

Ice Age 1021

Chapter 1021: Total Retreat

Yamata no Orochi faced Lu Huang's aggressive charge with a mocking glint in his eyes.

After being briefly affected, all eight heads converged to crush Lu Huang.

The steel-hard heads directly collided with the Great Demon Sword, as if completely unconcerned about being injured by Lu Huang.

Soon, Lu Huang's body was covered in wounds from the impacts.

But he paid no mind, fixating solely on the third head with fierce determination.

"Hellfire!"

His arms were battered and bruised, crimson blood flowing down to stain the Great Demon Sword in his hands.

The sword's blood-red vertical pupil absorbed all the blood without wasting a single drop.

After devouring Lu Huang's blood, the sword began radiating an eerie, bewitching aura.

Lu Huang raised the great sword with both hands and swung it fiercely toward Yamata no Orochi's third head!

A massive blade aura sliced through the sky, aimed directly at the third head.

Lu Huang's so-called luck wasn't baseless.

As a captain-level fighter, his combat wasn't solely reliant on brute force.

A superhuman who doesn't use their brain will always remain a low-level superhuman.

During previous battles, he had observed that this third head attacked the least frequently and never launched risky assaults.

From this, Lu Huang deduced that this head was Tanaka Ryūseki's weak point!

The third head saw the sword energy coming toward it and narrowed its eyes slightly.

It opened its large mouth and spat out a white beam of light that violently collided with the sword energy!

"BOOM!!!"

The two supernatural powers crashed together, erupting with astonishing force. The shockwave blasted outward, turning the area within several kilometers into their exclusive battlefield.

The superhumans from both squads didn't dare approach even slightly.

At this level of combat, even the slightest stray shockwave could seriously injure them.

Rather than embarrassing themselves by getting close, it was better to keep the opposing team members occupied.

Although Lu Huang's attack hadn't succeeded, when he saw Yamata no Orochi's reaction, a fanatical smile appeared on his face.

"It seems I guessed correctly!"

His body erupted with even more terrifying demonic energy. With a flap of his massive wings, he shot like lightning toward Yamata no Orochi's third head.

At this moment, Yamata no Orochi's eyes finally revealed a trace of horror.

"You won't succeed!"

The other heads attacked from left and right, roaring as they assaulted Lu Huang.

Lu Huang struggled to evade these attacks and had no choice but to tank the damage.

But behind him, the two white beams remained connected to his body, replenishing his strength and healing his wounds.

"BAM!" "BAM!" "BAM!"

Lu Huang endured the damage from the other heads and forcibly charged right up to the third head.

Yamata no Orochi's body was simply too massive, making it impossible to shake off Lu Huang's assault.

Moments later, Lu Huang, covered in blood, leaped atop the third head.

His face was drenched in blood, savage and terrifying, but the corners of his mouth twisted into a mad grin.

"Great Demon Sword! Slash!"

Lu Huang raised the Great Demon Sword high overhead. Rampant supernatural energy manifested as chaotic black and crimson colors, transforming into a violent storm that surged skyward.

Right above Yamata no Orochi's head, it formed into a massive demonic sword over ten meters long!

Yamata no Orochi's eyes filled with terror.

"Damn it!"

Its body tried to rapidly retreat, but its massive size made its movements far less agile than Lu Huang's.

It could only watch helplessly as that great demonic sword descended with tremendous force, chopping directly into its head!

"SPLAT!"

The white, sturdy scales were split open, followed by the skull, brain matter, and flesh.

The massive Great Demon Sword, accompanied by Lu Huang's mad laughter, continued cleaving downward!

Blood and white brain matter sprayed everywhere as if they were free.

Yamata no Orochi's third head was brutally split in two, the cut continuing all the way to the base before stopping.

Lu Huang was covered in the spurting blood and brain matter, the scalding blood making him so excited he nearly moaned aloud.

He gripped the great sword with both hands, his face twisted with excitement, the vertical pupils in his eyes growing even darker.

"It's over."

He laughed maniacally.

But in the next moment, he heard Li Yue's urgent shout: "Captain, watch out!"

Just as Lu Huang turned to look, a long neck whipped toward him like a lash, smashing violently into his body.

"BAM!"

Lu Huang was sent flying nearly a kilometer away, crashing through over a dozen ruined buildings before embedding in the wall of a high-rise.

Yamata no Orochi had lost one head, but it still had seven heads remaining, glaring coldly at Li Yue and the heavily injured Lu Huang.

"Such a pity, you guessed wrong!"

Tanaka Ryūseki's lips curled in mockery.

"There are always people who think they're clever, trying to find my weaknesses."

"But I quite enjoy giving such people opportunities."

"You see, didn't you fall right into my trap?"

Li Yue rushed immediately after Lu Huang.

From that last attack, Lu Huang had expended too much energy, and caught off guard by the heavy blow, he vomited copious amounts of blood.

"Captain!"

Li Yue called out to Lu Huang with heartache, desperately channeling supernatural energy into him to heal his wounds.

Lu Huang, covered in blood, used the Great Demon Sword to prop himself up as he stood.

He stared fixedly at the distant Yamata no Orochi, now with only seven heads.

At that moment, Yamata no Orochi seemed to find the shattered head bothersome, as the other heads actually began devouring it!

"What a troublesome opponent! Interesting, this is truly fascinating!"

Yamata no Orochi looked toward them and let out an ear-splitting roar.

The terrifying sound and astonishing aura greatly boosted the morale of the surrounding Yamata ninjas still fighting.

Correspondingly, the Demon Squad members weren't having an easy time.

"I wonder how the captain is doing. The opponent looks really strong. Can he handle him?"

Lu Huang had always been a powerful presence in their hearts.

But on Star Island, which superhuman wasn't a dominant force in their own right?

Among the strong, there's always someone stronger. If Lu Huang was struggling, or even facing defeat, it wouldn't be surprising.

Just as they were worrying about Lu Huang, his voice came through the communication system.

"Everyone, evacuate this area immediately! Leave right now, the faster and farther the better, and don't look back!"

Hearing Lu Huang's voice, all Demon Squad members were inwardly shaken.

Lu Huang was telling them to retreat?

Then what about himself?

Was he planning to let himself be surrounded by the enemy?

Or... had he already realized he couldn't win and decided to give the others a chance to survive?

"This is an order."

Lu Huang said coldly.

The team members fell silent.

The Jiangnan Region investigation team was a military unit. When facing orders from superiors, they had to obey unconditionally.

Chapter 1022: The Demon's True Form

After hearing Lu Huang's words, Tanaka Ryūseki couldn't help but burst into loud laughter.

"You certainly are a responsible captain! Knowing you're about to die, yet you're still thinking about your team members' survival."

"But what a pity! This is completely meaningless. After I kill you, I'll hunt down every one of your team members and slaughter them all!"

Facing Tanaka Ryūseki's mockery, Lu Huang's gaze was ice-cold, but he didn't refute it.

He held the Great Demon Sword, standing protectively in front of Li Yue.

Li Yue looked at him with some worry, yet still used her Love and Sincerity ability to grant him protection.

Yamata no Orochi let out a long roar, then its remaining seven heads came smashing down like pile drivers!

The force of each impact could easily destroy an entire building.

Lu Huang's massive black wings behind him flapped violently as he shot skyward, desperately blocking every single one of Yamata no Orochi's attacks!

But having just suffered severe injuries, he was clearly struggling to keep up now.

Every collision was an immense struggle for him to withstand.

Seeing how desperately he wanted to survive, Yamata no Orochi felt a surge of malicious amusement.

He wanted to thoroughly torment this man before him.

Yamata no Orochi's gaze passed over him, landing on deputy captain Li Yue.

"What a fine woman! She must taste absolutely delightful! Hehehe!"

The lecherous gleam in Yamata no Orochi's eyes wasn't concealed in the slightest.

He had already decided not to hurry and kill Lu Huang, but instead break his limbs and keep him alive.

Then, right before his eyes, he would brutally violate Li Yue.

Just thinking about Lu Huang's agonized, despairing wails made Yamata no Orochi so excited he couldn't help but howl.

Naturally, this gaze didn't escape Lu Huang's notice.

The killing intent in his eyes grew increasingly intense, even his terrifying vertical pupils showing a hint of blood-red.

"Boom!!"

Lu Huang was sent flying back by Yamata no Orochi's fierce strike, his entire body tumbling into the ruins like a ragged sack.

Leaning against a chunk of concrete debris, he confirmed his team members' current locations through the communication channel.

"Are you all far away now?"

Replies from his team members came one after another.

They had already moved far away from this area and were currently being pursued by the ninjas.

"That's good."

Lu Huang said coldly.

"Boom!!"

A massive snake head plunged into the ruins, directly destroying the spot where Lu Huang was located.

Yamata no Orochi glared ferociously at Lu Huang, sneering sinisterly, "You should probably give up now! Brat!"

But just at that moment, Lu Huang's mouth twisted into a strange shape.

"Heh, hahaha!"

He raised his head and laughed unrestrainedly.

Yamata no Orochi looked at him puzzled, "You're about to die, what's so funny?"

Lu Huang slowly stood up, one hand clutching the wound on his abdomen. He was covered in blood from head to toe, looking like he wasn't far from death.

But he continued laughing maniacally.

Li Yue behind him watched with eyes full of concern.

Lu Huang's arms hung limply.

He said coldly, "They've all left, so I can show you my true form."

"If any one of them were nearby, I couldn't possibly use the power of it."

Yamata no Orochi didn't understand what Lu Huang was talking about.

But he vaguely sensed that something wasn't quite right.

Just as he prepared to finish things quickly and cripple Lu Huang, this man before him suddenly began undergoing a bizarre transformation.

Yamata no Orochi's eyes suddenly contracted, as if seeing something extremely repulsive and terrifying, his massive body retreating far back.

In the ruins, Lu Huang's face slowly cracked apart like spiderwebs.

His delicate, porcelain-doll-like features peeled away piece by piece.

What was revealed was nauseating, crimson-red, twisted flesh that made one want to vomit.

From his body surged massive amounts of bloody flesh, wrapping him completely like rotting tentacles.

The rotten flesh kept multiplying, completely formless, just a massive lump of twisted, disgusting monster!

"Superhuman mutations are unpredictable. Some gain powerful strength, handsome appearances, special abilities."

"Others head in the wrong direction, becoming monsters that are neither human nor ghost."

"And I am the latter."

Just before Lu Huang's body was completely enveloped by the putrid rotten flesh, he slowly closed his eyes.

He was that rare type - a negative variant.

While gaining powerful strength, he also acquired a form that would disgust and repel anyone.

Usually, his handsome youthful appearance was merely a shell crafted for him by Blizzard City.

What he was now was his true form.

Demon Squad, Lu Huang.

He was a genuine demon.

Just before Lu Huang was completely wrapped in the rotten flesh, Li Yue suddenly leaped forward, arriving before Lu Huang.

Ignoring the massive amounts of rotten flesh around them, she tightly embraced Lu Huang in her arms.

Love and Sincerity emitted an incredibly gentle white light, completely enveloping him.

The enhancement Love and Sincerity provided Lu Huang wasn't in terms of power.

Rather, it was a form of purification and restraint.

In fact, it would restrict Lu Huang's true power while preserving his humanity.

Only this way could Lu Huang avoid becoming a monster that only knew slaughter.

Massive amounts of flesh and blood directly burst through the entire ruins.

All seven heads of Yamata no Orochi showed expressions of extreme shock and disgust.

"What... what kind of monster is this!"

Before it stood a massive monster composed of flesh and blood, something that would likely make any human who saw it want to vomit immediately.

It had twelve demonic heads, dozens of disordered limbs.

Pigs, dogs, horses, black goats, twisted grotesque faces, all emitting painful wails.

Some heads had dozens of breasts growing beneath them.

Some arms held bloody heads.

Some gripped spine-bone transformed into long swords.

It represented lechery, greed, slaughter, malice and despair - the embodiment of humanity's negative emotions.

"Too disgusting, simply too disgusting!"

Yamata no Orochi roared angrily.

However, this was exactly why Lu Huang insisted on only revealing his demonic true form when his team members couldn't see it.

"Screech!!!"

The flesh and blood demon's dozen-plus heads emitted spine-chilling howls, then that massive lump of flesh charged toward Yamata no Orochi.

Yamata no Orochi roared furiously, two heads opening their mouths wide, firing two shockwaves from their mouths!

"Serpent God's Roar!"

Facing Yamata no Orochi's attack, the flesh and blood demon didn't even attempt to dodge.

It was directly hit, flesh flying everywhere, revealing tough meat strips resembling octopus tentacles.

Meanwhile, over a dozen arms wielding various weapons were already slashing toward it!

Chapter 1023: What does it have to do with me?

That massive pile of rotten flesh transformed into a bizarre creature, emitting chillingly chaotic screams as it charged straight toward Yamata no Orochi.

Like two mountains colliding, they began close-quarters combat without any technique whatsoever.

Yamata no Orochi's seven heads roared furiously, biting and slamming into the Great Demon's body.

Flesh and blood flew everywhere, demonized heads wailed in agony, yet they seemed to grow even more excited and launched frenzied charges.

The great serpent's teeth pierced the Great Demon's body, while the Great Demon's dozens of arms wielded sharp weapons to hack at the serpent's scales.

This battle lasted for a full half day.

Blood dyed the entire area red.

Both Yamata no Orochi and the Great Demon had lost all reason, their eyes filled only with ever-increasing killing intent.

Some ninjas who returned to support tried to attack the Great Demon, but were indiscriminately devoured and absorbed into the Great Demon's own flesh.

In the end, all eight of Yamata no Orochi's heads were torn into pieces by the Great Demon, and Tanaka Ryūseki perished completely.

Lu Huang's condition wasn't good either.

His body was shattered into pieces, broken flesh scattered everywhere, making it impossible to even identify which lump was his true form.

This place had become a true mountain of corpses and sea of blood.

By the end of the fight, Lu Huang was also on the verge of death.

It was Li Yue who painstakingly climbed through the river of flesh and dragged him out from the rotten meat.

Lu Huang's true form was a small, twisted, and hideous flesh monster.

Li Yue looked at him, her eyes filled with tenderness, without the slightest hint of disgust.

She took out a new skin from her treasures and draped it over him again.

Lu Huang once again became that handsome, silver-haired short man.

"Captain, it's alright now, we've already won," Li Yue said gently as she held Lu Huang in her arms.

At the same time, she had already notified all team members about Lu Huang killing Tanaka Ryūseki, instructing them to return.

The current Lu Huang had lost all combat capability.

Their journey to Star Island had reached its conclusion.

Subsequent Demon Squad members who arrived here were all terrified by the scene of mountains of corpses and seas of blood before them.

But they didn't know what had happened.

They only felt genuine joy upon learning that their captain had achieved final victory.

The Demon Squad took their captain and left Star Island along the predetermined route, returning to the Xuanwu warship. No need to elaborate further.

...

Zhang Yi sat in an old café, drinking hot coffee while using his smart system to assess the remaining combat forces on the island.

On Star Island, the only ones worthy of his attention were naturally the captain-level combatants.

He had created electronic cards for each person, sorted within his portable smart AI system.

"Hell's Lock members [Thor], [Uller], and [Medusa] have all been killed by me. Three members remain on the island."

"According to intelligence provided by the East Sea Region before coming ashore, they are [Billy the Kid], [Berserker], and [Helshest]. These three shouldn't be underestimated, especially [Billy the Kid] who possesses strength approaching Epsilon level."

Zhang Yi waved his hand, pushing their electronic cards aside.

"These are the main enemies we'll face next. Additionally, there are superhumans from other nations in the joint forces, though their strength is far inferior to Hell's Lock. But we still shouldn't let our guard down."

"Especially Neon - [Amaterasu] and [Susanoo] have already been killed by me. I just don't know what strength [Tsukuyomi] and [Kagutsuchi] possess."

Zhang Yi carefully analyzed the battlefield situation.

For him, the biggest regret was that there were too few captain-level superhumans on the island.

Otherwise, he could have hunted more superhumans to achieve transformation.

Sitting in his chair, Zhang Yi held hot coffee in one hand, drinking while contemplating his next tactics.

Beside him, Jingwei held a coffee pot, ready to refill his cup like a maid.

As the price for Zhang Yi forgiving her for monitoring him, Jingwei now had to unconditionally obey Zhang Yi's commands on the island.

"I think I should temporarily stop hunting, don't you agree?" Zhang Yi suddenly looked at Jingwei and asked casually.

Jingwei glanced at Zhang Yi, thought for a moment, and countered: "Is it because you've become the joint forces' primary target now?"

Zhang Yi nodded.

"That's part of the consideration too!"

Currently, within the entire joint forces, Zhang Yi was absolutely the most hated individual.

Killing three Hell's Lock members single-handedly - such devastating losses were enough to enrage the entire Colombian Ocean Fleet's high command!

If Zhang Yi tried to take further action, he would definitely face deliberate targeting from the enemy.

"However, that's not my main consideration either," Zhang Yi said slowly, narrowing his eyes.

So what if he was targeted?

The joint forces had suffered heavy casualties - how could they spare the resources to launch an encirclement against him?

Jingwei asked puzzled: "Then what's the reason?"

Zhang Yi smiled slightly and put down his coffee cup.

Jingwei quickly refilled it.

"As for me, I just don't like letting others reap the benefits!" Zhang Yi laughed.

Jingwei immediately understood Zhang Yi's meaning.

"You mean you don't want the East Sea Region people to get the advantage, right?"

Zhang Yi nodded.

"After coming ashore, I've cleared many obstacles for them. I think their people, especially the Four Spirits, are already in Mist Valley by now."

"These guys are hailed as the East Sea Region's strongest combat force. Let them prove their worth!"

Jingwei said: "You're still very eager to obtain the Divine Source, aren't you?"

Zhang Yi scratched his cheek with his right index finger, showing a playful expression.

"Very eager to obtain? Well, actually not that eager."

"It's just that I quite enjoy watching the show, and I hate seeing others reap benefits without doing any work."

Jingwei remained silent.

In Zhang Yi's heart, he never cared about any so-called bigger picture.

No, perhaps for Zhang Yi, he himself was the only important bigger picture.

So he could snipe joint forces superhumans, but that was only to obtain high-level superhuman origins and enhance his own power.

However, that didn't mean he was willing to make wedding dresses for others.

"But if the Divine Source falls into the hands of the Colombian Navy, what will you do then?" Jingwei couldn't help but raise this question.

Zhang Yi raised an eyebrow slightly.

"Hmm... what does that have to do with me?"

Jingwei's expression changed.

If these words got out, many would consider them treasonous.

Zhang Yi suddenly laughed and tapped the table: "Just joking! Don't worry, they won't get the Divine Source."

Chapter 1024: Vermilion Bird and White Tiger

Jingwei didn't understand where Zhang Yi's confidence came from.

Ever since he landed on the island, he hadn't participated in any search for the Divine Source.

Yet his attitude remained so calm and composed that it was puzzling.

But Jingwei didn't ask. She understood clearly that Zhang Yi didn't trust her.

She had no doubt that if she hadn't intervened to help Zhang Yi deal with the three from Amaterasu's group, and if she hadn't obediently taken the truth serum afterward, she would already be a corpse by now.

The only reason he kept her alive was because Zhang Yi disliked taking things to the absolute extreme.

"If he killed me, it would mean complete rupture with the Jiangnan Region. I'm afraid Commander Zhu would also..."

Jingwei murmured to herself, not daring to imagine that outcome.

Because her close surveillance of Zhang Yi over the past days made her clearly realize how terrifying his strength was—far beyond the Jiangnan Region's expectations.

A comprehensive superhuman ability index of 9800 points, only good at defense but not offense?

What a joke.

In Jingwei's eyes now, he was probably just one step away from reaching the true Epsilon level.

Outside the cafe, a transparent barrier enveloped the area.

That was Zhang Yi's barrier. With its presence, they were protected from wind and rain, and it could block any reconnaissance methods.

Outside the barrier, thick toxic miasma churned and rolled, and the snowflakes drifting down from the sky had turned dark green.

Zhang Yi gazed out the window into the distance.

This place was far from Mist Valley.

But distance had never meant much to Zhang Yi.

"The toxic zone should be closing in now. The weaker superhumans have either been eliminated or withdrawn from the battlefield."

"And those remaining are mostly gathered around Mist Valley. The real show is about to begin!"

Zhang Yi said this because the Mist Valley area contained the Divine Source.

That was the origin of the toxic miasma. According to Li Zongyu's information, the Divine Source was buried deep underground within Mist Valley.

Because of its presence, the entire magnetic field in Mist Valley was chaotic.

Entering it meant complete loss of contact with the outside world.

So whatever happened to people who entered remained unknown to both the joint forces and the command centers of Huaxu Kingdom's two major regions.

The more such an environment existed, the more dangerous it became.

"We can't always let others pick the fruits."

Zhang Yi rested his chin on the back of his right hand, saying with a smile.

He looked as relaxed as if he were here on vacation.

However, not everyone could be as carefree as him.

On Star Island at this moment, almost all remaining personnel had gathered in the Mist Valley area.

After multiple rounds of elimination, the surviving superhumans were either incredibly lucky with tremendous fortune, or top-tier experts with peak-level strength!

And this group was destined to engage in extremely fierce battles within Mist Valley's limited few hundred li range, all competing for the Divine Source!

After multiple rounds of elimination, the surviving superhumans were either incredibly lucky with tremendous fortune, or top-tier experts with peak strength!

In the allied forces of Huaxu Kingdom's two major regions, according to the original plan, the East Sea Region should have borne the main responsibility for confronting the joint forces.

However, due to the East Sea Region's selfish motives from the very beginning, they adopted different strategies.

Li Tianyang's thinking was simple.

Let Zhang Yi and the other superhuman forces from Jiangnan Region serve as the vanguard—or more bluntly, as cannon fodder—to create trouble for the joint forces' superhumans.

This way, the East Sea Region's superhumans could seize the initiative and reach Mist Valley ahead of time.

It must be said that although developments had been somewhat unexpected, Zhang Yi's sudden emergence had indeed brought tremendous pressure on the entire joint forces.

This also resulted in Qinglong, Baihu, and Zhuque—three of the Four Spirits—being the first to reach the Mist Valley area.

Apart from Qinglong eliminating one captain-level superhuman, Zhuque and Baihu hadn't encountered much significant resistance along their way.

This was partly due to Zhang Yi, and partly due to their own tactical arrangements.

Many people on the island had gradually forgotten their original purpose after landing.

Zhang Yi went off to continuously hunt superhumans.

Other superhumans, believing they had no chance with the Divine Source, turned to capturing companion source sprites instead.

Only the Four Spirits steadfastly executed their mission—searching for the Divine Source.

Therefore, throughout their journey, they avoided conflicts as much as possible.

However, although they seized the initiative and reached Mist Valley first, this didn't give them much advantage.

Mist Valley was enormous.

This was a massive valley that had once been famous throughout Star Island as an adventure area.

Peak connected to peak, with the deepest valleys reaching four to five hundred meters.

The entire terrain was complex and intricate.

And Li Zongyu's original intelligence only provided the approximate location where the Divine Source was discovered.

But now, this area was completely covered by the densest toxic miasma, making electronic devices unusable and even cutting off communication with command centers.

Therefore, after Qinglong and the others entered the depths of Mist Valley, they could only proceed with cautious exploration.

The most effective radar turned out to be their superhuman instinctive sensing of the Divine Source.

This was, admittedly, quite a frustrating situation.

In a mountain stream.

A man and woman approached slowly from the distance.

The man wore white combat suits. He had a tall build, standing about two meters tall, majestic and upright like a giant mountain.

The woman beside him wasn't particularly delicate either, though she appeared somewhat smaller compared to the burly man beside her.

However, anyone seeing this pair wouldn't think the woman was dependent on the man.

Instead, the man always walked half a step behind the woman.

This pair was none other than Zhuque and Baihu from the East Sea Region's Four Spirits.

Unlike other superhumans, the two operated as a team on Star Island.

This was quite rare.

Originally, because of the Divine Source's existence, top-level superhumans found it difficult to trust and cooperate with each other.

But these two had been operating together since they landed on the island.

Baihu's sharp eyes scanned the surroundings. In the thick toxic miasma, several areas showed strange mist churning, like sinister monstrous eyes.

Zhuque's combat suit was dark red.

In the nearly gray-green toxic miasma, it wasn't particularly eye-catching, but still made her identity easily distinguishable.

She advanced with graceful steps, and after half a day of travel, she slightly frowned.

"We've been here for three days already, but we haven't found any clues about the Divine Source."

"Mist Valley is so vast. Without modern equipment, who knows how long it will take us to find it."

"Doesn't that mean all the advantages we gained earlier were wasted?"

Hearing Zhuque's complaint, Baihu showed a simple, honest smile.

"During that operation in Shengjing Region, they reportedly mobilized half the region's forces and still took three full months to obtain the complete Divine Source."

"Zhuque, don't be too impatient. What's meant to be yours will eventually be yours!"

Chapter 1025: Split Operations

Hearing Baihu's reassurance, Zhuque frowned and spoke coldly:

"But we don't have that much time."

Zhuque naturally understood the logic behind Baihu's words.

However, the present situation was different from the past.

Back then, Shengjing Region was operating domestically—they had ample time and didn't need to face external threats.

But now, East Sea Region was racing against time to seize the Divine Source.

If the joint forces obtained it first, all their efforts would be wasted.

Moreover, there was another matter that stuck in their throats like a fishbone.

"During this operation, we haven't contributed much. Instead, the people from Jiangnan Region have taken care of most of our opponents!"

Zhuque pursed her lips. "If we fail this time, won't the other five major regions laugh at us for the rest of our lives?"

Even though they chose to follow orders and make finding the Divine Source their primary mission,

Zhang Yi's actions during this period had indeed stolen the spotlight too much.

He single-handedly challenged the entire joint forces, killed multiple superhumans, and nearly wiped out half of Hell's Lock all by himself!

In contrast, the superhumans of East Sea Region appeared dim and unremarkable.

Zhuque was also a top-tier superhuman with her own pride. If not for the region's plans, she would have gladly charged into battle to eliminate enemy superhumans!

Baihu certainly understood Zhuque's feelings.

He quickly comforted her, "I know you feel unbalanced. Chaos is indeed strong, and he has secured a rare opportunity for us."

"But once you obtain the Divine Source and advance to Epsilon level, you will far surpass him!"

"No one remembers temporary victories. When you become an Epsilon, no matter how strong he is, he'll only be able to grovel at your feet and look up to you."

Baihu's words made Zhuque feel slightly better.

"But where exactly should we look for this Divine Source?"

She helplessly glanced around.

In the areas covered by toxic miasma, mountains were everywhere, with more mountains beyond them.

According to Li Zongyu, the Divine Source was buried deep underground, which made the search even more difficult.

Baihu frowned slightly and slowly said, "With my puppet robots, it won't be difficult to find it as long as we spend more time."

Zhuque suddenly turned around and stared intently at Baihu with her deep, large eyes.

"We don't have much time left!"

"I must obtain the Divine Source! I won't allow any possibility of accidents."

Baihu looked somewhat startled. "Zhuque, what do you want to do?"

Zhuque crossed her arms and said coldly, "From now on, we'll split up. This way we can at least double our speed!"

Hearing this, Baihu said with concern, "That's not good. Before we came, the commander said I should..."

Zhuque waved her hand. "I know the commander's stance. But right now we need to race against time."

"Moreover," she looked sharply at Baihu, "you don't think I need your protection, do you?"

Baihu scratched his head. "I believe in your strength, but when we're together, we fear no opponent. But if we split up, we might..."

Zhuque interrupted him, "Baihu, this is what makes you unlikable. You're too cautious about everything."

"With that attitude, you'll never achieve anything great in your life."

"Anyway, I've made up my mind!"

Her tone suddenly became serious as she pointed to the left with one hand and to the right with the other. "I'll go left! You go right! We'll communicate through the puppet beasts. If anyone finds the Divine Source, notify the other immediately."

"Of course, for safety reasons, the direct distance between us shouldn't exceed thirty kilometers."

Baihu still wanted to persuade her further.

But seeing Zhuque's unyielding attitude, he had no choice but to swallow his planned words.

"Alright then, we'll do as you say."

He raised his right arm. His arm armor was unusually thick and bulky, several times larger than that of an ordinary person.

The combat suits of captain-level personnel were specially customized, tailored according to each person's ability characteristics.

Baihu's combat suit featured heavy white armor covering his arms and legs.

He tapped on his right arm, and a piece of armor immediately popped open, revealing an exquisite white metal cube inside.

Baihu took out the cube and handed it to Zhuque.

Zhuque skillfully opened the cube, which quickly transformed into a centipede about thirty centimeters long, then crawled onto her shoulder and firmly locked onto her combat suit.

This was a mechanical puppet created by Baihu.

He had specially designed it for environments like this.

Since it used ancient mechanical technology with very primitive communication methods that didn't rely on electronic communications,

it could still function even deep in Mist Valley where magnetic interference was severe.

The only drawback might be its inability to handle complex communications, but it was perfectly sufficient for calling teammates and confirming positions.

"Your hobbies are really... hard to describe!"

Zhuque sighed helplessly.

Although she wasn't some young girl afraid of bugs, women still had an innate aversion to insects.

Baihu quickly explained, "Ah, it's not like that. It's just because... this shape is very suitable for clinging to various complex terrains."

Before he could finish speaking, Zhuque had already turned and quickly walked in the direction to her left.

Baihu watched Zhuque's retreating figure helplessly, thought for a moment, and could only head in the opposite direction from her.

Deep in the toxic miasma, the fog churned as a group of huge, ferocious monsters appeared around Baihu, cautiously accompanying him.

However, when the two departed, neither noticed a man in a brown felt hat hiding behind a withered tree in the distance.

Hell's Lock second-in-command, Billy the Kid Yasin Canero.

He had a dried leaf in his mouth—certainly not picked from the toxic miasma-filled Mist Valley.

He used to enjoy collecting plants and butterflies to make specimens.

The leaf in his mouth came from his hometown—a plant with a slight sweetness mixed with spiciness that could cause mild addiction.

Baihu and Zhuque believed they were the first to arrive in Mist Valley.

Actually, this assumption was wrong.

Canero had arrived in this area earlier than them.

However, since he also lacked clear targets for searching for the Divine Source, he had instead adopted a laid-back approach.

In Canero's view, mining was work for miners.

What he needed to do was conquer this land and become the mine owner.

Then he could recruit numerous miners to work for him.

So he no longer considered searching for the Divine Source—such an inefficient and troublesome task—as his primary goal.

Instead, he chose the same approach as someone else—to begin hunting and eliminating all enemies.

Once they eliminated the threat from Huaxu Kingdom's two major regions, Star Island would naturally become their property.

At that point, they could search for the Divine Source however they wanted.

Even at worst, they could be the oriole waiting behind the mantis stalking the cicada.

Wait for others to exhaust themselves searching, then step in and seize the Divine Source.

And indeed, the duo of Zhuque and Baihu had now appeared in his sights.

Chapter 1026: The Vermilion Bird of Ice Prison

Baihu and Zhuque were moving together, which Billy the Kid found somewhat troublesome.

However, when he later saw the two splitting up, the corners of his mouth immediately curved upward.

But which prey should he hunt first?

He stroked his chin, thinking carefully.

Soon enough, he had an answer: "Lady first!"

Canero wore a relaxed smile, but when he moved, he gave off a feeling as clean and sharp as a razor.

Like Vito Baldia, Yasin Canero was also an elite from special forces, having previously served in the Columbus Ocean Delta Force.

He was already thoroughly familiar with these stealth sniper tactics.

However, to achieve the optimal effect of his ability, he needed to get close enough.

His ability required activation through his two revolvers.

While these weapons possessed formidable power, they also had a fatal flaw—insufficient range.

Even as a superhuman with supernatural ability enhancements, his effective range did not exceed 2,000 meters.

Therefore, he couldn't achieve ultra-long-range attacks like Zhang Yi or Baldia.

But where something is lost, something is gained.

What he traded for losing range was terrifying, nearly unstoppable killing power at close to medium distances!

So, he needed to approach Zhuque first, then take her life with a single shot!

He wasn't anxious at all.

He had to wait until Zhuque and Baihu were sufficiently far apart, so he could enjoy a proper one-on-one duel.

Facing two opponents would be slightly troublesome for him.

Moreover, for someone who adored Western cowboy-style duels, it wasn't that one-on-two wasn't possible, but rather that one-on-one offered better value.

While advancing cautiously, Zhuque used her superhuman instincts to sense the presence of the Divine Source nearby.

However, a faint, elusive aura suddenly began to linger in her heart.

Canero was the most elite soldier, but so was Zhuque.

After being targeted, Zhuque's instincts as a warrior gave her a premonition.

Frowning, she stopped in a valley, spreading her ten fingers wide as her slender, graceful hands naturally hung by her sides.

Zhuque had extremely sharp senses; she already felt that someone else was nearby.

But she still couldn't determine the other party's location.

Just this alone made her realize she had definitely encountered an expert!

Her crystal-clear fingers slowly turned outward, then a layer of blue flames abruptly ignited from her fingertips, instantly covering her entire body in the blink of an eye.

The blazing blue flames were magnificent, gorgeous, sacred, and evoked a sense of awe.

Those flames resembled a blue divine bird!

Zhuque raised her hands, her ten fingers slender, graceful, and pale, elegantly moving as if playing the piano.

Ten surges of raging blue flames suddenly burst from her fingertips, directly shooting out in all directions!

"Whoosh—"

In an instant, with Zhuque at the center, all toxic miasma within a kilometer radius was completely devoured by these flames.

The ground originally covered in gray-green ice and snow was instantly dyed with a crystal-like, stunning ice-blue hue.

Zhuque stood within this magnificent ice-blue expanse, like a goddess.

She coldly spoke: "Come out!"

She said this because she hadn't yet pinpointed the hidden person's location.

She knew that person wouldn't easily reveal themselves.

But she had to say it to provoke the other party into making some moves, allowing her to more clearly determine their position.

However, the person appearing here today was [Billy the Kid].

A gunslinger who deeply admired the Western cowboy spirit and had a rather romantic style.

So he actually appeared right in front of Zhuque.

"Hi there, young and beautiful lady. We meet again!"

Canero's voice abruptly sounded.

Zhuque's pupils sharply contracted because the voice came from behind her.

And she hadn't detected it at all!

She spun around violently, blue flames surging wildly over her body as a massive Zhuque over ten meters tall manifested around her, taking on a fierce yet beautiful form.

It let out a sharp cry toward the man who had suddenly appeared before her!

"Screech!"

When she clearly saw the man before her, Zhuque's entire body tensed up involuntarily.

The East Sea Region and the Ocean Fleet were archrivals in the East Sea.

Members of Hell's Lock often dealt with the Four Spirits.

And Yasin Canero was one of the most troublesome existences in their eyes!

Of course, this was partly because Cadillus was simply beyond their level to handle.

But Zhuque knew very well how difficult the guy before her was to deal with.

If not for his laid-back nature, the superhumans from the East Sea Region who had died by his hand would have long formed mountains of bones!

"[Billy the Kid]!"

Zhuque coldly uttered the other's codename.

Simultaneously, she had already used her smart system to notify the distant Baihu for support via the mechanical puppet on her shoulder.

The current distance between them was thirty kilometers.

At Baihu's top speed, it would take at least two minutes to arrive at full speed!

This lengthy time was absolutely a huge test for Zhuque.

Though she felt a brief surge of excitement inside, she quickly adjusted her emotions.

As a professional soldier, she possessed extremely strong psychological resilience.

Similarly, she also had top-tier combat ability!

The smart system had already provided her with battlefield intelligence analysis.

"Target confirmed. Number two position of [Hell's Lock], [Billy the Kid]."

"Environmental conditions loaded."

"Combat simulation in progress."

"Based on simulation results, [Zhuque] has a 3% probability of winning, 12% probability of escaping, and 85% probability of defeat."

After hearing the intelligence from the smart system, Zhuque couldn't help but take a deep breath.

"Only 3%? Damn it! If only I could have found the Divine Source earlier."

Compared to Zhuque's caution, Canero appeared much more relaxed.

He wore a gentlemanly smile, his right hand resting naturally on the golden revolver at his waist.

However, from his posture, Zhuque knew the person before her was also ready to strike at any moment.

"Miss Zhuque, what luck to meet you here. Did you come alone?"

"What a pity, there's no time for me to chat with you now. Otherwise, I'd truly love to share a cup of afternoon tea with you after sunset."

"But now," the smile on his lips deepened, "let's talk about surrender! What do you say?"

Zhuque said coldly: "If you want to surrender, I'll consider it! But before that, withstand my flames first!"

She spread her hands toward Billy the Kid, and two massive flames instantly surged forth, transforming into a giant Zhuque dozens of meters tall that pounced toward Canero!

Chapter 1027: Silver Revolver

Zhuque's attack made Canero raise an eyebrow slightly.

"I originally wanted to resolve this matter in a more elegant manner."

His hand rested on the revolver's grip.

Facing the massive blue-flamed Zhuque rapidly flying toward him, he didn't draw the revolver from its holster, but simply adjusted the muzzle and pulled the trigger.

A white light like a sharp sword instantly pierced through space, also piercing through the blue Zhuque's chest!

Ice-blue flames scattered through the air like falling snow.

Billy the Kid looked at Zhuque with resignation.

"It seems I'll have to subdue you first before we can discuss afternoon tea!"

Though his words remained elegant, his eyes had already turned sharp.

His right-hand revolver continued firing, and in an instant, five bullets had already cut through space, shooting toward Zhuque!

His attack speed was incredibly fast. If one wasn't prepared in advance, it would be difficult to even notice he had attacked.

But this wasn't the first time the East Sea Region had dealt with Hell's Lock.

Coupled with the precedent of the entire Ironblood Squad being wiped out, Zhuque had been guarding against this move from the very beginning.

Surging ice-blue flames shot skyward, forming a massive firestorm in front of her!

The whirlwind obscured Zhuque's figure as it swept toward Billy the Kid.

Those bullet-like streaks of light cut through space, but as they passed through the firestorm, the white layer of special ability on their surface began to scatter and dissipate bit by bit.

The bullets' speed also noticeably began to decrease.

"Oh?"

Billy the Kid raised an eyebrow slightly, quite interested in Zhuque's ability.

"It seems... it can absorb my attacks?"

The bullets that passed through the firestorm had slowed to a speed that Zhuque could capture.

Zhuque raised her hand, a flame whip materializing in her palm. The whip swept fiercely around her, coiling like a massive python and deflecting all those bullets!

"Do you think it only absorbs your attacks?"

Zhuque said coldly.

Ice-blue light flashed in her eyes as the flames around her body grew even more intense.

Torrents of flame surged out, transforming into countless fiery tongues that pierced through the ground, heading straight for Billy the Kid!

This attack was even more ferocious than before.

Billy the Kid's gaze showed slight surprise.

While calmly reloading his revolver, he swiftly dodged sideways, avoiding the pursuing fiery tongues.

In an instant, the reloading was complete.

Through the surging flames, he could vaguely make out Zhuque's beautiful figure standing within the fire.

"Bang!"

Billy the Kid kept moving while pulling the trigger.

The muzzle spat out chilling white light, like sharp swords stabbing straight toward Zhuque.

Yet these supposedly unstoppable white lights all shattered upon touching the surging fire ring surrounding Zhuque for hundreds of meters, transforming into scattered points of white radiance.

Even his most prized rapid-fire attacks had their speed reduced.

Simultaneously, the flames around Zhuque grew even more intense!

These flames didn't give off a feeling of heat. Instead, the closer one got, the more Billy the Kid felt an intense cold.

Just brushing past them made the combat suit on his body crystallize with a layer of frost.

Even the edge of his thick felt hat developed a white, furry coating.

"Cold flames, is it?"

"It seems her flames can not only absorb my attack power but also reflect it back to herself."

"What a terrifying ability!"

Canero couldn't help but marvel.

Hearing Canero's words, Zhuque frowned deeply.

Truly worthy of being Hell's Lock's second-in-command, to have discerned the essence of her ability in such a short time after their exchange.

East Sea Region, Four Spirits, [Zhuque].

Ability codename [Ice Flame Zhuque].

Special-type, fire attribute superhuman.

But her flames weren't ordinary fire—they were cold fire, a substance opposite to conventional flames.

The essence of fire is an exothermic combustion reaction.

Yet her flames could absorb all energy, thereby strengthening themselves as abnormal fire.

Any substance possessing energy could be absorbed by her flames.

Even the kinetic energy of human movement would become extremely slow when passing through her flames, eventually being completely absorbed.

This was why Canero's rapid-fire attacks lost their effectiveness against her.

Zhuque's eyes remained fixed on the constantly moving Canero.

Even though she was prepared and had blocked Canero's lethal shots, she didn't dare let her guard down in the slightest.

Because no one would think that Hell's Lock's second-in-command would be so easy to deal with.

Anyone who had ever thought that way had long since perished.

Her hands hung at her sides, releasing even more surging flames from her fingertips, forming a massive blue fire ring surrounding her!

The surging firestorm emitted bone-piercing cold while also serving as an absolutely unbreakable defense.

For Canero's bullets to penetrate this hundreds-of-meters-thick defense, they would need to lose at least 50% of their energy.

By that point, Zhuque would definitely be able to block them.

Against such a powerful enemy, Zhuque didn't dare show the slightest carelessness.

Her only thought at this moment wasn't to defeat Canero, but to stall him until Baihu arrived on the battlefield, then combine their strength to overcome Canero.

At the same time, she didn't forget to use the surging fiery tongues to pursue and attack Canero!

From Canero's perspective, Zhuque now resembled the core of a blue sun.

And this sun's flames were exceptionally unstable, with long coronae extending from the stellar surface, constantly trying to lick at his body.

"Truly dangerous! If this thing touches me, I feel like my special ability and even body temperature would be rapidly drained."

Canero nimbly dodged, avoiding Zhuque's attacks.

His speed didn't appear exceptionally fast, but it gave off a feeling of agile dexterity.

Every movement and foot placement was extremely stable.

He continuously changed positions, but his eyes never left the center of that blue star.

The silver revolver in his right hand constantly shifted positions as he attacked.

"Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!"

His bullets were specially made, each one rose gold in color, transforming into brilliant white light when fired from the silver revolver.

The white beams impacting the ice-blue star would produce dull sounds like blacksmithing.

This massive power couldn't be completely absorbed even by [Ice Flame].

After passing through Zhuque's massive fire ring, it would still reach in front of Zhuque, forcing her to actively defend.

After Canero exhausted three rounds of ammunition, he gradually began to understand Ice Flame's defensive capabilities.

Chapter 1028: Return to Zero

Finally, he had made sufficient judgment in his heart.

With an extremely flamboyant gesture, he put away the silver revolver in his right hand.

Then he drew the golden revolver inserted at his left waist with his left hand.

He had two guns.

The silver revolver [Yellow Sand Sunset], and the golden revolver [Sigh of Fate].

The silver revolver represented the romance of the western cowboy.

While the golden revolver paid tribute to the ballads mourning the dead.

"Click-clack—"

He expertly spun the revolver's cylinder, checked the ammunition, then snapped it back into the firearm.

Then he aimed at Zhuque and raised his golden revolver.

"[Zero Out]!"

When the muzzle pointed at Zhuque, an immense, deathly crisis instantly enveloped her.

Every hair on Zhuque's body stood on end. She didn't understand why this sense of danger had suddenly emerged.

But one thing was certain—Canero was about to unleash an attack countless times more powerful than his previous silver revolver!

"[Ice Prison Zhuque]!"

More turbulent flames erupted from her body, flowing explosively in all directions like an outburst.

Where the flames passed, the earth directly withered. The icy aura penetrated dozens of meters underground, completely draining the last remnants of life from this land!

Ice Flame Zhuque possessed the ability to forcibly plunder power.

In a certain sense, Zhuque's ability was considered to have the potential to advance to Epsilon level.

Countless ice-blue flames converged into one, transforming into a massive, nearly materialized blue Zhuque!

It emitted a sharp cry, its wings spanning nearly a hundred meters as it charged fiercely toward the area where Canero stood, wrapped in overwhelming ice flames!

Canero's expression remained cold as steel, completely unmoved.

In his eyes, a ring of destiny was slowly closing.

It was a strange serpent biting its own tail. When the head caught the tail, it marked the end of fate.

In that instant, six bullets shot from the muzzle almost simultaneously.

Time seemed to freeze at that moment.

The six bullets tore through space, colliding with the massive Ice Flame Zhuque.

Zhuque's head instantly shattered, simultaneously coating the bullets with a layer of blue.

Yet this momentary pause seemed unable to change anything.

They continued advancing with unstoppable momentum, their final destination being Zhuque's body!

Crash—

The sound of shattering ice.

The air had frozen due to the Ice Prison Zhuque, yet it couldn't halt the bullets' trajectory.

Because Billy the Kid's ability was called [Zero Out].

This ability was simple, without any flashy effects—it could simply ignore almost all physical defenses.

Combined with his gunslinger skills, this made him nearly invincible.

If you didn't know about his ability, you would die the moment you saw him.

Even if you knew about his ability, it was still extremely difficult to block his bullets.

It was purely a difference in level!

"Thud!" "Thud!" "Thud!"

The massive Ice Prison Zhuque rapidly disintegrated.

The enormous ring of flames around Zhuque was quickly pierced.

The six bullets fired from the golden revolver carried an unstoppable momentum as they shot toward her body!

In that moment, Zhuque's mind even flashed with memories of her entire life.

But she forcefully broke free using her powerful willpower.

At this critical juncture, she unleashed the most powerful energy of her lifetime, burning all her superhuman abilities within her body to release supercharged flames!

She indeed managed to affect the bullets' trajectory.

She was among the few who could influence the timing of Canero's bullets.

But merely achieving this didn't mean she could evade this attack.

Even after exhausting all her strength, she only managed to dodge three bullets—three others still found their mark.

One bullet slowly pierced her shoulder, another grazed her forehead bone leaving a long scar, and one bullet struck her thigh.

The battle ended with astonishing speed.

This was the nature of a gunslinger's combat.

Zhuque was instantly severely wounded. She nearly collapsed to the ground but struggled to remain standing, immediately having her combat suit administer medication.

Billy the Kid stood in the distance, looking at Zhuque with considerable appreciation.

"You're the first person who didn't die after taking this move from me."

"However, I don't think there's any need to continue this fight. Your life is your own—how about surrendering? You know we always treat prisoners well."

Though he spoke these words, his hands never stopped reloading.

Zhuque's heart turned ice-cold.

She had originally thought that with her abilities, she could at least hold her own against Canero for a while.

She never expected she would be so utterly powerless against him.

Was the gap in levels really this immense?

Thinking about how many high-ranking officials in the East Sea Region had called her the superhuman most likely to become their navy's second Epsilon, she felt overwhelming shame.

Facing the olive branch extended by Canero, Zhuque gritted her teeth and sneered coldly:

"Don't treat me like a three-year-old child! I'd rather die than become your lab rat!"

Canero smiled faintly. "Don't underestimate your own value. If you surrender, I can guarantee you'll receive better treatment than in the East Sea Region."

"Coincidentally, we've lost a few members recently. I could write you a recommendation letter to join [Hell's Lock]. What do you think?"

Canero's words were actually sincere.

In his view, fighting was merely for certain people's objectives, forcing soldiers like them into life-and-death struggles.

He didn't enjoy such matters.

This was just a job—punch in, do the work, no need to risk your life!

Zhuque breathed heavily, staring at Canero without responding.

But soon, a glimmer of hope appeared in her eyes.

"Surrender? In your dreams!!"

Canero's eyebrows twisted up and down helplessly.

"Then I have no choice!"

He raised his gun toward Zhuque.

Just at that moment, sharp whistling sounds came from the distance as two phantom images shot straight toward Canero!

Canero raised his hand and fired two shots.

"Boom!" "Boom!"

The two phantoms, after being hit, landed on either side of him in the distance and immediately exploded!

They turned out to be two micro-missiles.

Canero knew that Zhuque's reinforcements had arrived.

He didn't plan to delay any longer and was about to finish off Zhuque.

At that moment, a massive figure descended from the sky with a thunderous impact, landing in front of Zhuque.

It was a giant panda-shaped robot, standing three meters tall with a somewhat bulky yet robust build, entirely covered in the hardest military-grade alloy armor!

Canero aimed his pistol at it and fired three rapid shots: "Bang! Bang! Bang!"

The massive mech puppet was sent flying backward!

The armor shattered into pieces, revealing the mechanical core within.

But it had bought enough time for both Zhuque and the arriving Baihu.

Chapter 1029: You Must Live

At the critical moment, Baihu finally arrived!

He flew over from a distance riding a pterosaur-type mechanical puppet.

One of the Four Spirits Fleet commanders of the East Sea Region—[Baihu].

Ability codename [Puppeteer].

Control-type superhuman.

He possessed the most proficient control-type skills, capable of simultaneously controlling dozens of mechanical puppets.

This ability made him one of the few men on the battlefield who could pilot large-scale mecha weaponry.

On the battlefield, he alone was a powerful heavy firepower army!

Baihu positioned himself in front of Zhuque and immediately retrieved two metal boxes from the storage compartment on his arm.

As soon as the metal boxes hit the ground, they rapidly transformed into two panda-type mechanical puppets, placing themselves between the two of them and Canero.

The puppets made from memory metal could be maximally compressed for easy carrying.

After seeing the first destroyed puppet, Baihu realized one thing—Billy the Kid's strength was absolutely not something they could contend with!

If even Zhuque could barely withstand Billy the Kid's attacks.

Then he, being merely a puppet controller, didn't have that capability either.

"Can you still move?"

Baihu inquired.

Canero looked at the new opponent who had suddenly appeared, and this time, he drew both his gold and silver revolvers.

"I think I don't have much time to waste with you here."

As soon as his words fell, two massive mecha puppets suddenly burst out from the dense toxic miasma.

They were two insect-type puppets, over three meters tall with eight legs, two huge mechanical claws, and carrying more than a dozen cannons of various sizes on their bodies.

"Rat-tat-tat-tat!!!"

The two mecha puppets launched a fierce assault on Canero.

Simultaneously, they threw out numerous flashbangs and smoke grenades.

This bought Baihu and Zhuque some breathing room.

Zhuque's injuries had been stabilized after receiving medication injections.

But continuing to fight would clearly be quite difficult for her.

She had already recognized the gap between herself and Canero.

"I can still move. This guy is too strong, we're no match for him. Forget about us—even if Qinglong came, he might not be able to defeat him!"

"His ability requires that guy from the Jiangnan Region to counterbalance it!"

"Let's get out of here quickly!"

Zhuque showed no attachment to continuing the fight.

But Baihu glanced at her, then looked toward the battlefield not far away.

Those two mechanical puppets had already been shot to pieces by Canero, one bullet at a time.

"If we both try to escape, we won't make it. His guns are too fast."

"I'll stay behind to hold him off. You leave quickly! Find Qinglong or Chaos!"

Baihu said without hesitation.

"Baihu! You..."

Zhuque was stunned, looking at Baihu in disbelief.

This man who usually had no interests beyond dealing with machines was actually saying such things at this moment.

Face Canero alone?

Wasn't that just seeking death?

"You can't beat him!"

Zhuque said.

"But with you here, we still can't beat him either."

Baihu also said.

A surge of intense regret suddenly welled up in Zhuque's heart.

If she hadn't insisted on separating their actions initially, perhaps they wouldn't have ended up in this situation.

Baihu knew what she was thinking but still comforted her:

"Don't overthink it. His ability is too unsolvable—even if we encountered him head-on, we'd have difficulty winning. The Smart System's data doesn't lie."

"Right now, the best choice is for you to escape. I can stay behind and hold him off for a while."

As Baihu said this, his eyes grew increasingly bright, and his entire aura became heightened.

Zhuque immediately realized something.

"You... injected Compound-5!"

Baihu had to do this.

If he didn't, he might be instantly killed by Canero.

Zhuque clenched her silver teeth tightly, a trace of blood seeping from the corner of her mouth.

She also intended to inject Compound-5 and fight Canero desperately.

But Baihu stopped her again.

Although he usually spoke little, he was quite perceptive, especially toward Zhuque, whom he understood very well.

"Don't do something meaningless. Your injuries are severe—using the drug again will definitely kill you!"

"Live well. You have Epsilon-level potential. You shouldn't let your life wither away here."

"Live well, if not for yourself, then for us."

The "us" he referred to were all the comrades who had died on the battlefield.

Zhuque fell silent upon hearing this.

She had awakened relatively late, so her current combat power was among the lowest in the Four Spirits.

However, she possessed growth potential and had even been assessed as having talent not inferior to Xuanwu's.

Precisely because of this, Baihu had been ordered to protect her during this operation.

Baihu was loyal to his duty—he believed Zhuque's survival was more important than his own.

Zhuque no longer hesitated: "Alright! Baihu, I'll go first. You must survive too!"

Baihu nodded silently.

His heavy armor suddenly began to disassemble and then flew onto Zhuque's body.

In a brief moment, it grew a pair of wings and added two powerful propulsion systems.

"Go!"

Zhuque turned and, with the help of the flight equipment, quickly left the battlefield.

By this time, Canero had already cleared away the obstacles before him.

He saw Zhuque escaping and slightly frowned.

But Baihu was already controlling seven or eight massive mechanical puppets, launching the most ferocious attack toward him!

Baihu knew that Canero's combat power was extremely formidable, but his pursuit ability wasn't particularly strong.

He only needed to buy Zhuque enough time.

Not much—just one minute, and Zhuque would be safe.

As Baihu looked at Canero before him, he had already resolved himself to die!

He wasn't afraid of death.

Every warrior must be prepared to die from the moment they step onto the battlefield.

What mattered was whether the death had value.

"My superhuman ability index is 9600 points, but after using Compound-5, I can temporarily burst forth with combat power equivalent to 9800 points!"

He felt the continuously surging power within his body and clenched his fists.

"I can fight!"

"Even if I die, I must buy Zhuque enough time."

"Perhaps I can even use my life to inflict serious injuries on Billy the Kid."

"In that case, my sacrifice would have value!"

Zhuque had escaped.

Canero wasn't in a hurry either—he wasn't a superhuman skilled in pursuit anyway.

It was just as well to slowly take care of Baihu here first, then consider future matters.

"Do you think that after injecting the drug, you can fight me?"

Canero wore a cruel smile.

"Today, let me tell you a fact."

"My superhuman ability index evaluation is 9999 points because that's the maximum limit for the Delta-level."

"While your 9000-plus points are because that's your own personal limit."

"Don't ever think that you and I are superhumans on the same level!"

Chapter 1030: Puppet Master

Facing Canero's mockery, Baihu remained silent, expressing his attitude through action.

The patterns on his arm guards and thigh armor unfolded one by one, ejecting numerous metal boxes from within.

These seemingly heavy armors were actually his puppet warehouses.

After more than twenty metal boxes landed, they expanded like inflating balloons.

In an instant, a massive and terrifying mecha army appeared around his body!

From his brain extended invisible threads of mental energy.

It was precisely using these threads that he could control all mechanical puppets as if they were his own body.

Four huge armored pandas "BOOMED!" as they blocked in front of him, forming a solid wall!

Seven or eight combat-type armored puppets aimed their autocannons and began fierce bombardment against Canero!

Canero's body rapidly rolled and dodged across the ground. The autocannon bullets were extremely fast, but to him, their speed wasn't even one-tenth of his own, so his dodging wasn't panicked.

Clatter clatter—

Bullet casings scattered across the ground, and micro-missiles exploded near Canero's position, but the killing power of such weapons couldn't even penetrate Canero's combat suit.

When the mechanical puppets' attacks created a gap.

He stood up and lightly fired several shots.

Each bullet accurately destroyed one mechanical puppet.

The golden revolver [Sigh of Fate] fired four rose-gold streams of light, hitting the four tank puppets in front of Baihu.

The seemingly incredibly thick panda armor couldn't block those seemingly light streams of light, instantly disintegrating!

In less than five seconds of combat, most of Baihu's puppets had been destroyed.

This made his heart gradually sink.

"As expected, is my capacity limited to this? What a pity!"

He let out a helpless sigh.

As a mechanist, reaching this level was already his limit.

He was never a genius to begin with; relying on the power of mechanical puppets to play a significant role in war was how he managed to become one of the Four Spirits.

However, when facing true geniuses and top experts, his weaknesses would be completely exposed.

"But even a small screw can become very useful if placed in the right position!"

"Don't underestimate me, Billy the Kid!"

The broken mechanical armor emitted embarrassed plumes of smoke in the valley as Canero, holding two revolvers with his head lowered, stepped toward Baihu one step at a time. RẦ NỒ BÈ

In his view, this was just a completely one-sided battle.

Baihu took a deep breath, then shouted in a low voice: "Explode!!"

From among the mechanical puppets destroyed by Canero, sudden bursts of urgent red light emerged.

Canero's gaze sharpened; without realizing it, he had become surrounded by those puppets.

He hadn't expected that the already destroyed puppets had all been equipped with high-energy self-destruct devices.

"BOOM!!!!"

Over a dozen mechanical puppets simultaneously self-destructed, with Canero right in the core explosion area.

That astonishing energy explosion was enough to easily destroy several city blocks!

Baihu stared intently at the explosion area before him.

According to intelligence, Canero's attack power was S-class, but there was no indication he possessed extremely strong defensive capabilities.

Generally speaking, these two attributes rarely existed in the same person.

If they did exist together, it was only an illusion created by that person's excessively high superhuman ability index.

"Even if I can't blow you to death, I should at least inflict some injuries!"

At the moment the explosion occurred, Canero rapidly spun his revolvers.

"Neon Dance!"

He spread his arms wide, two powerful superhuman abilities madly pouring into the gold and silver revolvers.

Then from the gun barrels erupted brilliant beams of light!

Each time he pulled the trigger, what shot out were no longer bullets, but energy beams like strobe lights on a dance floor!

Canero danced within the core explosion area, at this moment as if he were in a dance hall, the gold and silver revolvers in his hands becoming the disco ball on stage, shooting out colorful rays of light.

These energy beams penetrated the explosion's shockwaves, weakening the blast's power.

This move directly left Baihu utterly stunned.

He never imagined that someone could use single-target attacks to weaken an area-wide explosive attack!

Simply because his gun skills were fast enough, he achieved this unbelievable effect.

A moment later, Canero walked out from the core explosion area, his body stained with mud from the ground, yet he still appeared completely composed.

"Surrender! Big guy."

Canero said coldly to Baihu.

Baihu's puppets had already been completely destroyed.

Without his puppets, his combat power couldn't even match that of an Alpha-level superhuman.

Continuing to struggle no longer held any meaning.

Baihu just grinned.

"Impossible!"

He opened his right hand, the huge palm pressing hard against the armor on his chest.

"This is my final puppet, Baihu, self-destruct!!"

Deep within Mist Valley, in a certain canyon, erupted an immensely powerful energy.

The roar of the explosion echoed for dozens of miles, forcing all surrounding toxic miasma to recoil outward.

At this moment, Zhuque, who had already dragged her wounded body dozens of miles away, heard this explosion, her expression momentarily freezing.

She knew what that explosion sound meant.

A touch of sorrow spread through her heart.

Zhuque's heart felt as if pierced by needles, stinging with pain.

She had thought her heart was hardened enough, but for some reason, her vision was still somewhat blurry.

Perhaps only at this moment did she vaguely realize that big oaf had treated her so well, perhaps he had feelings for her.

Yet until the very end, he never spoke those words aloud.

For warriors, dying on the battlefield is their destiny.

Especially after the apocalypse, almost no one could be an exception.

Either freeze and starve to death in the ice and snow, or contribute power to major factions and die on the battlefield.

As long as this chaotic world doesn't restore its original order for even one day.

War will never completely end.

Zhuque clenched her fists tightly.

She knew she had to leave quickly; in this Divine Source competition, she had completely lost her qualification.

"I must live, only by living will there be hope to avenge Baihu!"

She breathed heavily, the wounds on her body temporarily sealed by hemostatic coagulant, but to remove the bullets Canero left inside her body, she needed to return to Xuanwu.

The aircraft had already broken down; being able to fly a distance in this harsh environment was its absolute limit.

Zhuque buried the aircraft, then dragging her injured body, not daring to pause for even a moment, staggered toward the coast where Xuanwu was located.