. He asked, "Who at the Bureau of Mystic Security is responsible for the 'Farser VIII' affair?"

A follower stepped forward. "Our insider at the Bureau of Mystic Security headquarters sent word: it's a special agent named 'Chen Gu.'"

"Chen Gu?" Boles frowned. "I have a vague recollection of him."

His spiritual power was exceptionally strong, so his memory was remarkably good. He continued, "That boy was in the same prison as me once and disrupted our operations on Empire River Star."

"That's him," the follower confirmed.

Wei Jiangqi sneered again. "He got transferred to headquarters so quickly? Such a promising new star of the Bureau of Mystic Security! Heh heh heh... Find out where he is now, and then make that person disappear from this world forever!"

"The lowly worms that impede the grand steps of the Holy Church deserve only death—and that's letting him off easy! He has no idea of the grandeur of the cause he's hindering!"

A 'worm's' fate was decided in a few words, and Wei Jiangqi expelled some of his pent-up anger. He was too busy with "great endeavors" to bother with such trivial beings.

"What about the other arrangements?"

"All is going smoothly," the followers quickly replied.

Wei Jiangqi felt somewhat satisfied. "Let's head to Tianluo Star first."

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Tianluo Star was one of humanity's earliest colonial stars, relatively "close" to what was once the mother planet. However, because it was developed early, by this epoch, all kinds of resources on the planet had been depleted. This was much like the cities from Chen Gu's era, which had collapsed quickly after flourishing once their resources were exhausted.

Nowadays, the surface of Tianluo Star is covered with huge mining pits. Many cities had been abandoned over a millennium ago, with only a few rundown towns still housing a small number of residents.

The inhabitants here mostly live by scavenging, exploring those abandoned cities, and picking out recyclable materials to sell.

Many fugitives are hidden among them, leading to extremely poor public security.

Around the planet, orbiting in the satellite belt, floats a large amount of space debris—discarded satellites, wrecked spaceships—all of which stand as evidence of Tianluo Star's bygone prosperous times.

Among this space junk, dozens of advanced satellites were disguised as space debris. They orbited the planet, continually emitting electromagnetic waves and scanning its entire surface from all directions. These were military satellites, ensuring that no ship could land on the planet undetected.

Chapter 506: The Abandoned Planet_2

Within an abandoned city, a sealed underground base had just been opened.

A group of people was tidying up the base when one of them couldn't help but ask, "Hey, do you think those crazies from True Knowledge Sin will come back?"

"They definitely will!"

On a desolate square, the ground already cracked, hundreds of people gathered amid the howling cold wind. They wore patched-up, old-model protective suits and dirty goggles. All of them looked up, hopefully gazing at the sky.

This time every month was the salvage ship's scheduled arrival.

The scavengers on this planet all needed to sell their 'harvests' to this ship in exchange for Starshield, the currency they needed to survive.

A flickering light appeared in the distant sky, just as it did every other time. The scavengers sighed with relief, for no one knew if those large corporations would suddenly abandon this planet and stop sending salvage ships.

After about fifteen minutes, the equally dilapidated salvage ship made a shaky landing. Its hatch opened, and the scavengers began trading with the robots on board in an orderly fashion.

Meanwhile, from another hatch, a group clad in brand-new light Mecha suits stepped out. They didn't even glance at the dirty scavengers as they boarded an advanced maglev armored vehicle and sped off into the distance.

The scavengers were surprised. Except for wanted criminals fleeing pursuit, no outsiders had come here in a long time.

But most scavengers were indifferent, merely curious. Still, some who fancied themselves 'fierce' secretly eyed these newcomers.

Their equipment, if stolen, could fetch a good price. On this planet, that was a huge fortune.

So, some scavengers broke away from the crowd. From a concealed spot nearby, they dragged out their crudely assembled motorcycles and swarmed after them.

Inside the newly reactivated base, a signal came through: "A ship has arrived."

"It's a regular salvage ship. It comes every month. Do we need to monitor it?"

"Bring up the satellite imagery."

The feed came through quickly. They saw the group disembark from the salvage ship, then a band of scavengers stealthily followed them. About fifteen kilometers from the salvage ship, the maglev armored convoy suddenly stopped. Several weapon hatches opened, revealing large-caliber rapid-fire energy laser cannons, which unceremoniously blasted the ill-intentioned scavengers behind them into shattered debris.

The entire process took only about a dozen seconds. Then, the convoy retracted its weapons and continued to speed toward its target.

"It's them!" several voices inside the base shouted excitedly at once.

"Move out!"

Soon, armored combat vehicles equipped with advanced holographic cloaking technology rolled out of the base. They lifted into the air and immediately began traveling at supersonic speeds.

A massive primordial mountain range, like a majestic ancient dragon, snaked across the planet's surface, its grand body stretching for 100,000 kilometers.

It extended from south to north, passing through vast plains. However, at its midpoint, it seemed as though its spine had been snapped by a giant hammer. Here, entire sections of mountain peaks were severed, and large swathes of surface rock stripped away. This left behind numerous excavated mine shafts, their gaping openings resembling empty eye sockets—dark, hollow, and somewhat sinister.

In and around this region, there were several completely abandoned cities. From their vast footprints and the skeletal remains of towering buildings, one could imagine how prosperous these cities once were.

The lucrative resource extraction industry had rapidly built these great cities, but as resources dwindled, the cities just as swiftly declined.

Desolate and decaying, the planet's surface winds whipped up yellow sand and gravel, roaring wantonly through the cities' crumbling walls and ruins.

A skinny boy in a tattered protective suit hid behind a low concrete wall, sheltering from a gust of wind. Then, he grabbed his worn sack and hurried toward a target he had spotted earlier.

It was a stone monument where the wind had just blown away the surface sand, revealing an uncovered manhole.

It had been concealed before and likely hadn't been 'explored' by anyone yet. Perhaps it still held some 'good stuff.'

The nearby 'cities' were the territory of the Hyena Gang. They had risen to prominence decades ago through ruthless acts and cunning schemes, gradually coming to dominate the area.

The scavengers living here had to regularly pay them 'taxes,' or they would meet a very grim end.

The boy had a younger sister to support. It was already nearing noon, and he still hadn't gathered enough for their taxes for the day, making him understandably anxious.

By five in the afternoon, it would be time for the Hyena Gang's various posts to start collecting taxes. Everyone would obediently go to turn in their daily share. Those who broke this rule were all hung from the flagpoles in the city square.

In the largest of these abandoned cities, atop the tallest building, was a room whose 'decor' was, relatively speaking, quite lavish.

'Bear' sat in the room, drinking from a bottle of strong liquor from a bygone era. Of the original 700 milliliters, less than 300 milliliters remained.

On Capital Star, this kind of liquor could fetch an astronomical price at auction.

If sold to the salvage ship, it would also represent an income sufficient for any family on this planet to live without worry for a lifetime.

But 'Bear' was agitated. He didn't care about money; he just wanted to go back. He had plenty of this liquor, all procured by those worthless subordinates of his. As for how many other 'worthless people' they had killed in the process of obtaining it, he couldn't care less.

Chapter 507: The Abandoned Planet_3

Over twenty years ago, he received an order. He deliberately exposed his 'illegal body modification' from within Gong He's body. With the steel fist of his left hand, he then burst the head of a law enforcer on the street. Then, as he wished, he became a high-priority fugitive. Afterwards, he took a pre-arranged spacecraft and smuggled himself to this planet.

Subsequently, relying on his powerful illegal body modifications and some secret "abilities," he slowly established the Hyena Gang.

Decades passed. The Hyena Gang had become the most powerful gang on this planet, where he was akin to an "emperor."

But he was born ambitious, possessed his own loyal beliefs, and loathed this kind of life.

Fortunately, everything was finally coming to an end.

As dusk fell, several satellites rose from the horizon, and a convoy quickly approached from the distant wilderness. Bear leaped from the window of a dilapidated high-rise building. CLATTER! The metal armor on his back unfolded into a pair of gigantic wings.

He flapped his wings and landed on the ground, where a group of biker thugs awaited below. "Boss!"

"Come with me." He then flew low to the ground, and the thugs immediately started their bikes, following closely behind.

Along the way, they encountered the convoy.

The biker thugs thought these were rivals trying to take over their territory. Despite the opposition being well-equipped, the thugs had absolute confidence in their leader, Bear. Without hesitation, they drew weapons from their vehicles, aggressively aiming at the newcomers.

"They are not enemies," Bear said in a deep voice. He retracted his wings and walked towards one of the vehicles. Kneeling devoutly on one knee, he placed his right hand over his chest, his voice slightly choked. "Prophet, I have finally waited for you!"

The vehicle door opened. Wei Jiangqi nodded at him in approval. "How did the task I gave you go?"

"I found it long ago. I've had people guarding it all these years, just waiting for your summons."

Wei Jiangqi was even more pleased. "Good. Lead us there."

"Yes." After receiving the command, Bear turned to his subordinates. "You follow behind."

He soared ahead on his wings, leading the way. The armored maglev convoy followed closely, not lacking in speed. The biker thugs at the rear, however, struggled to keep up.

But the boss had spoken. If they couldn't keep up... the consequences would be dire, too severe for them to bear.

So, along the way, due to the planet's rough surface terrain, seven or eight thugs were thrown from their bikes and died.

After speeding for several hours, they had penetrated deep into the mountains. They were surrounded by mine shafts of various sizes, which became even more dangerous in the darkness.

Bear finally descended. His wings folded on his back, transforming into liquid that flowed into his body. It then seeped out from his waist, reforming into eight gigantic metal spider legs.

The maglev convoy came to a halt. Wei Jiangqi stepped out, his demeanor solemn, as Bear reported, "Prophet, from here we must pass through some mine shafts."

Wei Jiangqi nodded and glanced back at the biker thugs, satisfied with Bear's arrangements.

The biker thugs had never seen their hot-tempered, fierce boss show such respect to anyone. The encounters that night made them vaguely feel that something was amiss, yet they dared not defy Bear's orders.

Leading the way, the boss walked into a mine shaft on the verge of collapse. They had no choice but to dismount their bikes and follow on foot.

They had entered less than ten meters into the mine shaft when a furious shout came from the darkness, "Who's there!" followed by the clear sound of weapons charging.

"It's me," Bear said, his voice deep.

"Boss!" Lights flared on, illuminating the mine shaft, where a group of fully armed thugs had set up multiple checkpoints.

With Bear in the lead, they continued forward, descending deeper, even passing through several refurbished vertical elevators.

At last, a research base buried deep underground appeared before them.

Upon arrival, Wei Jiangqi stopped before the base's great door, constructed from concrete and heavy alloys. He paused silently for a moment, then spoke, his voice somewhat hoarse, "Let's go in."

The base's equipment was ancient, lagging behind the current era by an unknown number of years. But to these scavengers-turned-biker-thugs, these were treasures!

They were surprised. Their boss actually had such a "treasure trove" hidden away—why not sell it for money?

The Prophet's followers solemnly trailed Wei Jiangqi. Upon arriving here, the role of guide had shifted from Bear to Wei Jiangqi.

He seemed very familiar with the place. Moving past huge, cylindrical, transparent incubators reminiscent of a jungle, they arrived before a silvery vault.

Wei Jiangqi asked lightly, "Have you opened it?"

Bear immediately knelt. "Following your instructions, I found this place, cleared it, and reinforced it as necessary. But I have absolutely never touched this vault, not even once."

Wei Jiangqi watched him for a moment, then slowly nodded. "You're not lying. Good."

The vault had a very old mechanical combination lock. Wei Jiangqi stepped forward and entered the password, one digit at a time. "It's fortunate you were obedient," he said. "This lock only allows three attempts. If all are wrong, the bomb inside will explode, with enough force to level this entire mountain range. Had you tried to open this door, you would have been obliterated long ago."

Chapter 508: The Abandoned Planet_4

Bear couldn't help but shudder.

CLICK. A metallic sound rang out as Wei Jiangqi slowly turned the lever, opening the large gate. The interior was empty, save for a round metal column standing towards the back, near the center.

Atop the one-and-a-half-meter-tall metal column rested a jet-black crown!

A crown? Bear frowned inwardly. What era is this? What value could such an object possibly have beyond being an artifact, warranting such tight security?

He didn't notice that Wei Jiangqi, gazing at the crown, had an indescribably complex expression in his eyes. It was a mixture of hatred, enmity, fear, gratitude... and even a touch of nostalgia.

While Bear carefully observed the crown, he noticed that its pitch-black surface wasn't smooth but was covered with extremely fine, densely packed "patterns."

Yet, they didn't quite seem to be patterns, as the markings looked very deep.

Upon closer inspection, he realized the crown seemed to be "fading" or "bleeding color." Countless fine, almost imperceptible black lines "flowed" down from it, streaking across the metal column and continuing to "flow" onto the ground.

One of the followers couldn't help but ask, "Your Excellency, is this what we've been searching for? Such a bizarre crown?"

Wei Jiangqi chuckled. "This isn't a crown; it merely bears some resemblance."

Then, taking a deep breath, he added, "This is a brain."

"A brain?" Everyone present was puzzled and looked at the object again. But Bear suddenly understood: Could those intricate patterns on its surface be the convolutions of a brain?

"How could such a... dead brain be of any use to us?"

Wei Jiangqi turned and glared at the follower. "Who said it's dead?"

"Not dead?" The crowd was incredulous. They scrutinized the object even more intently. Some, wanting a closer look, unconsciously started to step into the vault before Wei Jiangqi forcefully pulled them back.

"No one is to enter except me."

A chill went through the followers. "Yes, we understand."

Wei Jiangqi shook his head. "You don't understand. I'm not worried about you coveting this object... I'm worried about this object coveting *you*!"

"You have no idea how terrifying it is!"

Just as Wei Jiangqi finished speaking, layers of pale blue energy ripples suddenly stirred within the vault. Then, in an instant, a figure materialized out of thin air beside the "black crown"!

The followers and Bear were first shocked, then furious. "You're courting death!"

Wei Jiangqi looked at the young man. His powerful memory instantly recalled the "sleeping" face from a certain prison, and he realized, "Chen Gu?"

Chen Gu stood beside the "black crown," clutching an object that caused electricity to arc and flicker across his body.

He warily eyed the "brain" beside him and offered Wei Jiangqi a slight smile. "Wei Jiangqi, your reputation precedes you.

Today, we two Prophets finally achieve our historic meeting. Everyone present is a fortunate witness, though I'm afraid you'll all have to share this singular honor from within a special prison of the Bureau of Mystic Security."

There are some clowns in this world so exasperatingly cringeworthy that neither friend nor foe wants to admit knowing them...

A historic meeting? Singular honor? We're the Bureau of Mystic Security's special ops team! Have some damn dignity, will you? Even if you're trying to provoke them and distract them with words, can't we pick a more intimidating topic? Members of the special ops team made gagging sounds over the communication channel.

Meanwhile, the members of True Knowledge Sin erupted in fury. "Who do you think you are?!" one roared. "Daring to compare yourself to His Excellency the Prophet? A charlatan like you, guilty of such grave blasphemy, should be burned to ashes by eternal flames for the Purification of this world!"

Wei Jiangqi, however, looked at Chen Gu with a hint of admiration, still somewhat incredulous. "You actually managed to find me."

My arrangements were flawless, he thought. It should have been impossible for anyone to find me before I executed my final plan.

Chen Gu thought for a moment, then said earnestly, "You've done very well indeed. It's quite probable that no one but me could have found you."

Over the Bureau of Mystic Security's communication channel, Marcus couldn't take it anymore. "Chen Gu, you're laying it on a bit thick, kid."

That sounded like a top student telling the runner-up, "You've already done exceptionally well, surpassing many others; you just can't surpass me."

Great Actor Chen, reminded by Marcus, belatedly realized he might have just twisted the knife a little too much...

But I was just stating the truth, he thought. Only he knew that if he weren't a multi-specialist, and if "Brain Domain Hacker" and "Quantum Wizard" weren't among his specializations, he would never have been able to find Wei Jiangqi.

Chapter 509: Movie Emperor

Time rewound to when Chen Gu and the special operations team were at the Pumountain Secret Prison.

Hou Yinan listened to Chen Gu's analysis. It was well-articulated, but with no substantial progress, he felt quite disdainful. Just when he thought Chen Gu would also end up empty-handed like himself, Chen Gu suddenly called out, "Bring the prisoner from the cell next to Wei Jiangqi for interrogation."

Hou Yinan was very cooperative, immediately ordering several prisoners to be brought out for them to question as they saw fit.

Such a simple matter. Hadn't we thought of it before? We'd already interrogated them. But Wei Jiangqi had very little communication with them, and repeated questioning yielded no valuable information.

In fact, in a high-security prison like Pumountain Secret Prison, inmates were kept strictly isolated, barely seeing each other a few times a year. Moreover, the cells here weren't like those in traditional prisons, where they stood one next to another. Here, they were all independent units, making it impossible for inmates to knock on walls to greet those in adjacent cells.

What communication could there possibly be?

However, what made Hou Yinan shake his head in disapproval was that Chen Gu not only interrogated the prisoners whose cells were close to Wei Jiangqi's but also specifically reviewed all surveillance footage of Wei Jiangqi since he entered Pumountain Secret Prison.

During the four and a half months Wei Jiangqi was detained here, he only left his cell twice. The first time was for the prison's quarterly collective recreation period; the second time was when Wei Jiangqi reported feeling "uncomfortable" and went to the prison infirmary for a check-up.

On the first occasion, Wei Jiangqi spoke briefly with four inmates, no more than three sentences to each.

On the second, he only spoke two sentences to a nurse.

Chen Gu not only interrogated the four inmates but also brought in that nurse! Although Hou Yinan remained cooperative throughout, he shook his head in private. What was the point of all this?

Hou Yinan's exceptional cooperation stemmed from a desire to shift blame. It's true, I let the prisoner escape, and I found out nothing. But it's not because I'm incompetent; it's because the enemy is too cunning! Look at this so-called special operations team, the elite of the elite. I gave them everything they wanted, and in the end, they found out nothing either, did they?

After interrogating these people, Chen Gu, instead of reflecting on any perceived mistakes, redoubled his efforts. He contacted, through the Director-General, all prisons that had ever detained Wei Jiangqi. He demanded that inmates from adjacent cells, those who had significant communication with Wei Jiangqi, or even prison guards, all be brought in for questioning. Of course, it was remote video questioning.

He also assertively demanded that the local Bureau of Mystic Security have special agents present to assist. If he felt an interviewee was withholding information, he would instantly order the special agents to use "unconventional" interrogation methods—regardless of whether the subject was a prisoner or a guard!

This is utter madness! Hou Yinan thought. Yet Chen Gu did it anyway, and faced no repercussions; the Director-General absorbed all the pressure for him.

Hou Yinan could only sigh internally. So this is what it means to be the Director-General's confidant. Just look at the treatment he gets!

In fact, Hou Yinan was completely mistaken; at best, Chen Gu was nothing more than a "big headache" for the Director-General.

Interrogating all relevant personnel was an incredibly tense process. Chen Gu went full throttle, not resting for a minute. If he hadn't been a Professional, he truly wouldn't have been able to withstand it.

Then, Chen Gu began analyzing all the collected information, relying on the powerful computational ability of a Brain Domain Hacker.

From the start, he knew he couldn't obtain any direct or conclusive intelligence from these people. Wei Jiangqi was cunning and calculating; he wouldn't disclose any specific information to unrelated individuals. However, Wei Jiangqi had a particular trait—not quite a weakness: as a cult leader, he, like many such individuals, possessed an irrepressible urge to proselytize. Given any chance to communicate, they invariably tried to impart some of their beliefs to anyone nearby. And the more he spoke, the more he was bound to reveal something.

Even an ordinary Brain Domain Hacker could have reached this stage, similar to what Chen Gu was doing: analyzing these trivial, complex conversations—which spanned vast amounts of time and seemed utterly unrelated—for keywords, specific time nodes, or locations, and so forth. But at this point, the Brain Domain Hacker would have come to a standstill, because what they would have obtained would still just be some clues of unclear significance and uncertain truth.

To confirm which of these clues needed to be focused on and in which direction to pursue them, a Quantum Wizard would have to use Quantum Divination to decide. And if the Quantum Wizard hadn't participated in the initial information gathering, their understanding of the entire event would be shallower than Chen Gu's, making it difficult to achieve accurate divination results.

Wei Jiangqi was no ordinary person. The divination method of finding a hair from his prison bed, which might work on common people, was utterly ineffective on him. Even if a Brain Domain Hacker and a Quantum Wizard cooperated with perfect synergy, they couldn't match the accuracy Chen Gu achieved working alone.

So, when Chen Gu said that perhaps no one else could find Wei Jiangqi but him, it wasn't boasting but the plain truth. And it was precisely this unboastful truth that made the impact of his statement so devastating...

Chen Gu used Quantum Divination to identify three clues, and he split the special operations team into three groups, each responsible for one.

Chapter 510: Movie Emperor_2

As for Chen Gu himself, he certainly wanted to handle Wei Jiangqi's most likely next appearance. However, by this point, Quantum Divination could no longer help him. So, after much hesitation, Chen Gu still decided to call Valkyrie.

"What is it?" Valkyrie always exhibited an attitude towards him as if to say, "I don't want to speak even one extra word to you."

Chen Gu took a deep breath and asked, "I don't know if my clearance level is sufficient, but in order to accurately track down Wei Jiangqi, I must ask something very important."

"Hmm," Valkyrie replied with a single word.

Chen Gu asked, "Why do we just keep someone like Wei Jiangqi in prison? I know he's the spiritual leader of True Knowledge Sin; he's more useful alive than dead. Indeed, simply executing him would cause True Knowledge Sin to completely spiral out of control, resulting in even greater losses..."

Aviloya interrupted him, "There's no need to belabor things we both understand."

Keeping Wei Jiangqi in custody was indeed far more advantageous for the Confederation than killing him outright. He was not just a military leader; he was a spiritual symbol of a heresy.

Chen Gu asked directly, "Interrogation is undoubtedly futile with Wei Jiangqi, so why not conduct memory reading on him? Even if it turns him into an idiot, it wouldn't matter as long as he's still alive. We could also learn all the secrets of True Knowledge Sin and have the chance to uproot the heresy completely!"

After Chen Gu finished speaking, Aviloya remained silent for a long time before finally saying, "Do you promise this is crucial to tracking down Wei Jiangqi's whereabouts?"

"I promise!"

Aviloya hung up and soon called back on a different line. "This is one of the three highest-security lines in the department," she said. "What I'm about to tell you is a massive scandal. It absolutely cannot be leaked, under any circumstances."

"I understand." I almost regret asking, Chen Gu thought. It's best to know as little as possible about such sordid secrets; those who know too much die quickly.

Yet, thinking of the stolen nebula bullet, he clenched his teeth and resolved to listen.

"Wei Jiangqi is very special. His spiritual power is extremely strong. In any prison, he wears special suppression devices."

"Furthermore, he has undergone brain augmentation. Our current technology simply cannot perform memory reading on him. It's even possible that during such a process, he could use the equipment to amplify his spiritual power, causing massive damage."

Chen Gu was startled. "Brain augmentation?"

Without giving him a chance to ask, Aviloya went on, "Long ago, during the era when humanity first left its mother planet and ventured into the Star Sea, the power of professionals gradually became apparent. Consequently, every major Star Nation was eager to recruit more of them."

"However, becoming a professional requires talent, and the success rate of initiation is extremely low. This led to numerous related research projects. Among them, one theory posited that stronger spiritual power correlated with a higher success rate for becoming a professional. Whether this theory is correct remains debatable, but it was very popular at the time, and many research teams based their studies on it."

"Over a thousand years ago, within the Confederation, a group of people who believed their theory had matured quietly began conducting human experiments!"

Chen Gu: "..."

Aviloya continued, "Illegal body modification has always been strictly forbidden. Brain augmentation experiments, in particular, were unanimously denounced by all nations as the most cruel and heinous form of human modification. Not only was the probability of failure extremely high, but the entire process was also exceptionally painful and inhumane."

"So... to successfully complete their experiments, this group sought protection from a prominent political figure of that era. They then found a hidden mine on the already declining planet of Tianluo and commenced their inhumane experiments."

"I don't need to detail the various inhumane procedures involved; you can imagine them. Using living people as test subjects was just routine for them," Aviloya said, unable to stop herself from shaking her head and sighing.

Chen Gu asked through gritted teeth, "Why would those so-called political figures be willing to shelter such vile experiments?"

"Because this particular figure realized he was aging, and his family lacked a sufficiently powerful professional to secure their position. Frankly, for that individual, this experiment was nothing more than 'a casual attempt.' Yet, that single, casual attempt altered the destinies of countless people!"

"Back then, public order on Tianluo was already deteriorating. Poverty-driven crime was rampant, resulting in many orphans."

"Initially, the experimenters only used prisoners from the jails as subjects. However, as their experiments grew more frenzied and prisoners became scarce, they began secretly kidnapping orphans and vagrants for their trials!"

Chen Gu shook his head repeatedly. "Madmen!"

"Yet, no matter how many fresh lives were sacrificed, the experiments repeatedly failed. This continued for decades. Then, one day, those fanatics suddenly reported to the political figure that they had succeeded!"

"But just as they excitedly bellowed the words 'We succeeded!' screams suddenly erupted over the communication channel. Then, the entire research base lost contact with the outside world."

"The political figure, unconcerned, merely sent people to investigate. They found everyone in the base dead, their deaths horrific. Some had gouged out their own eyes, stabbing electronic pens from the lab into their sockets, deep into their own brains!"

