

Full Time 551

Chapter 551 Complete Infected Body_3

On various live streaming platforms, the number of viewers skyrocketed. This was thanks to the continuous efforts of Number 21 and Chen Gu, whose exciting battles garnered a huge influx of viewers.

The freelancers hidden among the common people were also genuinely moved. It seemed that the Bureau of Mystic Security could be a desirable place to end up, and if they really couldn't make it on their own, they might as well surrender to it.

This result was far from what the Digital Group had anticipated.

Zero Creator was somewhat annoyed and was about to reprimand Number 18 when the latter immediately said, "Rest assured, everyone. This is just an appetizer. He will soon understand what a dance of demons is!"

This attitude slightly satisfied Zero Creator and the others. However, Number 18 had barely finished speaking when Chen Gu drew the Father-Son Sword—the one publicly known as the Sword of Admonition. With a swing of his hand, he unleashed a Nuclear Electrocution Strike!

Now, when this move was executed... its power was probably tenfold stronger!

Chen Gu's Energy Level had increased, and he had replaced the Riverwash Sword with the Father-Son Sword. In an instant, the entire underground space was filled with a dark red glow, with lightning everywhere and the CRACKLE and ROAR of thunder.

The power of the Radiation Missionary inherently suppressed these evil creatures. Wherever the red glow passed, those seaweed tentacles and root-like limbs instantly shriveled and carbonized, then completely shattered.

With one slash, Chen Gu cleaved the head of the evil creature, instantly splitting it in two.

The onslaught wasn't over yet. The remaining power of the Nuclear Electrocutation Strike, still unspent, went CRACKLING and SPARKING wildly everywhere, smashing the yet-to-be-opened incubators into pieces.

Furthermore, the evil creatures inside, still unawakened, turned to ash as well.

This one strike not only killed the creatures but also destroyed at least seven or eight incubators.

Number 18's eyelids twitched as he watched. He had painstakingly cultivated a dozen or so evil creatures with moss virus symbiosis, intending for them to make a grand appearance during the "Purity Operation," but half were destroyed right off the bat!

Number 18 ground his teeth in anger, his hands moving swiftly. In the underground space, the incubators all WHIRRED open with a series of CLACKS! The video feed was somewhat blurry due to the earlier Nuclear Electrocutation Strike. The audience, more excited than ever, asked, "Is this a trailer for a new movie?" Some guessed, "Could it be some kind of Giant Beast Battle Royale?" Soon after, other viewers expressed their support: "Whatever it is, I'm all for it!"

Numerous evil creatures stood up from the incubators. One appeared like a massive treeman, except its leaves were like sharp blades that could be launched to strike down foes.

Another was a huge, amorphous mass, like a fifteen-meter Toad-augur, constantly squirming, its body sporadically opening ferocious jaws or a single, green, ghostly eye.

Yet another seemed like a swarm of green butterflies, sometimes dispersing across the sky, sometimes clustering together to form a giant, disgusting green moth.

The carefree audience exclaimed in delight, marveling at the superb special effects. "So lifelike!"

"Maybe it's props!" someone commented.

The moment the incubators opened, Chen Gu had switched his memory to Isabella Wu and, with the capabilities of a Brain Domain Hacker, released spiritual power tentacles to attempt "hacking" into the brains of these evil creatures.

He wanted to ascertain what kind of beings these evil creatures truly were.

However, as soon as the creatures burst forth, he put away Isabella Wu's memory and switched his Profession back to Radiation Missionary.

In that brief instant, he sensed that the spirits of these creatures were dull, possessing a "wooden" quality, as if they had truly become plants.

But their brain structures were essentially animalistic, and several were clearly human in origin.

Utterly inhumane! Chen Gu cursed silently. They were bred from humans and animals!

What he saw were only a few incubators, but such breeding must have an extremely high failure rate. He didn't know how many of their own kind had been destroyed in the process!

The moral outrage in Chen Gu's heart manifested in his combat. Gripping his sword with both hands, a crimson glow burst forth from the blade.

He wielded his sword in battle, each stroke unleashing a blade of light dozens of meters long. Each strike that hit its target instantly blasted the enemy to pieces, its might even surpassing that of the previous Nuclear Electrocution Strike!

Suddenly, Chu Zheng received a message from headquarters: "Chen Gu's battle is being live-streamed on the interstellar web!"

Chu Zheng was shocked. "What?"

The source sent several links. Opening them revealed various live streaming platforms, all broadcasting this fight.

Chu Zheng was angry. "What are you internal affairs people doing? How can you let the live stream continue? Shut it down!"

The existence of professionals was still a secret to the general public, and this "grand" live stream could potentially expose that secret. For Chu Zheng, the potential exposure of Chen Gu was an even more serious concern.

The personnel in internal affairs were also helpless. "By the time we noticed, it was too late," they explained. "The cumulative audience has already reached tens of billions. With so many people watching, if we suddenly shut down all these live streams, wouldn't that be a dead giveaway?"

"Moreover, many of these live streaming platforms belong to other Star Nations, and we don't have the authority to shut them down."

Chu Zheng didn't know what to do. She passed the message on to Chen Gu, who was in the midst of combat.

Having already slain six evil creatures, Chen Gu's heart skipped a beat upon hearing Chu Zheng's words. He discreetly scanned his surroundings, then continued to clear out the remaining evil creatures without altering his expression.

Chapter 552 - Complete Infected Body_4

In the chat room of the Digital Group, members grumbled, "What's going on? We invested so many resources, only to produce such feeble 'weapons'?"

"Number 18, you are responsible for this failure!"

Zero Creation was also very annoyed, feeling he had misplaced his trust in Number 18. The original plan was to show the freelancers lurking in the shadows the "hollowness" of the Bureau of Mystic Security, and then find a way to recruit them.

But now, it had turned into a grand showcase for the Bureau of Mystic Security, inadvertently setting the stage for their enemies. What kind of mess was this!?

Zero Creation stopped watching and went offline.

This was already a statement of sorts. Number 18 shuddered, knowing he had messed up. But he had already played all his cards and very much wanted to remedy the situation, yet he was completely out of options.

All he could do was sit there dumbfounded, watching Chen Gu waving his giant war sword, ablaze with crimson flame, as he slashed one after another of the 'weapons' Number 18 had painstakingly cultivated. Members of the Digital Group left the chat room one by one.

After killing the last of the monsters, Chen Gu said to Chu Zheng, "Cut off all network connections to the research institute."

Chu Zheng had long been prepared. Subsequently, all the live broadcast rooms went dark, bringing an end to the extravagant livestream.

Number 18 stared at the pitch-black screen. A sudden shudder ran through him. Run!

But before he could flee, he had to erase all traces here. This was to prevent others from discovering this location and, by following the clues, tracing them back to other members of the Digital Group.

However, as he was erasing these traces, there was a sudden loud BANG—the door was blasted open. Ma Changlong, bristling with various gun barrels, stormed in.

Number 18 cried out in alarm and reached for a red button beside him.

This was the last resort that every 'Number' had to prepare in advance. By pressing it, everything in the room, including himself, would be completely blown to bits, ensuring the Digital Group's secrecy.

Ma Changlong evidently realized something too and bellowed as he rushed forward. But just as Number 18's hand was about to touch the button, he suddenly froze in place.

Even his eyes could not move.

Chen Gu walked in from behind Ma Changlong, having switched to Isabella Wu's memories. The power of the Brain Domain Hacker firmly locked Number 18's brain.

Then, Chen Gu surveyed the room. His gaze landed on a special cabinet from which an enticing aroma wafted. This, of course, was only Chen Gu's current perception; Ma Changlong would certainly not have thought so.

Therefore, Chen Gu didn't bother with Number 18 for the moment and approached the cabinet. He gently opened it, as though afraid of damaging the "delicacy" inside.

Inside the cabinet were rows of delicately sealed tubes, each only the size of a finger, containing a clump of moss the size of a soybean.

Luckily, Ma Changlong was standing behind Chen Gu at this moment; otherwise, he would have been astonished to see the hungry green glow emanating from the eyes of the revered 'Volunteer Soldier'.

Ma Changlong stepped forward, kicked Number 18 to the ground, and took out restraining shackles to lock him up securely before walking over to Chen Gu.

By then, Chen Gu had gone through a fierce internal struggle and finally suppressed his terrifying "appetite."

Seeing the test tubes, Ma Changlong asked, "Viruses?"

Chen Gu nodded. "Notify everyone to come in."

Since the surveillance equipment inside the research institute had been secretly controlled, it was naturally possible to track back and find Number 18.

The Digital Group had Number 21 assisting them, but the Bureau of Mystic Security's hackers were no slouches either.

Number 18 lay on the ground, still controlled by the power of the Brain Domain Hacker. He could do nothing but glare at Chen Gu. At this moment, he desperately wanted to shout a few slogans, but Chen Gu gave him no such opportunity.

Chen Gu made a call to Ding Zhou. "May I proceed?"

After a moment's consideration, Ding Zhou answered, "You may."

Without hesitation, Chen Gu extended his spiritual power tendrils into Number 18's brain, beginning to forcibly search for any clues he wanted.

Chapter 553 - The Protagonist

Number 18, named Zheng Qihe, was an executive at a local construction company. Despite his excellent academic performance from a young age, his personality had always been extreme because his mother had abandoned him and his father when he was three years old.

During college, he encountered the concept of "purity" and became increasingly obsessed with it. Two years after graduation, he joined the Digital Group as Number 18.

That was over twenty years ago.

Since then, the Digital Group had been lying in wait. All its members believed Zero's words that "purity" required the right moment. Although they took no action, all members of the Digital Group were secretly preparing.

For example, a few years ago, after his company undertook the research institute's construction project, Number 18 used his authority to clandestinely build an underground space there, hiding one of the Digital Group's labs inside it.

That time, he used construction robots to work at night when no one was around, so Robert was completely unaware. The security guards on-site were also from the construction company. Number 18 would invite them out for drinks at night. After he left, the construction robots would activate and work according to the preset program.

Afterward, Number 18 would secretly delete the relevant data from these robots' storage units.

The construction robots were highly efficient and completed the task in one night. The next day, no one noticed anything amiss.

During the entire construction process, Number 18 had the opportunity to get close to Robert. As Robert was new to the Confederation, he was more than happy to befriend a local.

Later, when Robert's lab was recruiting local staff, Number 18 recommended many "talents"—all of whom were, of course, his subordinates.

Thus, for a long time, Number 18 secretly cultivated malevolent creatures without Robert or the other researchers knowing.

However, Chen Gu also learned from Number 18's memories that the moss virus hadn't originated from this research institute. Rather, after the institute was built, Number 18 had received a mailed sample of the original virus, which he then used to cultivate the malevolent creatures.

Over the years, no matter how careful they were, they inevitably gave themselves away a little.

Employees at the research institute who noticed something amiss would often "resign" suddenly the next day. They wouldn't show up; a resignation letter would simply be sent to Robert's email.

These people, of course, had been kidnapped by Number 18 and his group. They became test subjects for cultivating the "weapons," thus contributing to "purity" in their own way.

Chen Gu searched through all of Number 18's memories. Although he understood the situation with Robert and the institute, it was of little help in rooting out the Digital Group. The new intelligence he gained was pitifully scant.

Chen Gu sighed internally. "Have the office staff come over and check all the equipment here. See if they can trace any valuable leads."

"Yes!" Chu Zheng crisply acknowledged the order.

Chen Gu had no sooner stepped out than he received a call from Ding Zhou. "About the live broadcast incident," Ding Zhou said, "there are still some problems."

"Public opinion has started to ferment. People are discussing what exactly that battle was all about."

"I've discussed it with Marshal Bai, and we think we should just go with the flow," Ding Zhou continued.

Chen Gu was somewhat perplexed. "Go with the flow?"

"Most of the audience thinks it was a promotional clip for a new movie, and they're full of anticipation for the realistic special effects," Ding Zhou explained. "Since that's the case, we might as well make a movie."

Chen Gu was about to nod when Ding Zhou's next sentence left him dumbstruck: "You'll be the lead actor."

Great Actor Chen... Although he shamelessly claimed to be an emperor of acting every other day, that was just a goal. In his past life, he had been a minor actor, the kind who had never even played a lead role in a tiny, low-budget production. Suddenly, to have a leading role in a top-tier blockbuster literally fall into his lap, his instincts from his past life kicked in, and he nearly blurted out "Thank you, boss!" in excitement.

Fortunately, he restrained himself. Seeing his prolonged silence, Ding Zhou thought he was upset. After all, asking a special agent to become a public figure and act in a movie was asking a lot.

The Deputy Director hastened to explain, "We have no choice. We know it's tough on you, but rest assured, we won't forget any of the sacrifices you've made for the Bureau. The Bureau will promote you one rank first, and for the movie, you'll get the top star salary: one hundred million!"

"There's precedent for star players from the Behemoth Alliance to make movies, so it's justifiable to the public. Only by handling it this way can we minimize the incident's impact."

"You also don't need to worry about not being able to act. We'll hire a personal acting coach for you, so don't worry about any of that."

Chen Gu's eyes went wide. As expected! Without Aviloya in power, my treatment at the Bureau of Mystic Security has skyrocketed! Just look at this: helping me fulfill my dream, pocketing a hundred million, and getting a rank increase on top of it! One more rank and I'll be T8! MHM, MHM, MHM... Same rank as that unfilial son, HAHAAAA!

"Alright, I'll give it a try," Chen Gu said, his voice tinged with reluctance.

Ding Zhou breathed a long sigh of relief on the other end. "The situation there has concluded. For now, the follow-up work will be handed over to the experts from the internal affairs team. Hurry back. We need to deliver the rewards we promised you and start promoting the new movie as soon as possible to mitigate any negative impact."

"Okay."

Number 18 had basically become a vegetable. He had fiercely resisted Chen Gu's attempt to forcibly read his memories using spiritual power tentacles; this vegetative state was the inevitable result.

The experts from the internal affairs team were more useful for pursuing further leads than the special action team members. Chen Gu staying here would no longer be of any use.

He took Chu Zheng, Ma Changlong, and the others aboard the military-arranged spacecraft back to Capital Star.

On the way, Chen Gu received word that the other groups hadn't uncovered any useful leads. However, upon his arrival at Capital Star, he learned that the team led by Chen Jixian had found a setup similar to what Chen Gu had encountered. This discovery was made in a sewage treatment plant they investigated. Consequently, the Bureau inferred that the Digital Group had premeditated actions this time but had abandoned their subsequent plans due to Chen Gu's outstanding performance.

Chen Gu couldn't help but smile. 'Creator Zero' is probably hopping mad at this point, he mused.

But the smile was fleeting. The moss virus still loomed over everyone's heads like a sword.

Qing Ruyan came to meet their spacecraft. Upon seeing Chen Gu, she smiled slightly and said, "Congratulations, the youngest T8 rank special agent in the history of the Bureau of Mystic Security!"

Chen Gu checked his Bureau of Mystic Security account; sure enough, his status had been updated to "T8".

"Come with me back to the headquarters building," Qing Ruyan said. "During the last mission, you earned the reward of one piece of equipment. This time, we'll go select it."

Chen Gu also felt a touch of anticipation. I already have the Father-Son Sword for combat, but I lack supportive gear altogether. The items I had before are no longer strong enough now that my rank has increased.

The maglev vehicle sped for forty-five minutes and stopped precisely at an internal parking spot in the headquarters building. Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan stepped out. Chu Zheng, cheeks puffed in anger, trailed behind.

During the journey, Chen Gu and Qing Ruyan, being old friends, conversed cheerfully, her bell-like laughter frequently echoing in the cabin.

Since they both shared numerous interests in traditional cuisine, Chu Zheng found herself unable to interject. Eventually, she resorted to sulking by herself in the back seat. And there she was, still pouting even after they had disembarked.

Chen Gu was a little puzzled. "What's wrong with you?"

Chu Zheng turned away with a hint of grievance. "It's nothing."

Chen Gu didn't dwell on it and followed Qing Ruyan deeper into the headquarters. Arms crossed, an increasingly annoyed Chu Zheng trailed behind them.

Qing Ruyan then looked at her strangely. "Why are you following us? The area we're entering has a very high security clearance; you can't go in."

Chu Zheng stomped her foot and ran off, leaving Chen Gu utterly baffled.

He wasn't blind to Chu Zheng's feelings for him, but as she was Dr. Meng Ji's niece, Chen Gu couldn't bring himself to cross that line.

The "Armory" of the Bureau's headquarters was heavily guarded. Qing Ruyan led him through a long underground passage. Along the way, she told him, "This is the only link between the headquarters building and the Armory. It incorporates clever architectural designs that ensure even those who have been here from the headquarters before wouldn't know the Armory's exact underground location."

"With the practical application of dimensional technology now possible, the Bureau has plans to construct a dimensional space Armory and eventually relocate everything there."

After passing through four strict identity checks, Chen Gu finally stood within the vast and renowned Armory.

"You don't need to bother with these items on the first level; they're for those below the Third Energy Level," Qing Ruyan said as she led him further inside.

Chen Gu observed the items sealed within various transparent vessels around him. Although these vessels were crafted from special materials designed to maximally contain the items' energies, he could still sense their power!

"Indeed, worthy of the headquarters' collection!" Chen Gu exclaimed. The items I'd received before were all excellent, but they seem quite ordinary here.

Upon entering the second level, Qing Ruyan spread her arms. "Pick whatever you like; these are all for use by those at the Fourth Energy Level or above."

"Let me search for you," Qing Ruyan said while operating the system. Images of eleven items flew out. "These are all numbered items. If I were you, I'd pick one from amongst these."

But the moment Chen Gu stepped in, he was drawn to something else. It wasn't among the numbered items but was instead sitting in a corner, a hexahedral gemstone pendant that had been cut and polished.

Chapter 554 - [Secret Nest]

Qing Ruyan followed Chen Gu's gaze, somewhat puzzled that he was attracted to a piece of "jewelry" rather than choosing one of the numbered artifacts she had strongly recommended. "You like this?"

The mischievous side of her erupted, and her tone sounded as though she was a sugar mama who had found herself a toy boy.

Chen Gu nodded. "Let's have a look."

Qing Ruyan fiddled with some controls, and the pendant flew over.

"[Secret Nest]? What a strange name."

"Each facet can store one professional skill, without the need for the skills to be from the same profession..." Upon reading this, Qing Ruyan was stunned. "There actually exists such an artifact! Although it's not a numbered one, this is practically custom-made for you."

"Wait, let's look at the usage restrictions below: the stored professional skills cannot exceed the Sixth Energy Level."

Chen Gu inwardly nodded. It indeed suited him well. However, it could only be used up to the Sixth Energy Level—if he reached the Sixth Energy Level, the skills he could manifest through "The Past of Four Hundred" would be at the Seventh Energy Level.

He scoffed at himself. He was just at the Fourth Energy Level and was already thinking about the Sixth? Wasn't that a little too "forward-looking"?

Going from the Fourth to the Sixth Energy Level was a true leap. At the Sixth Energy Level, one could already be addressed as "Your Excellency."

Starting from the Fifth Energy Level, each advancement became exceptionally difficult, requiring an exponential increase in resources, including those precious ones derived from super life forms.

But this [Secret Nest] was indeed perfect for Chen Gu. Using "The Past of Four Hundred" to switch professions always involved some delay, and his own Energy Level also put a limit on how many professional skills he could use in one fight.

With this pendant, he could pre-store various professional skills, allowing him not only to cast them instantly but also effectively adding six skills to his arsenal in battle!

"Don't get too excited just yet," Qing Ruyan said. "There's another usage restriction at the end."

"[Secret Nest] has six facets, and each person has their different sides. When facing different people, they'll reveal a different side of themselves."

"Only a complex person is worthy of using [Secret Nest]."

This passage was rather enigmatic. Qing Ruyan mulled over it, then suddenly understood. "Tsk—after all the beating around the bush, it just means it's suited for jerks and bitches! The creator of this is such an asshole! How come someone as faithful as me can't use it? Ridiculous!"

Then, she stared at Chen Gu for a moment and chuckled sinisterly.

Chen Gu also stared back at her for a moment, then joined her in the sinister chuckling.

"Let's pick this one." Chen Gu reached out and took the pendant. There was no chain attached to the artifact, so Chen Gu strung it on a cord and hung it around his neck.

Qing Ruyan had thought that in the armory, with its wealth of collections, Chen Gu would certainly "wander" for a bit, vacillating between "white roses" and "red roses" before making a difficult choice. But once he entered, he fell in love at first sight.

Now that she had finished her task so quickly and had to return to work, Qing Ruyan, who was eager to slack off, tempted him, "You can't just leave without gaining something extra. There are so many treasures here. Let me give you a tour, and you can see what other artifacts might suit you in advance."

Chen Gu refused righteously, "Don't even think about it!"

"Trying to tempt me with these things, and then make me work hard for the Bureau of Mystic Security to get rewards? Not a chance!"

"The treasures might be tempting, but my life is my own."

Without a trace of reluctance, he turned and left. "I'm going home!"

Great Actor Chen knew himself well. If he really looked at those numbered artifacts that were so appealing, he might become obsessed. Then, during the next mission, he would think about going all out, possibly earning another visit to the armory to pick something.

That would be dangerous!

Qing Ruyan pursed her lips and had no choice but to follow him out. Then she dutifully returned to her job, while after a long absence, Chen Gu finally returned to his "home" on Capital Star.

He had a car and a house, and not just any car or house, but luxury ones. Still, this "home" felt a bit too deserted.

For a moment, Chen Gu actually missed his grandchildren a little.

He called the gorilla, "Blockhead, I entrusted my granddaughter to you. How has she been developing recently?"

The gorilla humphed. "With me, a gold-medal producer, personally in charge, how could it go poorly? Just look online. Which music site doesn't have her promotions and advertisements?"

Chen Gu, still insatiable, asked, "So how's her fame now? How does she compare to Man Suling?"

The gorilla almost cursed. "Man Suling is a pop diva! You're comparing her to a rookie who hasn't even been in the industry for half a year? The fact that you could ask such a question only shows there's something wrong with your IQ!"

Chen Gu sneered, "Oh really? I seem to recall having some very interesting photos in my possession..."

The gorilla instantly caved. "Brother! My Lord! Dear Daddy! I'll double my efforts to ensure our granddaughter surpasses Man Suling as soon as possible."

Chen Gu leisurely replied, "That's the right attitude. But a question just occurred to me: if she played a significant role in a major film production, that would help her, wouldn't it?"

The gorilla paused, then responded, "I know you're rich now, but that's not how you should be splashing your money if you want to promote someone."

Chen Gu responded with disdain, "It's no wonder you have such a limited view—who told you I was planning to finance a movie for her?"

"Not that?"

"Of course not!" Chen Gu's voice shot up eight octaves, brimming with pride. "It's your dad here who's going to be the lead in this big production! The lead always gets certain privileges, so it shouldn't be a problem for me to create a role, right?"

"You? The lead in a big production? HAHHAH!" The gorilla burst into laughter.

Chen Gu flared up, "Gao Mengjiu, watch your tone!"

Gao Mengjiu was puzzled, "Aren't you just blowing smoke?"

"Of course not!" Chen Gu explained the situation, and Gao Mengjiu got excited. "If that's the case, then it's really great. Qing Yu has potential, and the more exposure she gets now, the better."

Chen Gu nodded, "Alright, I'll handle this."

At this moment, the voice of Man Suling came through from Gao Mengjiu's side, "Who are you talking to? Is it my male god? Quick, let me say a few words..."

Chen Gu hung up the call with a click.

After resting at home for a day, the next morning, Chen Gu went back to school.

When going to class, he ran into Shangguan Yuqing outside the classroom. Just as Chen Gu was about to greet her, the young lady glared at him angrily and turned her head to walk away in a huff.

Chen Gu was baffled. What's gotten into her?

It wasn't until right before class that he saw Qiao Shuangyi sneaking into the classroom through the back door, covered by Lin Xiaochen.

Upon seeing Chen Gu, Lin Xiaochen immediately dragged the chubby kid over, "Brother Chen, be careful. Qiao Fatty has spilled the beans about you, and that girl now knows you were behind the incident last time..."

Chen Gu touched his nose. No wonder she was so unfriendly. Then he pulled Qiao Shuangyi out from behind Lin Xiaochen, "Are you a pig?"

Qiao Shuangyi frowned miserably, "Brother Chen, I was wrong..."

"You let slip something like that too?" Chen Gu glared at him, "What exactly happened?"

Qiao Shuangyi's face reddened, and he was hesitantly silent. Chen Gu said in feigned anger, "Are you going to talk? If not, I'll tell your grand-aunt about this!"

Qiao Shuangyi shivered. He imagined the consequences of his grand-aunt finding out that one of her descendants was such a nitwit... He promptly said, "I'll tell!"

"Shangguan Yuqing, that girl, she doesn't play fair; she used a honey trap..."

After the attack at the Immeasurable Stadium, because Shangguan Yuqing notified the Bureau of Mystic Security in time outside the stadium, Qiao Shuangyi and others had a narrow escape.

Subsequently, Shangguan Yuqing's attitude towards Qiao Shuangyi became "ambiguous," and this fatty, under her few hints, quickly conjured the narcissistic conclusion that "the life-or-death situation made her realize her true feelings; she actually cares about me."

Already coveting her beauty, he boldly asked her out for dinner. Shangguan Yuqing neither agreed nor declined, arriving half an hour late, but still showed up.

Qiao Fatty was over the moon and, in a dazed state, spilled the beans about everything when Shangguan Yuqing asked...

After Qiao Shuangyi finished his story in a lovesick daze, he looked up to find Chen Gu and Lin Xiaochen's eyes practically saying, Is this guy an idiot or what?

He didn't dare to get angry at Chen Gu, but why the hell are you, Lin Xiaochen, looking at me like that? Aren't we on the same boat?

He gave Lin Xiaochen a glare and said, "What are you looking at? I don't believe you could withstand it if Shang Qingye pulled this trick on you!"

Lin Xiaochen panicked internally and immediately started making excuses, "That woman always has a cold face, acting as if someone owes her three billion. Why would I like her?"

Qiao Shuangyi chuckled, "I didn't say you liked her, but look, you just gave yourself away... OW!" He got a slap from Chen Gu.

"Pretty smart, huh? How could you fall for such a simple honey trap?" Chen Gu asked.

Qiao Shuangyi looked aggrieved, not daring to retort. Then his eyes suddenly lit up, "Brother Chen, although I've leaked secrets, I haven't come away empty-handed. I've got some important information for you."

"What kind of information could you possibly have?" Lin Xiaochen sneered.

Qiao Shuangyi said to Chen Gu, "During our conversation, I heard her mention that the Shangguan Family is preparing to excavate an ancient tomb, which could likely be the burial ground of a super life-form from the terror-insect series. Brother Chen, you need super matter from the terror-insect series to advance to the Fifth Energy Level."

Chen Gu's heart stirred. The Fifth Energy Level, huh? Although he still needed to save up skill points, it was indeed time to start making preparations.

He was currently at T8 rank. While the materials division would help shoulder part of the advancement, a significant portion still had to be procured by himself.

The higher the Energy Level, the more resources, especially those related to super life, were needed for advancement. It would markedly improve the success rate, reduce the influence of the Endless Realm, and there was even a chance to awaken unique professional skills.

But was Shangguan Yuqing unintentionally leaking this to Qiao Shuangyi, or was it a deliberate move to pass the message to me through Qiao Shuangyi?

Super life-forms lived incredibly long lives but weren't immortal. Some who reached the end of their lifespan chose the place of their birth as their final resting place.

That was the origin of these "Star Tombs."

Before passing away, they would arrange various measures to ensure their posthumous security. Therefore, Star Tombs were often deeply hidden and protected by numerous safeguards. Nevertheless, excavating a Star Tomb was often much simpler than hunting a super life-form.

The Shangguan Family didn't need to seek external help for such matters, but the fact that such a significant secret was revealed to a junior like Shangguan Yuqing, who was still studying, hinted at some underlying intent.

Chen Gu said lightly, "Let's attend class first." After class, he planned to call Shangguan Yuxie to inquire further.

Chapter 555 - The Second Practice Class

During the afternoon practical combat class, Shangguan Yuqing was clearly eager to participate, but Shang Qingye, who stood beside her with an ever-stoic expression, persuaded her not to embarrass herself by challenging Chen Gu.

Throughout the entire class, Chen Gu sat there like a mascot. Bai Zhijin, like an eggplant battered by frost, was completely wilted.

At the end of the class, Director Xue came in and announced, "The second practical training session for your year is about to begin. Everyone, get ready."

The implication was clear: You scions of influential families, quickly get your families to prepare all sorts of life-saving equipment for you!

Chen Gu turned his head to see Qiao Shuangyi and Lin Xiaochen looking like fawning lackeys. "Brother Cheen—" they drawled, dragging out the last syllable.

Chen Gu shuddered. "Anything, anything can be discussed."

After finally extricating himself, Chen Gu slipped away to call Shangguan Yuxie. This key successor, carefully groomed by the Shangguan family, possessed a striking, roguish charm. Shangguan Yuxie didn't beat around the bush, asking directly, "Are you interested?"

"Why me?"

"My original intention was to cooperate with the Qiao Family. If they joined, I planned to propose they invite you as well. However, Qiao Shuangyi must have consulted his family. They clearly don't want to participate, so he directly relayed the information to you."

Chen Gu had a moment of realization. Even if Qiao Shuangyi is a bit dense and naive, something as significant as a Star Tomb of Super Life Forms would naturally prompt him to report to his family elders first.

Shangguan Yuxie continued, "The fact that you're a multi-class professional is hardly a secret anymore. Star Tomb exploration involves facing numerous dangerous and bizarre situations, and your abilities are exceptionally well-suited for such circumstances. In the past, similar explorations often required sacrificing many professionals, leading to significant losses for us. A large portion of these losses weren't from direct combat with dangers. Instead, they occurred when facing various bizarre situations that required coordination among multiple professionals—and such multi-person cooperation is always prone to errors. If it were you, however, you could handle such situations alone."

"However, I can't promise you specific benefits in advance. You know how precious Super Life Forms are. The advantages you ultimately gain will depend entirely on your performance during the exploration."

Chen Gu nodded. "That's only fair."

"So, are you in?"

Chen Gu agreed. "Alright! But we're about to start our second internship, and it's going to be quite long..."

Shangguan Yuxie replied, "That won't be an issue. We still need some time to prepare on our end. Just rendezvous with us after you finish this internship."

He added a further request, "For my sake, please look after my younger sister a bit."

"No problem," Chen Gu replied.

The Digital Group seemed to have been severely impacted by the last incident. They had gone into hiding and hadn't been heard from since.

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Mystic Security diligently continued its search for clues, remaining ever vigilant.

That day, Ding Zhou finally concluded the arduous negotiations with Bai Yunpeng regarding the film investment. The Bureau of Mystic Security would contribute sixty percent of the funds, and the military the remaining forty percent. If the film turned a profit, the earnings would also be divided according to this ratio.

But making money from this film... Both leaders could only manage a dry chuckle at the thought. Could one really expect a special agent from the Bureau of Mystic Security to act?

Learning to act by cramming at the last minute—the best they could hope for was that it wouldn't be too embarrassing.

As for why they didn't just minimize the investment and churn out a low-quality film to get it over with—after such extensive promotional efforts, producing a slapdash movie would be utterly illogical.

After all, this wasn't Chen Gu's previous life; this was the Interstellar Age.

Besides, both knew that if the film were shoddily made, Chen Gu would be displeased and might genuinely refuse to cooperate. He was now a star player in the Behemoth Alliance, with an idol's image to uphold, and he needed to protect his reputation.

Therefore, both were acutely aware that while the movie could fail at the box office, it absolutely could not become a blight on Chen Gu's career.

Ding Zhou personally took charge of this, arranging for an acting coach for Chen Gu. The coach arrived today, and just as Ding Zhou was about to call Chen Gu over, the office door was suddenly pushed open. Aviloya and Rainbow, whom he hadn't seen in a long time, walked in together.

"Director-General!" Ding Zhou exclaimed, pleasantly surprised. "You've recovered?"

Aviloya nodded, then her gaze fell upon a mature woman standing to one side, exuding an air of intellectual beauty.

"And this is?" Aviloya inquired.

Ding Zhou quickly explained, "This is the acting coach we've found for Chen Gu."

Aviloya raised her eyebrows, looking as though she wanted to say something but ultimately refrained.

Ever since becoming the Director-General of the Bureau of Mystic Security, she had never experienced such a long period of complete 'downtime.' She had often wondered in the past when she might finally get a proper break.

But now that she was truly idle, she felt incredibly restless, almost antsy.

Having completed her Purification, she had rushed back immediately, unable to wait a moment longer. During her journey, she had listened to Qing Ruyan's report and was already aware of the recent events at the Bureau.

But sending Chen Gu to make a movie? With an investment exceeding five hundred million? What kind of harebrained scheme was this? Which brilliant mind came up with such an idea on a whim?

However, Chen Gu had just saved her, and the project was already underway. Swallowing her reservations, she said, "For matters like this, let the professionals take charge. Contact Gao Mengjiu and ask him to oversee it."

"Understood," Ding Zhou replied.

Regarding the fact that Chen Gu had saved her life, Aviloya's emotions were complicated. She herself couldn't quite articulate her feelings towards this young 'thief' anymore.

She dismissed Ding Zhou, then turned and sat down in her own chair. She let out a long breath. It felt good to be back; a sense of solid reassurance washed over her.

Chapter 556 - The Second Practice Class_2

Rainbow smiled slightly, a sparkle in her eyes.

「...」

Inside the Huai Shan Branch School, discussions had been rampant lately. The second-generation students were all trying to find out what this practice course was about. Each family was scrambling, using every connection and trick they had.

The previous time it was to quell native rebellions; what would this time entail? Moreover, for someone of the principal's caliber, the scale of the last mission clearly seemed like a gentle introduction for the newly enrolled students—just a minor test. This time, it had been announced that the duration would be quite long. And since students from every cohort had died during these practice courses, their anxiety wasn't unfounded; they were genuinely concerned for their safety.

Chubby, who was well-connected and always in the know, came to "report" to Chen Gu almost every few hours.

Finally, amidst everyone's anxiety, the school announced the news: gather tomorrow and prepare to depart.

This time, the group would be led directly by Director Xue, accompanied by Wang Chengqian and another instructor, Luo Bei. Wang Chengqian had surprisingly advanced to the Sixth Energy Level during this period, while Luo Bei was a "Medium Instructor" of the Seventh Energy Level.

The school, with its usual show of power, used its own starship, taking the students away from Capital Star.

Chen Gu had negotiated with the Alliance the night before. The Alliance was quite dissatisfied; a star player frequently missing matches was also a loss for them. Like the last time, they could only give Chen Gu a two-week leave; any longer, and Chen Gu's results would be marked negatively.

Chen Gu remembered Chubby mentioning this practice course might last for three months... By the time I return, my rankings will have tumbled drastically. This season is wasted. He sighed helplessly. I'll have to start over next season. But the rewards for a champion are so high...

On the starship, Fan Yutong raised his hand and asked, "Teacher, what exactly is this practice course about?"

Everyone had been waiting for several days, speculating wildly. Now that they had boarded the starship, the three supervising teachers were still seated nonchalantly, showing no intention of explaining. The students finally couldn't hold back any longer. Fan Yutong took the lead, and immediately a clamor of questions arose: "That's right, that's right! Even if it's supposed to be confidential, surely you can tell us now?"

"It's just us on the starship; no one will leak any information."

But Director Xue only replied indifferently, "When it's time for you to know, you will be informed. For now, make good use of the time to rest."

The phrase "make good use of the time to rest" suddenly made everyone uneasy. What? Does this mean we won't even have time to rest once the practice course starts?

Liao Mingliang, trying to be clever, asked, "Teacher, are we going to be divided into groups again this time?"

Director Xue glanced at him indifferently, offering no response. Liao Mingliang's attempt fell flat, and he rubbed his nose to ease his awkwardness.

Ten hours of interstellar travel and two warp jumps brought them into a desolate starfield. The number of surrounding stars had suddenly dwindled. In the distance, a peculiar planet emitted flickering light at an extremely rapid frequency. Amid fragments of a shattered asteroid belt, occasional meteors broke free of gravity and shot out.

The pilot manipulated a control, and on the star map, a massive, desolate, dark-red planet not far ahead of them was enlarged.

Three hours later, they appeared in the outer space of that planet. Then, the starship activated its stealth mode, quietly landing in a giant meteorite crater on the planet.

Most of the students present came from prominent backgrounds, and their expressions turned grim when they saw the starship activating its stealth capabilities.

Bai Zhijin asked softly, "What's wrong?"

Liao Mingliang explained in a low voice, "This means that our target for the practice course likely possesses overwhelmingly superior forces on this planet. We need to evade their satellites..."

Bai Zhijin couldn't help but whisper in dismay, "Why send us here? We're just students; this kind of place should be cleared out by the military."

Once the starship had landed securely, Director Xue stood up and said, "Deploy the 'Scouts' to ensure the vicinity is safe."

The starship's pilot pressed a button. Several hatches opened on different sides of the starship's hull, and armed drones, each about the size of a basketball, silently flew out. They then dispersed in various directions to scan the area, quickly disappearing from sight.

Director Xue clapped his hands to get the students' attention. "You've all been wanting to know the content of this practice course, and now I will tell you."

"Your opponents this time are gangsters, warlords, and the Insect Race."

The students were baffled. How could we face so many different types of enemies in a single operation?

Director Xue pulled up a star map and zoomed in on a corner. "This is the Star Nation of Ekmolon. Among the many small star nations, it's a rather unremarkable one."

"The Star Nation of Ekmolon has always been internally unstable, plagued by numerous rebel factions. Most of these rebel forces aren't actually based in Ekmolon. For example, this group, the 'George Warriors,' has established some of its key bases within the territories of the Four Great Star Nations to evade Ekmolon's government forces."

"The Four Great Star Nations can't openly shelter them—at least not officially. Therefore, the 'George Warriors' always seek out desolate planets within the territories of the Four Great Star Nations to establish themselves."

"If they want to rebel, they need an army, they need weapons, and they require money to purchase these from the interstellar black market."

Chapter 557 - The Second Practice Class_3

"The planet beneath our feet is one of the most important sources of funding for the George Warrior Group."

Then, she opened several images, all depicting the Alien Insect Race, which Chen Gu was very familiar with.

"Their 'business' on this planet involves breeding these insects. Then, they use a special stimulus to make certain glands within the insects' bodies produce a secretion."

"Once enough of this secretion has been accumulated, they kill the insects and extract it. The substance is then refined into this."

The screen displayed several brick-sized, neatly packaged blocks.

"Once these are distributed, the gangs in various places dilute them, and then some of you are very familiar with this, even having tried it personally—"

The screen changed once again to show some glass tubes the length of a finger, topped with a metal atomizing device.

The expressions of some of the students changed subtly, as they quickly tried to feign normalcy. If they showed recognition, wouldn't that prove they had indeed tried it?

Bai Zhijin asked in confusion, "Director, what is this?"

Bai Zhijin had never seen such a thing, and Director Xue believed her. "This is a hallucinogenic drug called 'Limitless,' which is very popular in the Star Sea."

"Just press this button and inhale the drug, and you'll feel as if you have endless possibilities!"

"This drug is potent and swept across the market upon its introduction six years ago, quickly overshadowing all other hallucinogens. All major Star Nations are deeply troubled by it, and for years have been tracing its origins. Despite several upstream dealers being taken down, the root source has never been found."

Director Xue explained, "And its source is right beneath your feet, on this planet."

The students' faces turned pale. This field practice was too dangerous!

That was a rebel army they were dealing with, and an important source of their funding at that—surely heavily guarded by elite troops.

Fan Yutong, shivering, said, "This kind of thing... shouldn't it be cleaned up by a joint operation of law enforcement and the military? Why bring us students here..."

"Because the principal thought it should be you," Director Xue replied.

Fan Yutong was speechless. It was indeed the typical style of the principal.

Chen Gu raised his hand. "Director, our strength is too weak. Even if we are all Professionals, facing a well-organized rebel army, we have no hope of winning."

"The purpose of this field practice isn't to annihilate the rebel army nor to destroy their breeding grounds completely," said Director Xue.

"Your mission is beheading."

"Just kill the highest commander of the George Warrior Group on this planet. After that, the military will immediately take over the battle," she continued.

Qiao Shuangyi voiced his dissatisfaction, "Why all this hassle? Why not just send a Starship to bomb them outright?"

Director Xue glared at him. "Because the George Warrior Group has captured about 700,000 civilians from Eckmolon and other nearby Star Nations. It's very likely that all these people, possibly used as slaves, are detained underground on this planet for labor."

"Do you want our Starships to fire a shot and blow up these people together with the 700,000 war refugees?" she asked.

Qiao Shuangyi was dumbfounded. How was he supposed to know about that?

Lin Xiaochen, as one of the sycophantic duo, immediately kicked him while he was down. "You think you're smart? If it were feasible, the principal and the military would have done it long ago."

Director Xue didn't bother with Lin Xiaochen and moved on to open another image. It showed a ferocious man with a centipede-like metal scar on his face and a scruffy beard.

"According to the intelligence we've acquired, this is the bandit leader of the George Warrior Group on this planet, 'Ghost Shark' Deng Puer. He is the third-ranked member of the George Warrior Group. While there's no concrete intelligence, we're seventy percent certain that he's a Professional, possibly a 'Mist Singer'—somewhere between the Third Energy Level and the Fifth Energy Level."

She looked around at all the students. "So your main mission is to scout and handle the other riffraff. If Deng Puer is spotted, the three of us teachers will take him down."

"We estimate that there are about 40,000 warriors of the George Warrior Group on this planet. They are heavily armed, not to mention their various combat vehicles and powered Mechas, and it's very possible they have hidden Starships in the Star Sea, so everyone needs to be very careful!"

Upon hearing that their teachers would handle 'Ghost Shark' Deng Puer, who seemed quite menacing, the students noticeably relaxed.

Even with strong support from their families, the strongest among these students were only at the Second Energy Level, with only a few beginning to prepare for the Third Energy Level.

And someone like Deng Puer, a rebel military leader, was very likely the maximum level reported in official intelligence: the Fifth Energy Level.

At this point, Wang Chengqian stepped forward. "We will divide into three groups, each deployed in a different area to search for targets. The three of us teachers will each lead a team, and student credits will be assessed based on each team's achievements."

As soon as he said this, Wang Chengqian was dismayed to see all the students, including Chen Gu, giving him disapproving looks...

Wang Chengqian fought the urge to curse. He wondered if he should voice his frustration but ultimately just slumped his head in resignation. What could you expect with a low Energy Level and inferior strength?

Chapter 558: The Second Practice Class_4

"The random grouping begins now..." Just as Wang Chengqian started speaking, Qiao Shuangyi and Lin Xiaochen let out a wail, "Random? I want to be in the same group as Chen..."

Director Xue frowned and glared at the two. "I no longer want to be stuck with you two."

The other students chuckled with schadenfreude. The sycophantic duo realized in an instant that they had unwittingly earned the dislike of Director Xue. She held the highest position there, and even if they were randomly assigned to her team, she would surely kick them out. So, the remaining two teachers—one at the Seventh Energy Level, and the other at the Sixth Energy Level—didn't really differ much. Moreover, the teachers had said that their main task was to deal with Deng Puer, which meant that at other times, the students had to rely on themselves. If that was the case, it would be better to take this opportunity to cling tightly to Chen's coattails. What if Chen was moved by our choice of him over a mighty Eighth Energy Level teacher and decided to take extra care of us? That would be worthwhile!

The two said quickly and "sincerely," "We really want to be in the same group as Chen."

Their words were indeed sincere. The last practice class had proven that Chen's coattails were solid and reliable. Clinging to them could not only save their lives but also ensure a top spot in the credit evaluation!

The rest of the students looked on. Are these two nuts? Offending Director Xue so grievously?

But Director Xue laughed and said, "Since you're so persistent, I'll make an exception this time. You two will be tied to Chen Gu. Let's begin the random assignment."

Chen Gu wore a helpless expression, casting a reproachful look at the two. He wasn't so clairvoyant that he could see through the duo's little schemes, but because of them, he knew Director Xue had definitely forsaken him too! You guys want to cling to a strong backer, but don't I, Chen Gu, want to as well? That's every man's dream! I also don't want to rely on my own efforts, struggling and toiling endlessly. Following Director Xue, an Eighth Energy Level grandmaster, and coasting to an easy win—wouldn't that be fantastic?

Wang Chengqian operated the device, binding the three together. Then, lightly touching a button, his private super-brain began the random grouping.

In an instant, the outcome was revealed, and three voices cried out in unison, "I don't want to be in the same group with them!"

Bai Zhijin.

Shangguan Yuqing.

Shang Qingye.

Even Shang Qingye, a remarkable girl whose expression had hardly changed in a hundred thousand years, realized that teaming up with these three would undoubtedly lead to immense suffering.

There's no need to mention Bai Zhijin and Shangguan Yuqing; their reactions were even more obvious.

Wang Chengqian's expression turned cold. "I'm only at the Sixth Energy Level, so you think you can question my grouping decisions?"

The three students were stunned, their hopes of changing groups completely extinguished.

Wang Chengqian was genuinely furious. He said to Director Xue, "Director, I'll take their group."

Director Xue smiled slightly. "Alright."

Bai Zhijin and the other two hung their heads, grinding their teeth. They hated Chen Gu's trio to the core. If it weren't for those clowns, how could we have ended up like this? Following a "mere" Sixth Energy Level teacher on such a dangerous mission?

Liao Mingliang and Fan Yutong got their wish and were assigned to Director Xue. They patted Bai Zhijin's shoulder with a grin. "Buddy, good luck! We believe in your strength!"

As for us, HAHAHA, of course, our skills are lacking, so we'll just safely get through this perilous practice class by tagging along behind the Eighth Energy Level grandmaster.

The school's spacecraft released three small ground vehicles, carrying the three groups off in different directions.

After their departure, the spacecraft immediately transmitted coordinates. Before long, a fleet of the Confederation's stealth Landing Craft descended sequentially into the meteorite crater.

The hatches opened, and powerful Confederation infantry troops marched out continuously.

Finally, with a tremendous roar, an entire battalion of "War Sages" emerged from the Landing Crafts. Among them were four of the largest, first-class War Sages.

The principal wasn't truly insane. For such a dangerous mission, he wouldn't just let his students recklessly take risks without arranging any backup.

Chapter 559: Spiritual Power

The ground flyer cruised a hundred meters above the surface. Wang Chengqian sat impassively, surrounded by his "team members."

Anyway, everyone's mood was far from joyful...

After several hundred kilometers, the terrain became undulating. The turbulence created by the ground grew severe, causing the flyer to climb higher.

Wang Chengqian looked at Qiao Shuangyi and Lin Xiaochen with malice. "This practical lesson is definitely centered around you. Unless there's a fatal danger, I won't lift a finger. In fact, I assure you that for the vast majority of the time, you won't even be aware of my presence.

"Moreover, the school's practical lessons do have a casualty quota. If I find out that you're not fully exerting your potential because you're counting on my secret protection, and not giving it your all in the practical lesson... then I'm sorry, even if you put yourselves in a life-or-death situation, I won't intervene..."

Just as Qiao Shuangyi and Lin Xiaochen were about to protest, a series of sharp alarm sounds suddenly blared inside the flyer.

On the ground ahead, what had been a vast expanse of gravel suddenly swelled with huge mounds of rock, from which unfolding turrets emerged!

In total, ten twin-linked rapid-fire pulse cannons!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM...

Countless bolts of light assailed the flyer. Piloted by its AI, it immediately activated full power, nimbly maneuvering through the air to avoid the onslaught.

Compared to most human pilots, AI piloting had significant advantages. Despite the twenty cannon barrels firing a dense barrage of energy projectiles, the flyer always managed to dodge by the slimmest of margins.

But such unrestrained evasive maneuvers took their toll on the students inside. Shangguan Yuqing and the chubby kid nearly vomited.

Wang Chengqian laughed heartily. "Dear classmates, the practical lesson has officially begun! You're about to see the vast difference between the rebels and ordinary gangs!"

The flyer roared past the ten turrets, but they didn't cease fire, rotating their barrels to continue bombarding the fleeing craft.

The flyer desperately dodged the pursuing projectiles. Suddenly, on the ground ahead, a row of energy generators concealed beneath stones activated with a BUZZ.

A massive energy net shot up from the ground, stretching into the sky.

The flyer smashed headlong into it. Amid CRACKLING sounds, the energy net nearly shredded it to pieces!

Qiao Shuangyi sat there stunned as an incandescent beam from the net sliced into the flyer's interior, passing just five centimeters from his nose!

A small bolt of energy lightning FIZZED from the net, striking Qiao Shuangyi precisely on the tip of his nose.

Poor Qiao Shuangyi felt as if he'd been punched in the face. His nose turned black, and the stinging pain nearly brought him to tears.

The ground generators powered down, and the energy net vanished instantly. With a loud THUD, the flyer crashed to the ground. Chen Gu observed the incessantly flashing red lights inside the flyer. He stood up and grabbed Qiao Shuangyi and Lin Xiaochen, one in each hand.

Bai Zhijin was frantically yanking the hatch release lever, but the mechanism had jammed. Chen Gu strode over and kicked the hatch. The heavy armored door WHOOSHED out dozens of meters, crashing heavily onto the ground.

While Bai Zhijin stared in disbelief, Chen Gu had already leaped out, dragging Qiao Shuangyi (the chubby kid) and Lin Xiaochen with him. He took cover behind the downed flyer, evading the continuous barrage of energy bolts still firing from their rear. After observing the surroundings, he waved to everyone. "Who among you can deal with those turrets?"

The rapid-fire pulse cannons weren't very powerful individually, but their sustained fire and long range made them a persistent threat. The moment they revealed themselves, the turrets would target them again.

Qiao Shuangyi and Lin Xiaochen shook their heads like pellet drums. The one thing they were certain of at that moment was the age-old wisdom: stick close to Brother Chen.

Chen Gu gritted his teeth, preparing to charge back and deal with the turrets himself. Suddenly, Shang Qingye stood up. On the back of her Mecha was a specialized backpack. It opened with a SWISH, its metallic components automatically assembling into a bizarrely shaped, long-range sniper... rifle?

Simultaneously, a special targeting lens slid down over her helmet. After aiming at a turret, she fired with a dull THUD.

A specialized energy projectile flew a great distance, accurately striking one of the turrets. Immediately, the turret erupted violently from within. A net of crackling electrical energy, resembling a fishing net, spread out from it.

BOOM!

The entire turret exploded from the inside. Its two energy cannon barrels were blasted into several pieces and launched skyward.

Without a moment's pause, Shang Qingye turned and aimed at the second turret.

In just ten seconds, Shang Qingye had sniped all ten turrets. Throughout the process, she remained expressionless and cool, showing no hint of emotional fluctuation.

After finishing, the specialized energy sniper rifle automatically disassembled, its components retracting to reform the backpack. Shang Qingye stated calmly, "Dealt with."

Chen Gu nodded. "The 'Guardian Sprite' system? Impressive."

Shang Qingye's specialization differed from that of the "Big Rabbit." Dora achieved victory through the sheer volume of her firearms. In contrast, Shang Qingye favored using high-powered ammunition to eliminate threats decisively from a long range.

This difference also stemmed from their distinct backgrounds. Dora was a freelance mercenary, while Shang Qingye's affluent family could supply her with formidable weaponry.

Chapter 560: Spiritual Power_2

For example, that backpack, Chen Gu felt, must be an item of a numbered classification!

After Shang Qingye dealt with those turrets, eight slender and graceful mechanical arms extended from behind her Mecha's shoulders. Each arm sported a miniature six-barrel, rapid-fire energy gun.

Although each barrel was only as thick as a pinky finger, a small energy reactor at her waist blossomed with light, as brilliant as a lotus flower. Chen Gu didn't dare underestimate the power of these "miniature" guns.

She headed toward the energy generators. "I'll go check them out."

Chen Gu turned and went toward the destroyed turrets. "I'll see if there are any clues over there."

Qiao Shuangyi patted the dumbstruck Lin Xiaochen on the shoulder and said earnestly, "Bro, you're on your own now."

Lin Xiaochen's expression became a little unnatural. "What does that have to do with me..."

Just as he spoke, a series of THUDS resounded; Shang Qingye had destroyed another energy generator.

Soon, both returned. Shang Qingye had found nothing, but Chen Gu, using his hacking skills, discovered that the turrets and energy generators here were all controlled by an intelligent structure hidden deep underground.

He said, "We've been discovered by the George Warriors, but I've also managed to reverse-track their location."

He glanced at everyone. "I know your families have prepared some good things for you. Don't hold anything back. You've all seen it—this time, we're facing a regular army! They are extremely vicious and possess powerful firepower. If we don't give it our all, we might end up using one of the school's precious fatality slots!"

Everyone's expression turned serious. Even Shanguan Yuqing, who still harbored some minor grievances against Chen Gu, understood the gravity of the situation.

"Follow me!" Chen Gu took the lead, gripping the Father-Son Sword. "Let's find Deng Puer as quickly as possible and end this field exercise!"

The little fatty silently slapped a button on his Mecha. Amidst a series of CLICKS and WHIRS, the initially ordinary-looking Mecha rapidly grew larger and more heavily armored.

Its defense is invincible!

Shangguan Yuqing sneered, "Quite the sturdy turtle shell!"

The little fatty, far from being ashamed, seemed proud. "Surviving is what's most important. After all, nothing matters once you're dead."

Bai Zhijin felt the most awkward at this moment. His Mecha was just the basic model provided by the school. While it was certainly excellent compared to ordinary Mechas found elsewhere, it fell far short of the custom models these second-generation rich kids had.

Chen Gu thought for a moment, then instructed, "Bai Zhijin, you follow behind me."

He intended to protect Bai Zhijin, who currently seemed the "weakest," by keeping him in the center of the team.

Bai Zhijin's expression changed. Chen Gu knew the guy's sensitive pride was acting up again. He raised his arm, activating the thick energy shield on his Mecha's forearm—one prepared for him by the Bureau of Mystic Security—and looked back. "Or would you prefer to take the lead?"

Bai Zhijin looked at the energy shield on Chen Gu's arm—two meters tall, one point two meters wide, and thirty centimeters thick—and felt a reassuring sense of security. He hesitantly shook his head. "No, you go ahead."

"Very good," Chen Gu said, then led the team onward.

Wang Chengqian faithfully kept his earlier "promise." Throughout the entire process, he had virtually no presence, and the students almost forgot there was a teacher among them.

Without surface vehicles, everyone had to rely on their Mecha's legs. Thankfully, the Mechas were not slow. After walking for a while, Chen Gu asked, "Does anyone have a satellite? Launch one. We're as blind as bats right now, which puts us in a very passive position."

Lin Xiaochen silently flipped a switch. From behind his left shoulder, a streak of fire shot into the sky, launching an expensive individual tactical satellite into orbit. He then shared the satellite's link password with everyone, allowing each of them to receive its signals. The situation for hundreds of kilometers around appeared before their eyes.

Bai Zhijin ground his teeth. "You damn rich show-offs!"

But then, they saw an armed convoy rapidly approaching their position. Perfect.

Chen Gu asked Lin Xiaochen, "What are the satellite's electronic warfare capabilities?"

Lin Xiaochen made an 'OK' gesture. "Leave it to me."

The group chose a location for an ambush. However, to avoid the enemy convoy's electronic reconnaissance, Chen Gu and his team were temporarily holding their position and regrouping behind the ambush site.

The convoy soon appeared in their line of sight: seven vehicles in total, all heavy armored vehicles with large-caliber energy cannons mounted on their sides.

A pair of optical lenses deployed from Shangguan Yuqing's helmet. After careful observation, she reported, "Each vehicle holds twelve people. No specialists among them."

Before Chen Gu could speak, Shang Qingye interjected, "Leave it to me!"

Her backpack once again transformed into that massive energy sniper... rifle. Then, Shang Qingye tilted her head thoughtfully and adjusted the "caliber" of the rifle's muzzle, increasing it by eighty percent.

She then aimed at the convoy and quickly locked onto her target. With a deep THUD, a large-caliber energy projectile was fired.

This time, however, it didn't directly hit a target. The energy projectile flew above the convoy and, with a resounding BANG, exploded, showering down a rain of fire that engulfed the entire convoy. When this fiery rain hit the ground, it triggered a second, even more terrifying wave of explosions.

The area where the convoy had been was now enveloped by an immense, gray-white hemispherical cloud of energy, nearly a hundred meters in diameter!