

Full Time 641

Chapter 641: The Inevitable Battle Part 4

This was an utterly cruel end.

Qing Ruyan grabbed Rainbow's arm in a panic. "Senior, you have to stop him! Just end this match!"

Inside the live stream room, the supporters of "only strength matters" all chimed in:

"It's over!"

In the No. 9 Refining Field, some people also realized what was happening. They shot to their feet and shouted, "The outcome is decided! Gao Deng, stop! We're all colleagues; there's no need to be so ruthless!"

But Gao Deng paid them no heed. He had already successfully captured Chen Gu with his abilities. As an emotionless weapon, he naturally wouldn't hesitate to kill his opponent.

And Chen Gu, under the effects of his Multistate Special Agent class, was unable to use Quantum Teleportation and thus obviously couldn't escape Gao Deng's grasp.

He would not miss this opportunity.

However, Gao Deng didn't know that Chen Gu still had Secret Nest.

A faint ripple of energy flashed. Gao Deng felt a lightness in his hand—Chen Gu had vanished!

Gao Deng was surprised but not disheartened. A Seventh Energy Level against a Fifth Energy Level—he had absolute confidence.

"You escaped once, can you escape a second time?" Gao Deng said coldly. "Your fate was sealed long ago."

Chen Gu reappeared dozens of meters away, leaning against the energy shield, gasping heavily. He seemed to be at the end of his rope.

Gao Deng walked towards him. Two rotating orbs of light appeared beneath his outstretched palms—no one knew what weapon was forming within that light.

However, to everyone's surprise, the two orbs of light kept spreading outward. Although the light was dimming, their reach gradually filled the entire interior of the energy shield.

"He's using his ability to control all matter within the energy shield's range!" someone realized. "This is like a sensory skill—Chen Gu has no way to escape this time!"

Leaning against the energy shield, Chen Gu smirked at the approaching Gao Deng and contemptuously made a gesture with his little finger.

Gao Deng was devoid of emotion; the provocative gesture had no effect on him. But then, Chen Gu's little finger shot off!

As the severed digit flew toward Gao Deng, a burst of red light erupted from it, growing brighter and more blinding!

"Biological Nuclear Explosion! He severed his own finger to trigger that divine-level nuclear blast!"

BOOM—

A tiny mushroom cloud soared into the sky, and the generator outside kicked into full load for the second time.

After the explosion, Chen Gu looked even more battered, but Gao Deng slowly walked out of the flames.

Inside the No. 9 Refining Field, nearly everyone, including Qing Ruyan, had hoped Chen Gu's self-mutilating move would turn defeat into victory. Now, only voices of disappointment could be heard.

And in the live stream room, those "strength is everything" proponents were making snide remarks again:

"Useless. Never mind a little finger; even if Chen Gu used his entire body as material to ignite a Biological Nuclear Explosion, he still couldn't take Gao Deng down with him. A Fifth Energy Level class skill can't kill a Seventh Energy Level opponent like that."

But amidst everyone's despair, Chen Gu smiled.

Rainbow finally finished her small bottle of strawberry-flavored yogurt, licking her lips with lingering enjoyment. She then gently patted Qing Ruyan on the shoulder. "It's over. Get the medical pod ready. Chen Gu is also near his limit."

Qing Ruyan was startled by her words. "What do you mean?"

Gao Deng, who had been steadily closing in on Chen Gu, suddenly grew uncoordinated as he walked. His legs then twisted unnaturally, and he inexplicably collapsed to the ground with a THUD.

Still trying to reach Chen Gu, Gao Deng twitched on the ground a couple of times. Then, the hand he was stretching towards Chen Gu fell limp, and he moved no more.

"Huh?!"

In the No. 9 Refining Field, all the spectators were utterly bewildered.

Chen Gu's desperate counterattack, launched by severing his own finger, hadn't seemed to work. So why had Gao Deng suddenly collapsed while simply walking?

Chen Gu walked out from the energy shield and waved weakly to Qing Ruyan. "Hey, come give me a hand. I'm about done for too."

"Oh!" Qing Ruyan leaped up excitedly and rushed down to support Chen Gu. Before they left, Chen Gu turned his head, pointed to the others from the Independent Action Detachment, and declared, "Give me back my case!"

Inside the live stream room, the flood of comments that had filled the screen vanished in an instant.

Those "strength above all" believers were still bewildered. How could Gao Deng, who clearly had the absolute advantage, collapse just like that? Finished, without Chen Gu even needing to strike again?

"HAHAHAHA!" Chen Gu's supporters emerged, excitedly spamming the chat: "Where are those barking dogs from earlier? Why have they disappeared? Your master's done for! No more bones for him to throw you! HAHAHA..."

The "strength above all" proponents all dived offline; not one dared to show their face.

Chen Gu had analyzed Gao Deng seriously and realized that a fight wasn't impossible.

Gao Deng appeared formidable, but he had a trait that was an advantage in war yet a disadvantage in duels between professionals like this: he lacked the sensation of pain.

A warrior's objective is to complete their mission, even at the cost of their life. So, it was perfectly fine for Gao Deng and his group, initially trained as "weapons," to lack a sense of pain; without it, injuries wouldn't affect their determination.

But in duels between professionals, they couldn't clearly perceive the severity of the injuries they sustained.

From the start of the fight, Chen Gu's strategy was to trade injury for injury with Gao Deng. His various Radiation Missionary class skills, like Radiation Scouring, dealt persistent damage; the radiation continually sapped Gao Deng's vitality.

A regular professional would have noticed this long ago, but Gao Deng, lacking a sense of pain, couldn't perceive it.

Despite this weakness, Gao Deng was, after all, a Seventh Energy Level being and a product of genetic modification; his physical constitution was formidable.

However, after careful analysis, Chen Gu discovered that Alchemical Adepts weren't known for robust bodies. Classes like adepts, Wizards, and Mages, just by their names, gave an impression of frailty.

Among those of the same Energy Level, their physical strength tended to be relatively weaker.

Moreover, Chen Gu had studied all the Super Soldier plans Bai Yunpeng had given him. He confirmed that Gao Deng and his kind relied entirely on genetic modification to meet the physical qualifications for their respective Energy Levels, then continuously fought to grind skill points, advancing as soon as they hit the threshold.

In other words, to ensure the fastest possible advancement, all their stats only met the minimum requirements for each Energy Level.

This meant that even among Seventh Energy Levels, Gao Deng's physical constitution was among the weakest.

It was worth a shot!

Finally, and most importantly, Chen Gu had collected a vast amount of data. He'd even endured a scolding when he called his mentor, Zhong Yuanbei, to confirm one crucial detail: Seventh Energy Level Alchemical Adepts could create almost any kind of weapon, but they weren't yet capable of manufacturing numbered-grade items themselves.

Low-level items were useless in combat at this Energy Level; creating them would be a waste of time and less effective than simply using powerful direct attacks.

And since Gao Deng couldn't directly manufacture numbered-grade items, Chen Gu, with his own abilities, likely wouldn't be instantly killed. This gave him the chance to wear Gao Deng down!

Gao Deng's body, after accumulating numerous injuries, finally buckled under the strain of the last Biological Nuclear Explosion and completely collapsed.

Meanwhile, Chen Gu himself had Atomic Life, allowing him to regenerate. His physical constitution was far superior to others at the same Energy Level. With his massive health pool, he had ultimately succeeded, outlasting and grinding Gao Deng down!

Chapter 642: An Unremarkable Star

Gao Deng's subordinates, the three female Professionals from the Xiaogasa Family, no longer displayed their usual malice and arrogance. They couldn't understand how a distinguished Seventh Energy Level could have been defeated.

A Fifth Energy Level can defeat a Seventh Energy Level—could we possibly be a match for such an opponent?

Meanwhile, the soldiers from the same Super Soldier Program as Gao Deng quickly rushed onto the field, picked up Gao Deng, and fled.

The agents of the Bureau of Mystic Security shook their heads. Given Gao Deng's condition, there was basically no hope for treatment. Even if they managed to save his life, his professional career was certainly over.

There was a lot of inside information they didn't know.

These people hustled Gao Deng to the parking lot. Their maglev car was their own, not the standard-issue model.

Inside the massive vehicle was an advanced life-support device. They rushed to stuff Gao Deng inside.

They had to ensure Gao Deng didn't suffer complete brain death. As long as his brain remained alive, his precious memories—especially the experience of fighting Chen Gu—could be preserved.

General Du Lifeng had memory backups of everyone, but those backups were updated only every three days and were incomplete.

"The vehicle's life-support pod doesn't have enough power..."

As an alarm sounded, several people decisively pulled Gao Deng from the life-support device, swiftly lopped off his head, discarded his body, and placed only the head back into the life-support device.

BEEP.

BEEP.

BEEP.

Green indicators lit up one by one, and the life-support device began to operate smoothly.

「...」

Aviloya was still dealing with official duties. After Chen Gu's victory, cheers erupted throughout the Director-General's building, but the door to her office isolated her from the outside world. She was the Director-General—lofty, revered, but inevitably solitary.

As for the live broadcast from the Ninth Refining Field, she truly had no interest in it.

Spending time on that was less useful than processing more documents; she really was very busy.

Suddenly, her office door was pushed open, and Rainbow walked in languidly. Seeing no one behind her, Aviloya asked, "Where is Qing Ruyan?"

With a playful smile, Rainbow said, "She went to the hospital to take care of her good brother. Tsk, tsk, those two are real oddballs. I actually thought they'd make a good couple, but the more they hang out, the more they act like siblings!"

Hearing that Chen Gu was in the hospital, Aviloya's expression remained placid. "He lost?" she asked. "Not surprising, as long as he's not dead."

"He won," Rainbow stated.

Aviloya paused, setting down her documents. "Won?"

"He won," Rainbow confirmed. "He exploited a weakness in Gao Deng that isn't exactly a weakness: his lack of pain sensation."

Rainbow only needed to hint at it, and Valkyrie immediately understood. "It... wasn't easy," she mused. "No wonder he ended up in the hospital. Wearing down a Seventh Energy Level is no small feat."

"We all overestimated Gao Deng. He's likely the weakest Seventh Energy Level..." After saying this, Rainbow frowned, thought for a moment, and corrected herself: "No, I mean he's the easiest Seventh Energy Level to defeat."

He might not be the weakest, but he definitely had the thinnest HP bar.

"Even so, that was a Seventh Energy Level! I really underestimated that thief," Aviloya remarked.

Then, she suddenly realized something. Looking up, she saw her best friend watching her with a teasing gaze. In a rare display of girlishness, she rolled her eyes playfully. "Fine, fine, you were right before. Are you happy now?"

"It was my meddling that led the Special Action Squad to a crushing defeat..."

If it wasn't for my concern that no one in the Special Action Squad could defeat Gao Deng, and my deliberately adding the Third Energy Level restriction, then Chen Gu, Chen Jixian, and Gong Shuxu might have won all three matches. It should have been the Independent Action Squad that was obliterated...

A rare flush warmed Aviloya's cheeks; this whole affair now seemed... rather foolish. The distinguished Valkyrie, Director-General of the Bureau of Mystic Security, had almost never in her life been associated with the word "foolish."

But this time...

From Aviloya's perspective, her original intention in imposing that restriction was simple: do everything possible to secure the first victory for the Capital Star Region. Keeping the jurisdiction of Capital Star under her control was what mattered most.

The outcome of the last two matches was, in her view, insignificant.

Rainbow didn't want to embarrass her close friend and instead praised Chen Gu. "That young man, we should all think more highly of him. If we need a miracle in the future, just send him out."

But Aviloya's focus was slightly askew. "Makes sense," she replied. "We should keep him on a tight leash and make sure he doesn't cause any trouble."

In the end, Aviloya couldn't help but feel regret. "Alas, the Capital Star Region," she sighed, "and the jurisdiction over those prosperous star systems... they slipped through my fingers. I can't get them back now."

「...」

Chen Gu was seriously injured, but none of his wounds were fatal. Given the medical standards of this era, they were all considered "minor."

He lay in the medical pod in good spirits as the members of the Special Action Squad surrounded him, everyone buzzing with excitement. This was a cathartic release after three days of suppression, a moment of sheer exhilaration.

The girls chattered away, while Chu Zheng quietly stayed by Chen Gu's side, attending to him.

Dora wanted to come over too, but Big Rabbit was too shy and couldn't bring herself to compete with Chu Zheng for that spot.

Chapter 643: An Unremarkable Star_2

Qing Ruyan was indeed becoming more like one of the guys, just as Rainbow had said. Once she saw Chu Zheng taking care of Chen Gu, she left him in her hands. After all, as long as the kid didn't die, that would be fine.

The little demoness, true to her nature, immediately reverted to her usual antics. She raised her arms high, shouting, "Let's go out and celebrate tonight!"

This immediately triggered a chorus of agreement.

Chen Gu, inside the healing pod, snorted. "Look at how easily satisfied you all are! Celebrating already? We just got a bit of breathing room by reclaiming a case that's actually irrelevant. And those prosperous star sectors are still in the hands of the Independent Operations Squad!"

Having worked together for a long time, his companions immediately caught the subtext. "What do you mean by that? The jurisdictions have already been publicly announced. Can we still take them back from them?"

Chen Gu's wounds were itching as they healed, adding to his irritation with Gao Deng and the Independent Operations Squad. He ground his teeth. "Of course, there's a way. The Independent Operations Squad only has ten members. I've already taken down one, leaving nine. That's not too many to handle, is it? Think about it. If we take down three today and four tomorrow, as long as they have no one left available, wouldn't it be perfectly fine for us, out of our great collegial friendship, to voluntarily go and 'help' them out? Over time, won't we naturally take over their entire jurisdiction?"

His companions gasped. "You can even think of such a fiendishly clever scheme!"

"We absolutely love it!"

「」

In the Central Operations Room, Du Lifeng's expression changed drastically upon receiving the news. After dealing with the matters at hand, he hurriedly rushed out.

Just as he reached the main entrance, he heard an enthusiastic shout, "General Du, where are you off to in such a hurry?"

He turned his head. The window of a car by the roadside rolled down, revealing Bai Yunpeng's cheerful, smiling face.

Du Lifeng secretly gritted his teeth, knowing Bai Yunpeng was here to gloat. "It's nothing urgent. Does Marshal Bai need something from me?"

"Not at all." Marshal Bai stretched lazily in the car. "I'm just a lucky fool. My subordinates and friends are so capable; they take care of everything for me. I don't need to worry about a thing, so I live comfortably every day. SIGH. SIGH. SIGH. But this won't do. If this goes on, I, your Marshal, will become completely useless."

His blatant flaunting made veins throb on Du Lifeng's forehead.

Before Du Lifeng could respond, Bai Yunpeng suddenly added, "By the way, did you know the Qiao Family and Shangguan Family are preparing to join forces? They plan to venture into the specialty steel sector. I heard they've already gathered quite a few top talents in this field. It also seems the Lin Family has a stake in it. Additionally, a certain shameless old codger who has connections with several elders also wants a piece of the pie..."

Du Lifeng could no longer hold back. He snorted heavily and stormed away.

The Xiaogasa Family's core business is specialty steel. This is a coordinated counterattack against my Alliance!

Bai Yunpeng shook his head lightly. "TSK. So ungracious."

"Alas! Look at how everyone else bustles about, appearing so diligent. And me? I spend all day just worrying about what to eat for lunch and dinner. No wonder the old man has been displeased with me lately. I truly haven't been trying hard enough. Yet, I *want* to work hard; alas, I lack the means to do so."

His driver turned back and asked, "Young Master, where would you like to eat for lunch?"

「」

The real titans of power are always particularly sensitive to power struggles. In fact, just two days after the secret Alliance between Ding Zhou, Du Lifeng, and the Xiaogasa Family was forged, their opponents sensed the dangerous atmosphere.

The Qiao Family, Shangguan Family, and Lin Family immediately united. Past minor conflicts could be set aside; they had to face the true enemy together.

Old Man Hua, so nicknamed for his fondness for floral shirts and shorts, was an opportunist. Having already placed his bets on Chen Gu, he decided he might as well double down. He also figured the

Xiaogasa Family was no match for the united front of the three families. Believing that if the three families were feasting, he could at least get some soup, he shamelessly tried to get in on it. Whether to accept him was apparently still under discussion.

「」

The next day, Chen Gu recovered and was discharged from the hospital. The case he had snatched back was placed before him.

However, the first order of business today was to process a promotion order: Chen Gu was promoted to Deputy Commander of the Special Operations Squad.

The stated reason for this promotion order was to reward Chen Gu for his outstanding performance in the previous "Angel Cinema" attack case.

But everyone knew Aviloya had been sitting on that commendation. The original plan was to combine it with Chen Gu's future achievements for a promotion to T9 rank.

This promotion was clearly because he had defeated Gao Deng, causing Ding Zhou to lose face.

Everyone came up smiling, presenting him with a new uniform and epaulets, urging him to change quickly. Chen Gu went to the restroom to change. Looking at himself in the mirror, he couldn't help but feel a mix of amusement and exasperation. It figures. Toiling away like an ox at my actual job is less effective than helping the boss take a shot at his political rival...

Upon returning, Chen Gu reluctantly agreed to the little demoness's demand that he treat everyone. Only after pacifying the group did he raise the case file in his hands. "Alright, can we get serious about work now? We fought hard to reclaim this. If we mess it up, we'll all lose face."

Chapter 644: An Unremarkable Star_3

The case occurred at the border of two squad jurisdictions on Gugelota Star, a planet that can only be described as "mediocre."

Lacking any significant resources to exploit, the environment on the planet's surface was also so-so.

There weren't even any fierce indigenous beasts, preventing it from being developed into a "planet for hunting game."

If it had been during the early days of grand human expansion among the stars, this planet might have been developed. Back then, the population was booming, and humanity had not yet discovered enough colonizable planets. The few available were filled to the brim with people.

But now... the total population of Gugelota Star was only... 6,700,000.

That was even less than the population of a single city on the remote Empire River Star.

Sparse population—definitely a sparse population.

The Bureau of Mystic Security didn't even bother to establish a branch here.

Over the past three months, more than ten violent attacks had occurred on Gugelota Star. The local police system hadn't dealt with such cases for many years.

In regular times, a bar fight leading to accidental death was already considered a rare "violent case" for the local police system.

These attacks all took place on highways, and each resulted in fatalities. So far, there were only two survivors. Both had been greatly shocked and were now somewhat mentally disturbed.

According to their incoherent statements, they were attacked by some sort of terrifying "creature." However, the descriptions from the two were inconsistent. Even their own subsequent accounts of the creature's appearance varied.

Huge, pitch-black, with a ferocious appearance and eyes glinting with ferocity, were the features of these "creatures."

Charles, with a flick of his hand, gathered up all the electronic files and said irritably, "The local police system is rubbish. There's not a single piece of useful information in these files."

Gong Shuxu said, "Considering the description of the survivors, it very much resembles a Mutant."

Melincha pondered and asked, "Could it again be the Digital Group?"

Chen Gu looked at his adult son. Chen Jixian, with half-closed eyelids, remained silent. Chen Gu decided to exercise his "deputy captain" authority with a sweep of his hand, "Let's go to Gugelota Star and see for ourselves."

...

The Digital Group was like a poisonous snake lurking in the shadows, so enough manpower always had to be left behind to guard against their sudden mischief. Therefore, the team heading to Gugelota Star this time consisted of only four people: Chen Gu, Chu Zheng, Charles, and Joseph.

A Fifth Energy Level leading the team was already considered an extremely high standard for a place like Gugelota Star.

However, just as Chen Gu and his team boarded the spacecraft, Wu Yihuo, carrying a travel bag, hurriedly caught up with them, "Instructor, take me with you!"

After the mishap in his backyard, Wu Yihuo had come clean about his "identity" to Bai Hongyue, spending the past few days at home soothing her.

The female film star seemed to wake up each day feeling it was all surreal, struggling to believe it wasn't a "hallucination," often asking her husband to transform just to be sure...

Thus, Wu Yihuo hadn't been to the Bureau of Mystic Security or to work these past few days.

Today, Bai Hongyue finally returned to normal, and Wu Yihuo, who had been cooped up at home for several days, immediately headed straight for the Bureau of Mystic Security—and then chased down to the spaceport.

Even in this era, "since you're here anyway" was a reason powerful enough to be irresistible. Chen Gu gestured, "Come aboard."

...

A massive cargo spaceship was slowly passing through the Confederation's border inspection.

In the starfaring age, such inspections had become exceptionally challenging. So-called "border customs" couldn't possibly cover every expanse of the stars. However, each nation had a comprehensive management system. If a spaceship left a jurisdiction without prior notification and was later discovered upon return, they faced severe penalties.

Because a spaceship's journey log couldn't possibly be altered, unauthorized departures and returns would inevitably come to light during routine log audits.

Even "black ships" involved in smuggling often got caught by border patrols who pursued and destroyed them.

This particular cargo ship's hold was filled with a vast number of luxury maglev cars, all paperwork in order, exported to a small Star Nation called Dimolan.

Then, on the return trip, it would bring back various ores filling every cargo hold.

A somewhat perfunctory scanning check concluded in just over ten seconds, and the spacecraft exited the Confederation's star domain.

Within the ship's mezzanine, bathed in dim light and stench, dozens of people sat, each emanating a sour odor.

Wu Lusi, hugging his girlfriend Lilith, had claimed the best spot, the one near the only source of drinking water in this cramped layer.

The stowaways were all fugitives wanted by the Confederation, each with blood on their hands, more ruthless than the last.

Upon arrival, Wu Lusi single-handedly subdued them all, securing his position, and even now, their gazes towards him were filled with fear.

Days later, the ship finally landed at a spaceport in Dimolan. They were loaded onto cargo trucks and departed.

After leaving the spaceport, they dispersed on their own, their fate no longer a concern to the snakeheads.

Wu Lusi found a menial job as a porter in the mines, where the couple could barely make ends meet.

More than ten days later, during a surprise mine inspection, he injured seven or eight police officers and was forced to flee once more with his girlfriend.

After days of desperate flight, fortune smiled on them, and Wu Lusi found a decent bartender job in a big city's bar.

Wu Lusi had a feeling that his prey was about to take the bait!

Sure enough, on the afternoon of his third day on the job, the still attractive middle-aged female boss took him aside, "What do you think, is this world filthy?"

...

The Bureau of Mystic Security's spacecraft landed on Gugelota Star. The spaceport was dismal, with very few ships coming and going. Passengers were all in a rush, eager to complete their business and leave on the next available ship.

The local police sent people to receive Chen Gu and his team, the representative being an efficient woman officer nearing her forties. Chen Gu spoke up in the car, "Let's start by looking at the bodies."

In the morgue, the medical examiner pulled out one body after another from the refrigerators, all of them dismembered and too ghastly to behold.

Charles whispered to Chen Gu, "It's very much like the work of Mutants, brutal and murderous, yet lacking the urge to feast—the bodies are intact, with no signs of being gnawed at."

Chen Gu nodded and bent down to examine the wounds closely.

Chapter 645 Devil Town

Charles was right. There were no signs of eating on these broken bodies, which was very much in line with what a Mutant would do. If it were a behemoth, or even the Alien Insect Race, they wouldn't be able to control their appetite.

But Chen Gu looked even more closely than Charles had: the reason these bodies were broken apart was more often due to biting and tearing, whereas Mutants tend to use their sheer strength to rip apart their victims.

The fundamental reason for this subtle difference is that Mutants ultimately still retain some "human" instincts and aren't accustomed to using their teeth and claws.

However, Chen Gu thought again... Hmm, if the Mutant was a woman before the transformation, or an effeminate man, then that would be a different story.

Regardless, after a careful examination of the bodies, Chen Gu couldn't immediately agree with Charles's viewpoint.

On Gugelota Star, the efficient female officer they interfaced with was named Julia. After coming out of the morgue, Chen Gu said to her, "I want to take a look at each of the crime scenes."

Julia, however, shook her head. "Most of the cases happened a long time ago, and the traces have all been cleaned up. Only the last two incidents still have the crime scenes preserved."

"Then let's go have a look."

...

Surface flyers were typically fast—yet on Gugelota Star, everything seemed to be the most primitive; even the speed of its flyers was quite slow.

The most recent attack took place on a road at the edge of a forest outside a small town.

It took Chen Gu over half an hour longer than he had anticipated to reach the location. The forest trees were a native species with dark purple trunks. At this time of year, various wildflowers were in full bloom within the forest, their shades leaning towards the dark and somber, evoking a sense of oppression.

There were only a few hundred residents in the small town, so the roads outside it were very quiet. The local police claimed to have secured the scene, but this only consisted of surrounding it with red tape. There wasn't even anyone guarding the site.

Some dark brown bloodstains remained at the scene, but the ground was covered in the chaotic footprints of wild animals...

Chen Gu shook his head. After just one glance, he entered the forest on his own.

Julia couldn't help but remind him, "Mastiff wolves might be lurking in the forest at this time..."

Joseph said from the side, "Don't worry, he's capable of handling various dangers."

Julia shrugged her shoulders and said no more.

About ten minutes later, Chen Gu emerged from the forest. Under Julia's lead, they went to speak with the town's only police officer—a man who seemed less like a sheriff and more like a "clerk," willing to work in this industry simply because the pay was comparatively good. Chen Gu didn't want to evaluate his professionalism.

They left soon after and hurried to the second location.

On the way, Chu Zheng couldn't help but say, "The quality of the police personnel here is too low. They can't even protect the scene properly, let alone solve a case."

Julia glanced at her indifferently and replied, "On the Capital Star, you wouldn't know, but many places are actually like this."

"The Star Sea is too vast. Many colonial stars lack sufficient resources to support themselves and gradually decline. These places contribute little to the tax revenue of the Star Nation, and the upper echelons of the Star Nation choose to forget them."

Chu Zheng had no response.

The second crime scene was also outside a town, similar in size to the previous one. However, beyond this town lay a vast mountainous area with complex terrain.

This time, Julia contacted the local sheriff in advance, but there was no response from the phone at the town sheriff's office.

Julia heaved a sigh. "Never mind, I'll just take you there directly."

The crime scene was in an area of scattered boulders, about sixty kilometers from the town. They parked their vehicle nearby. Just as they approached the scene, a gunshot echoed among the mountains. A kinetic bullet CRACKED against the rocks at their feet, sending stone fragments flying that nearly injured them.

Julia immediately drew her gun and sought cover.

Chen Gu furrowed his brow but remained unmoved.

Following the trajectory of the bullet, he spotted a dark gun muzzle poking out from behind a few large stones about a hundred meters away.

"Strangers, do not come any closer! This is not a tourist spot; it's a crime scene!" the person behind the gun shouted as a warning.

Julia relaxed. "Sheriff Howard?"

"Who are you?"

Julia, gun still in hand, stepped out to identify herself. But the dark gun muzzle didn't move, its aim filled with vigilance. "Transmit your ID."

Julia sent her ID. It seemed to be under review on the other side. The dark gun muzzle remained pointed at them, which was unsettling.

After a good while, the gun muzzle disappeared, and a middle-aged, heavily bearded man with a rifle slung over his back emerged. He eyed Chen Gu and the others unfriendly, snorted, and said, "Important people from the Capital Star? It's amazing that our forgotten place could trouble you to make a trip. It really reignites one's hope for life, doesn't it?"

Chen Gu didn't argue and simply gestured towards the scene. "Tell me about the situation."

Sheriff Howard said, "There's not much to say that I haven't already written in the report. The victim was the youngest son of old Zhao's family from town. Nineteen years old, a lively lad, full of unrealistic fantasies, always dreaming of leaving this place to venture out to the big planets."

Chapter 646: Demonic Town_2

"It must have happened at night; we didn't find this place until the following morning. Poor guy was torn into several pieces."

He patted the gun in his hand. "If you ask me, it was the work of a wild beast from the mountains, probably a brown bear, or maybe even a pack of Tibetan mastiffs. I've been trying to track them down and deal with them these past few days."

"Actually, there's no need to trouble you important people with our problems. We've been taking care of ourselves for generations; we can handle it."

Chen Gu couldn't be bothered with his grumbling and carefully examined the scene, finding claw marks on some of the stones.

He asked, "Has anything like this happened before?"

"No," the police chief thought for a moment. "At least not in recent decades. My gun isn't just for show; any dangerous beast that comes near the town gets taken care of by me in advance. This one probably came from somewhere else."

Chen Gu nodded and then said, "Let's take a look in the town."

Police Chief Howard glanced at them. "Our town is peaceful, and we would rather not be disturbed by external affairs. It's just a wild beast, and your flashy entrance could cause panic among the people."

Chen Gu signaled for Julia to take care of it, and she pulled Howard aside for a quiet word. After a while, Police Chief Howard returned with a reluctant face. "Fine, follow me, big shots."

There were only two roads in the town, intersecting in an A-shape. All the buildings stood along these two streets, the tallest being only three stories high.

Indeed, the townspeople hid behind doors and windows, peering out at them continuously.

Julia asked Chen Gu, "What now?"

"Let's visit the victim's family and ask around."

Old Zhao's family had not yet recovered from their grief. The answers they gave to Chen Gu's questions had little value. The elderly couple just wept, repeating over and over, "He shouldn't have died; he was so young, he had his whole life ahead of him..."

Chen Gu fell silent for a moment before asking, "One last question: What was your youngest son doing outside of town that day?"

The elderly couple hesitated, then gently shook their heads. "We don't know; he didn't tell us before he left."

Chen Gu nodded. "Let's go."

Upon leaving Old Zhao's house, Police Chief Howard said, "I'm very busy; I can't accompany you any longer. It's almost dark, the time when those big fellows become active. I'm planning to set up an ambush in the mountains tonight to see if I can take care of the killer!"

Chen Gu was indifferent. "We'll find a hotel to stay in on our own."

Police Chief Howard asked impatiently, "You've seen and asked; what else do you want to do?"

Chen Gu simply said, "Chief, you can go about your own business now."

Howard huffed, picked up his gun, and drove off in his old clunker.

Julia, unsure of what Chen Gu was up to, didn't see the point in staying in this town for another night. But she followed orders, leading everyone to a hotel in the town to settle down.

After dark, the town's roads were virtually deserted.

After ten o'clock, a door at the back of a two-story building quietly opened. A figure slipped out stealthily. He didn't take the main road but instead moved between low buildings until he reached a small courtyard. He gently knocked on the side door. After a while, someone opened it, and he quickly slipped inside.

In the room, Police Chief Howard was sitting under the light, cleaning his gun, joined by three other people.

"Those people have arrived!" The last to enter, the stealthy figure, was a short old man, looking quite panicked. "They've settled down in Stelo's hotel..."

The five people in the room all looked grim and flustered. "If they find out, we're all done for!"

Police Chief Howard slammed down his gun. "Cut it out! What's there to fear? They're just a bunch of outsiders, no different from those we've taken care of before."

But the others were clearly anxious. How could it be the same? These were law enforcement officers.

"Howard," one of them couldn't help asking, "Are they here because of us? Are they investigating the attack case?"

Police Chief Howard stared at him fiercely. "Don't kid yourself! What's there to investigate about Old Zhao's son's case? Clearly, it was an animal attack."

He picked up his gun again. "Get Stelo here. We're moving tonight. Everything will be done the old way—double the dose of the sedative!"

Someone protested hesitantly, "But if these people disappear, the Confederation will definitely investigate. They aren't like those rootless outsiders lured here by those 'mysterious events' on the website!"

Police Chief Howard had already thought it through. "Aren't they here to investigate the attack? When the time comes, we'll all stick to the same story: that they left in the evening. Then, on the road outside of town, we'll stage a scene of them being 'attacked'!"

"What good will that do? More people will certainly come to investigate later on..."

"Idiot!" Howard snapped. "That will buy us a few months at least. We'll clear all the evidence, and without proof, what can they do to us?"

The others thought for a moment, gritted their teeth, and agreed, "Let's do it that way."

The conditions at Stelo's hotel were quite basic, but there were only two hotels in the town anyway. The other one was even more like a 'family-style rural guesthouse' from Chen Gu's previous life.

Chapter 647: Demonic Town_3

Stelo had already received the message. He had turned off the lights but didn't sleep, waiting in the darkness. Suddenly, his account received a message: "Open the door."

Stelo swiftly opened the door, finding Howard and the others already standing at the entrance.

Everyone moved with practiced ease, acting without a word. Stelo retrieved a canister of gas from a hidden spot, attached it to a tube, and slowly turned the valve.

The anesthetic gas drifted into the several guest rooms upstairs through pre-set pipes in the building.

All of his rooms had been specially treated and had excellent airtightness.

After waiting twenty minutes, Howard rose and said, "That should be enough."

Stelo led them upstairs and used a spare key to open the rooms. Seeing Julia already unconscious, he said with some reluctance, "Just kill them like that? These people could fetch a good price."

Howard glared at him viciously. "What's more important, money or your life?"

Stelo shrank back and fell silent. He stepped forward to help. Together, they moved Julia to the truck outside, followed by Chen Gu, Wu Yihuo, and the others.

There was a lot of noise during the process, but the surrounding residents seemed long accustomed to it; not a single one came out to check.

Stelo locked the truck's cargo bay, patted the door, and said, "Alright, the rest has nothing to do with me."

Howard, without a word, started the truck and drove out of town.

"Head for the area where the Zhao family's youngest son had his incident," Howard said as the vehicle sped through the night, soon arriving at their destination.

He pulled out a long knife and, with a ferocious smile, headed for the back of the truck. "Aren't you here to investigate this matter?" he sneered. "Guess this is a fitting end."

CLANG.

He pulled open the cargo bay door and froze. Chen Gu and the others were sitting calmly inside, looking at him—only Julia remained unconscious.

Sheriff Howard reacted quickly, his hand instinctively reaching for the sidearm at his waist.

But with a slight raise of Chen Gu's hand, under the influence of Entanglement Control, his sidearm eerily flew out of its holster on its own, its muzzle slowly pointing towards Howard's brow.

Chen Gu examined the sidearm. "An ancient kinetic weapon. You're quite an old-fashioned man."

Howard slowly raised his hands, not daring to make any sudden moves.

A companion from the front compartment asked, "Howard, what's going on?"

Howard didn't dare answer, outwardly compliant but with a trace of cunning and ferocity hidden in his eyes. Chen Gu shook his head slightly and waved his hand; the sidearm flew aside. Just as Howard was about to counterattack with his knife, Chen Gu's palm pushed forward gently again.

The ability of Brain Domain Hacker was activated.

Howard immediately felt his body stop obeying his commands!

He felt as if something had invaded his brain. His eyes gradually filled with terror. What on earth are these people?!

Chen Gu didn't deign to explain anything to this criminal. No matter what tricks Howard had, in front of a Professional, he was nothing but a lamb to the slaughter.

Wu Yihuo and Joseph silently went out and soon dragged the few people from the front compartment over.

Chu Zheng couldn't help asking, "Instructor, what do they know?"

Chen Gu frowned. From Howard's memories, he had read some dark, filthy things that angered him, but they were unrelated to their current investigative mission.

Chen Gu shook his head slightly. I thought we were about to uncover the truth.

This small town was remote, decrepit, poor, and destitute. Over a decade ago, a well-dressed outsider had suddenly appeared and found the then-young Howard, telling him he could help the people here live a prosperous life.

He taught Howard a scheme: fabricate "mysterious incidents" happening nearby to attract outsiders on the interstellar network to come here for adventure. Then, use anesthetics to knock these outsiders out. Someone would come regularly to "collect the goods."

Thirty thousand Starshield per person!

For residents of Capital Star like Chen Gu, thirty thousand Starshield was not a significant sum, but for this small town, it was a fortune.

It began with only Howard, Stelo, and a few others involved. Gradually, almost everyone in town wanted to participate, following Howard to "earn extra cash."

The only difference was that some participated more, and others less.

Over the past decade or so, Howard himself couldn't recall exactly how many outsiders had been harmed—probably at least seven or eight hundred!

In this era, it was almost unimaginable. But this wasn't a bustling planet with ubiquitous surveillance equipment; many systems existed in name only.

Once these victims were taken away, Chen Gu could imagine their fate. Live experimental subjects!

Chen Gu's expression turned cold. In Howard's memories, he saw that twelve more "goods" were imprisoned, but the "collection" time was still a month and a half away.

Howard and his group were preparing to "dispose of" these goods and then erase all traces of their crimes in the town.

Chen Gu waved his hand. "Wake Julia up. We save the others first!"

The prison wasn't in the town but in a nearby mountainous area. Howard remembered one incident where a local mountain bear had broken open the cage door, and the sixteen captives inside were eaten alive. He remembered it so vividly because the loss of several hundred thousand Starshields had been deeply painful to him.

Chen Gu drove himself, and after several dozen minutes, they arrived outside the prison. It was crudely camouflaged with branches and converted from a natural cave. The cell door was made of arm-thick steel bars. Eating, drinking, and all bodily functions took place inside, creating an overpowering stench.

Chapter 648: Demonic Town_4

The commotion from Chen Gu and his team's arrival threw the inmates into a panic; they began to scream in terror and plead for mercy incessantly.

Julia had already awakened en route, and Chen Gu had personally told her about the town's sins, which she was still struggling to accept.

But upon hearing those miserable cries, the competent policewoman's eyes reddened. She rushed towards Howard, shattering several of his teeth with a fierce punch, then gritted her teeth and went to rescue the poor victims.

Knowing his death was certain, Howard didn't beg for mercy. He looked on, cold and defiant, asking, "I just found a way for everyone in town to live. What did I do wrong?"

Chen Gu remained silent, merely glancing towards the cockpit where several sharp blades lay—tools Howard had prepared for dismemberment and staging an attack scene.

He called Julia over. "All of you, go to the rear compartment."

"What for?" Julia asked. As a seasoned police officer, she still possessed a certain professional intuition. Chen Gu didn't reply. He subdued her with a swift application of Entanglement Control and tossed her into the rear compartment. Then he addressed Chu Zheng and the others, "You go in too."

They exchanged glances. Joseph said, "Brother Chen, you don't have to worry about us..."

"In!"

Joseph flinched and obediently went inside.

After everyone was in, Chen Gu personally closed and locked the door. What followed had nothing to do with them; locked in the compartment, they were powerless to intervene.

Chen Gu picked up Howard and his men and threw them into the cage. The victims, their faces tear-streaked and bodies filthy, regarded Chen Gu with suspicion.

He tossed the blades to them and then flashed Howard and his men a radiant smile. "I have certain special abilities that can amplify your senses. Pleasure will become more intense, and pain will be magnified!"

Brain Domain Hacker could accomplish this.

"And don't think it will end quickly. I have ways to make your vitality incredibly tenacious. Gentlemen, enjoy the retribution for your sins. Tonight will be exceptionally long!"

He used Atomic Life on them.

Chen Gu turned and left the cage, locking the door behind him.

The victims lunged for the blades, and soon the cage was filled with the horrifying screams of Howard and his men...

Inside the truck's rear compartment, Julia realized what was happening. She pounded on the door, crying out, "Chen Gu, what are you doing? This is a crime..."

Chu Zheng hooked Julia's leg with her foot, sending her sprawling. "They got what they deserved!" she said coldly.

Julia fell to the ground. She opened her mouth as if to say something but ended up curling into a ball in a corner of the compartment, covering her ears.

Chen Gu kept his word; the screams continued until dawn.

Chen Gu opened the cage door again. Every victim was drenched in blood. He brought several buckets of clean water from the truck. "Everyone, wash up," he said.

The victims appeared numb. After they had cleaned themselves, Chen Gu opened the rear compartment to let Julia and the others out. Julia's expression was cold, and she remained silent. Chen Gu had no desire to speak either. He had the victims get into the compartment and drove away.

He didn't want to return to that small town; everyone there disgusted him.

The crimes of those people would be dealt with by the local law enforcement authorities.

The vehicle headed straight for the nearest city. Halfway there, Julia's phone suddenly rang. She answered, and after a few words, she looked stunned.

Wu Yihuo asked, "What happened?"

Julia looked at everyone, her expression incredulous. "Another attack has occurred!"

"Where?"

"That town from yesterday. Not a single person survived!"

Chen Gu slammed on the brakes, then executed a U-turn and sped back.

All available local police had already converged on the scene, but an incident this vicious was beyond their capabilities. A company from the local military garrison had been dispatched and had already sealed off the entire town.

Chen Gu and his team hurried over and were allowed entry after presenting their credentials.

Devastation was everywhere: buildings were covered with claw marks, blood was splattered all around, and fragmented bodies littered the streets...

As they walked through the town, Julia said with a shudder of retrospective fear, "If we had been here last night... we would have been torn to pieces too!"

Chen Gu had already activated Radiation Field, trying to find survivors, hoping for one or two eyewitnesses.

Suddenly, he sensed something and strode quickly in a particular direction.

Everyone immediately followed. Chen Gu arrived outside a building, pushed open the collapsed door, and quickly found a secret entrance to a cellar.

This was the second inn in town, similar to the "farm stays" from Chen Gu's past life.

Originally, this was where Howard and his men captured out-of-towners. Later, an envious Stelo opened a larger inn, stealing most of the "business" from this place.

This cellar was incredibly sturdy. It had originally been used as a prison for their victims.

Chen Gu pulled open the cellar's secret door and went inside. Brownish-black stains still clung to the walls—the blood of victims from long ago!

In the deepest part of the cellar sat a cradle. A baby slept soundly inside, its chubby thumb in its mouth, sucking contentedly, with clear drool trickling from the corner of its mouth.

"It's just a baby." Chu Zheng sighed. "We still have no eyewitnesses."

Chapter 649: Star State Base

Julia emerged from the cellar holding the child. The surrounding police officers and soldiers were still oblivious to the evil buried within this small town. Upon seeing the child, their faces broke into warm smiles, and, though no one knew who started it, applause gradually rose.

In the midst of the crowd, Julia's feelings were complex. However, the child was innocent, and she carefully handed the child over to the medical staff. As she gazed at the child's delicate little face, the perennially single and competent female police officer suddenly felt an impulse to adopt this child.

Wait till this case is over. It's a significant decision, one not to be made impulsively, she told herself. Then she turned and went back to Chen Gu's side.

She noticed the young, enigmatic VIP looking up, examining the claw marks on the surrounding walls.

The marks were long, deep, and numerous. Many of them were stained with fresh blood.

His brow was slightly furrowed, giving him an air of intense concentration and wisdom. Julia didn't know exactly what department of the Star Nation the group led by Chen Gu belonged to, but it was clear they wielded great authority.

"It can fly!" Chen Gu suddenly exclaimed. Julia, momentarily confused, asked, "What?"

Chen Gu pointed at the claw marks and said, "The attacker can fly."

"I've had my suspicions. I wondered why every attack left so few traces. I also guessed the attacker had the ability to fly."

"Now it's confirmed. Throughout the town, most of the claw marks are on walls and rooftops."

Realization dawned on Julia, and she nodded.

But Chen Gu posed another question. "Previous attacks almost all happened on the highways. Judging by their scale, the attackers seemed to operate alone. Why launch a large-scale assault this time, wiping out the entire town without sparing even the animals?!"

Prompted by him, Julia tentatively suggested, "Like a gang-style execution, a revenge killing?"

Chen Gu didn't answer. He walked slowly through the town. Julia didn't know what exactly he was doing, but she was sure he had noticed something. Every move this powerful young man had made, since their first interaction, seemed laden with hidden meaning.

Police officers and soldiers bustled past, all instinctively steering clear of Chen Gu. Chen Gu stopped outside a house. Judging by its condition, it belonged to a prosperous family in the town.

Chen Gu pushed the door open. Julia followed him in. "This was the town mason's house," she said.

Chen Gu walked into the backyard. It was a scene of chaos, with dismembered body parts strewn about. They likely belonged to the mason himself.

Chen Gu went over to a small transport vehicle. He pushed aside some pieces of wood piled on it, revealing a broken claw embedded in the truck bed.

Julia's eyes lit up. "The attacker left this behind!"

Chen Gu had used *Radiant Mass Production* to find it. The residents of this town were all villains, exceptionally vicious; they certainly wouldn't have passively awaited their fate when attacked. Just as he'd guessed, the attacker had left something behind during their counterattack.

Chen Gu picked up the severed claw. Charles and the others immediately grew excited, as they knew Chen Gu would undoubtedly use *Quantum Divination* to trace the attacker's whereabouts.

Julia watched the young VIP lightly twirling the scimitar-like severed claw between his fingers. She felt as if she sensed something, but when she stared at Chen Gu in puzzlement, she couldn't detect anything, completely unaware of what he was actually doing.

Suddenly, a faint light seemed to flash on the severed claw. But when Julia rubbed her eyes, it was gone. She wondered if her eyes had deceived her.

Charles couldn't help but ask, "Did you find it?"

Chen Gu nodded, took a deep breath, and said, "Follow me."

Chen Gu led the way, and the others quickly followed. Within minutes, they were outside the town. Suddenly, Chen Gu raised a hand to stop Julia. "You shouldn't go," he said. "It's dangerous."

Feeling humiliated, Julia angrily drew her service pistol. "Are you discriminating against me because of my gender? My marksmanship ranks in the top five of the entire planet's police system. I can help!"

Chen Gu was considering how to persuade her without revealing any secrets when a column of armored vehicles suddenly raced towards them.

The light maglev infantry vehicle in the middle accelerated, breaking away from the main group and reaching them in the blink of an eye.

The door opened, and a lieutenant colonel jumped out. He looked at Chen Gu, his voice filled with excitement. "Your Excellency, it really is you! I never imagined I'd have the chance to see Your Excellency again in my lifetime!"

The surrounding soldiers immediately stood at attention and saluted. "Commander!"

The man looked somewhat familiar to Chen Gu. Then, realization dawned. "That planet!" Chen Gu exclaimed.

"Yes! We will never forget the heroic sight of Your Excellency repeatedly charging the insect swarms, pressing ever forward!"

Chen Gu smiled. "I remember back then, you were a... lieutenant? You've been promoted quickly."

The lieutenant colonel smiled shyly. "The merits from that battle, fighting alongside *Volunteer Spirit*, Your Excellency, were enough for me to be promoted two ranks."

The surrounding warriors stirred, whispering among themselves, "So this is *Volunteer Spirit*?" They looked at Chen Gu, their eyes filled with an almost fanatical adoration.

Chen Gu gestured around him. "Are these all your soldiers?"

The lieutenant colonel nodded vigorously. "Your Excellency, what have you discovered?"

"I'm about to give chase."

The lieutenant colonel immediately declared, "Please allow me to follow you, Your Excellency! For years, I've dreamed of fighting alongside you again!"

Chapter 650: Star State Base_2

Chen Gu hesitated slightly as the lieutenant colonel quickly signaled the convoy behind to catch up, opening a heavy armored vehicle to reveal rows of neatly arranged individual Mecha.

"Please believe me, I won't be a burden to you!"

Chen Gu thought for a moment. Chasing these attackers also required warriors on the periphery to be on guard.

He nodded. "Alright, take your elites and join us."

"Yes, sir!" The lieutenant colonel was elated, saluting forcefully before turning and shouting at his warriors, "You little bastards, I've managed to secure a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for you. You'll have the honor to fight shoulder to shoulder with His Excellency Volunteer Fighter Spirit!"

"Everyone, be sharp, and show me what you can do!"

"Now, those who believe their Mecha piloting skills are exceptional, step forward..."

"Me!"

"Me!"

"Me!"

The warriors roared eagerly, raising their hands high and jostling to the front.

Chen Gu turned to Julia and said, "It's not that I'm discriminating against you, but this battle is bound to be extremely dangerous. Elite military Mecha warriors represent the minimum standard of strength for this operation."

Julia opened her mouth, glanced at the individual Mecha inside the heavy grappler vehicles, and then at her own small-caliber sidearm, helplessly holstering the weapon again.

The lieutenant colonel quickly selected fifty men, who donned individual Mecha and set off following Chen Gu. The professionals from the Bureau of Mystic Security walked in front, with everyone following Chen Gu's lead.

The lieutenant colonel looked at Chen Gu's retreating figure. From certain subtle gestures, he could clearly sense that Volunteer Fighter Spirit was even more powerful and confident than before. Yet, just like in the old days, his valiant, advancing figure always brought a sense of reassurance.

Chen Gu was no longer the inexperienced man he had once been. His direction after performing Quantum Divination was much clearer. After leaving the town, his speed increased. Upon entering the mountainous area, the individual Mecha even had to activate their rocket thrusters just to keep up with him.

After charging through the rough mountain terrain for over two hundred kilometers, the team zipped past the mouth of a canyon.

Suddenly, the lieutenant colonel's voice came through, "Your Excellency!"

Chen Gu stopped, and the lieutenant colonel turned around, looking puzzled at a position above the canyon. "There, there's a camouflaged surveillance device!"

"Hmm?" Chen Gu had been tracking the Claw Master's position and had not activated the Radiation Field, so his control over his surroundings had diminished.

The lieutenant colonel's Mecha was a high-end model equipped with a high-power active scanning device, which issued a warning as they passed the mountain pass.

Chen Gu asked, "There shouldn't be any military secret bases here."

The lieutenant colonel assured, "Definitely not."

Such perfectly disguised surveillance equipment was definitely high-end and usually military procurement. Chen Gu had already figured it out. Focusing on the device, he suddenly raised his hand. A 'rock' shot up into the air under his control with a SNAP, tearing the wiring beneath and causing electrical sparks to flash.

Chen Gu beckoned, and the surveillance device flew back to him. The lieutenant colonel fiddled with it and, his expression changing, said, "It's a Star State model!"

The warriors were enraged, their various weapons immediately taken off safety. "They've infiltrated our territory, kill them!"

Chen Gu's brow furrowed. The Star State's fondness for playing duplicitous games was no secret in the Star Sea. People of this era were generally no longer fooled by the Star State's glossy propaganda slogans.

Whether against enemies or allies, they always played their shady tricks equally.

Even among the four major Star Nations, none could escape the Star State's underhanded tactics.

Four years ago, their infiltration efforts within the Empire were definitively exposed by the Empire's intelligence department, causing quite a diplomatic stir and nearly leading to the mutual withdrawal of ambassadors.

If not for the external pressure from the Alien Insect Race, given the Empire's temperament, it might have even gone to war with the Star State.

Therefore, finding Star State military equipment within the Confederation didn't surprise Chen Gu. But why here? Gugelota Star was quite remote and backward, not a strategic location at all. With its sparse population, there was no sense in the Star State infiltrating this place.

Chen Gu looked back at Wu Yihuo. "Can you trace the control location behind this device?"

Wu Yihuo chuckled. "Leave it to me."

The lieutenant colonel, unaware of Wu Yihuo's background, kindly reminded, "This is military equipment. Its security level is not on the same level as those civilian ones."

Wu Yihuo chuckled again, replying, "Don't worry." As he started working, he made a self-deprecating comment, "I feel that the biggest help I provide to the instructor isn't my professional ability, but my expertise."

"Hahaha."

Chen Gu smiled too. His hacking skills were likely on the 'civilian' level the lieutenant colonel mentioned. Therefore, he tactfully refrained from taking action himself.

Wu Yihuo took out a number of electronic devices unfamiliar to ordinary people. After some ten-odd minutes of operation, he lightly tapped with his finger. WHOOSH! A holographic projection of the terrain appeared amidst the group.

On it, dozens of red dots surrounded a red triangle in the middle.

One of the red dots blinked erratically.

Wu Yihuo explained, "This is the surveillance device that the instructor just removed. It's a node in the entire network.

"Look, these surveillance devices form a closed monitoring network, all sending data back here."