

## **Ice Age 431**

### Chapter 431: Infinite Evolution

After two battles with the mysterious zombie tide, Zhang Yi and his team had gleaned some critical information:

The zombies were fast, incredibly strong, and immune to death by headshot. Worse, they displayed a degree of intelligence.

However, the idea of a "Zombie King" orchestrating these hordes remained speculative. They had no concrete evidence to confirm it.

Zhang Yi rested his elbows on the table, his calm, calculating gaze fixed on the group.

"If these corpses have mutated and gained intelligence," he began in a low voice, "then their attacks will continue. That gives us more opportunities to gather intel."

"We need to pay close attention to every detail of their behavior to develop countermeasures."

"But first, we must clear the surrounding areas of zombies. Leaving them unchecked is a major security risk."

Uneliminated zombie hordes would inevitably return to harass them, and unforeseen accidents could arise at any time.

Unlike human adversaries, who feared Zhang Yi's strength and wouldn't dare provoke him unnecessarily, zombies had no fear. Even if they couldn't kill him, they'd still be a relentless nuisance.

Clearing the local hordes became a priority.

"However, there's another issue," Liang Yue interjected. Her Tang Sword rested beside her as she lounged on the sofa with her arms crossed.

"If these intelligent zombies can control large groups, how are they causing disturbances across all regions of Tianhai City at once?"

Zhang Yi grinned wryly. "I have no idea."

"Subway," Yang Xinxin said flatly, breaking her usual silence.

The single word made everyone's eyes light up.

Though none of them had ventured dozens of meters underground, they could deduce that the subway offered a warmer environment than the surface and provided extensive transit routes.

Yang Xinxin raised her head, her amber eyes gleaming with insight.

“The closest zombie activity zone to us is the Ci Qu subway station.”

“Tianhai City’s subway system is vast, connecting to every major area. It’s highly likely that the zombies are using these tunnels to move between regions.”

“Whether this is intentional or coincidental remains to be seen.”

Zhang Yi propped his chin in his hand, nodding thoughtfully.

“That would also explain why the hordes we face are the smallest. Cloud Manor is relatively remote, with only one subway line passing through.”

He turned to Yang Xinxin. “Keep monitoring the other factions. I need updates on the zombie activity in their territories.”

“We need to find a way to deal with this once and for all.”

Yang Xinxin smiled faintly and nodded. “Of course. But for now, their situation isn’t looking good.”

The three major bases had underground shelters, but they also relied heavily on above-ground infrastructure like steelworks, refineries, and port facilities—assets they couldn't afford to lose.

These facilities were the lifeblood of their operations, so they'd fight tooth and nail to defend them, leading to prolonged clashes with the zombie hordes.

The Followers of the Snow God fared even worse. Their poor living conditions and lack of defensive fortifications made them especially vulnerable, resulting in heavy casualties.

Zhang Yi chuckled dismissively. “Not our problem. If they can't make sacrifices when necessary, they'll just have to keep fighting the zombies.”

“Especially the Followers of the Snow God—they’re growing too numerous for my liking. A few losses during this crisis might actually benefit us.”

The group speculated about how the other factions might handle the zombie onslaught, their tone indifferent. Zhang Yi’s team had no strong ties to the others, so their misfortunes were met with little sympathy.

That afternoon, Zhang Yi and Uncle You inspected the area in front of the Shelter.

They doused the ground with gasoline, prepared to use fire to neutralize the virus driving the zombies.

By midnight, the third wave of the zombie tide arrived—sooner than expected.

Thanks to their vigilance, the team was ready. Night sentries had been posted, and they quickly mobilized to meet the attack.

“Switching to nighttime assaults? Are they learning that we perform better in daylight, or is it just coincidence?” Zhang Yi muttered as he strapped on a flamethrower and descended the stairs cautiously.

This time, the zombies’ approach was markedly different.

Rather than clustering together, they spread out across the snowy plain, moving toward the Shelter like a swarm of locusts.

“They really are learning,” Uncle You remarked, a cigarette dangling from his lips.

The new tactic rendered their pre-arranged gasoline traps less effective.

“Bad news, but also confirmation of our theory,” Zhang Yi said coolly, his eyes narrowing as he surveyed the scattered horde.

He was now certain that a Zombie King was orchestrating these attacks, adapting strategies after each encounter.

Though clumsy at first, both the Zombie King and its minions were clearly evolving.

One day, when they'd fully learned Zhang Yi's combat methods, even stepping outside the Shelter might become impossible.

"Even zombies are learning to gather intelligence," Zhang Yi said, exhaling a puff of white breath before securing his helmet.

"Now, let's test something new!"

He turned to Liang Yue and the others. "This time, we kill every last one. None escape!"

Mounting Hua Hua's back, Zhang Yi added, "We'll flank the horde and cut off their retreat!"

With a lever-action shotgun in hand, Zhang Yi targeted the zombies' lower bodies, knowing dismemberment was the most effective tactic.

Uncle You, armed with a flamethrower, unleashed fiery torrents that incinerated rows of zombies like a pesticide against insects.

Liang Yue, wielding her Tang Sword, danced along the horde's edges. The blade extended into a three-meter-long arc of blue energy, slicing zombies cleanly in two from head to hips.

Her speed, enhanced by her Superhuman abilities, ensured the zombies couldn't surround her as they had in previous battles.

Meanwhile, Zhang Yi and Hua Hua flanked the horde.

Zhang Yi's enhanced shotgun pulverized the zombies' lower bodies, leaving them crawling helplessly on the ground.

With a playful meow, Hua Hua transformed its fur into razor-sharp steel quills. Curling into a spiked black ball, it launched itself into the zombie horde like a living wrecking ball, shredding everything in its path.

Amidst the chaos, Zhang Yi smirked.

"The more they evolve, the more satisfying it'll be when we wipe them out."

Chapter 432: Counterstrike

Having fought off the zombie tide multiple times, Zhang Yi and his team no longer felt the same fear they once did.

These creatures were faster and stronger than ordinary humans but still no match for Superhumans.

Zhang Yi's team was among the most elite in Tianhai City. Against a few thousand zombies, victory was well within their grasp.

Using guerrilla tactics, the group skillfully corralled the horde like shepherd dogs herding sheep, picking them off systematically.

Oblivious to the strategy, the zombies acted purely on instinct, blindly charging toward their attackers—only to be systematically slaughtered.

Zhang Yi wielded his shotgun with precision, blasting apart five or six zombies with each shot. His eightfold speed boost ensured he remained untouchable.

On the perimeter, Hua Hua and Liang Yue carved through the horde with relentless efficiency.

Uncle You and Fatty Xu formed a formidable duo at the frontline, combining fire and ice to control the battlefield and deliver devastating area attacks.

As he fought, Zhang Yi observed the horde closely, searching for signs of the Zombie King—if it was among them or perhaps controlling the horde from a distance.

A creature with advanced intelligence, like the supposed Zombie King, would likely flee if it sensed danger.

True to his suspicions, the horde began to panic once their numbers were halved.

Abruptly, the zombies turned tail, retreating en masse toward the Ci Qu subway station.

“Leaving already? What’s the rush?” Zhang Yi sneered.

He and Hua Hua had already cut off their retreat. The fleeing zombies were met with a massacre.

Hua Hua transformed into a black-bladed war machine, slicing the zombies into chunks of meat.

Zhang Yi’s shotgun, enhanced with his abilities, reduced them to shattered fragments.

Meanwhile, Fatty Xu’s snowstorm slowed their movements, rendering escape nearly impossible.

After 30 minutes of battle, the horde was almost entirely wiped out.

Zhang Yi deliberately spared one zombie, severing its arms and removing its jaw, rendering it harmless.

“What’s the plan, Boss?” Fatty Xu asked as the group gathered around.

Zhang Yi produced a small infrared camera and pressed it into the zombie's remaining eye socket.

"This horde was a test," he explained. "I can confirm the Zombie King wasn't among them, yet it still controlled their actions."

"These zombies weren't here to kill us. Their real mission was to gather intel and relay it back to the Zombie King."

"Every time we kill some, the survivors retreat with information about our tactics. If this continues, they'll eventually understand our combat methods. When that happens, the true army will descend."

His voice turned icy as he continued, "We can't let them dictate the tempo. It's time to act."

Pointing to the zombie, he added, "This guy will scout the subway depths for us."

Understanding his intent, Liang Yue asked, "So, once we know what's down there, we'll destroy their nest?"

"Exactly," Zhang Yi replied without hesitation. "The zombies are evolving. I can't guarantee they won't adapt to our tactics. That would put us in extreme danger."

“The best defense is a good offense. We must strike first.”

With that, he kicked the zombie, sending it sprawling across the snow. It scrambled to its feet and bolted toward the subway entrance.

“Let’s see what kind of news our little friend brings back,” Zhang Yi said with a smirk as he watched it disappear.

Back inside the Shelter, Zhang Yi and his team gathered around the monitor as the infrared camera transmitted its feed.

The zombie sprinted for several minutes before reaching the Ci Qu subway station.

Plunging into the dark tunnels, the camera feed stabilized after a few seconds.

The screen initially showed only darkness. The infrared lens picked up no heat signatures, indicating no living beings nearby.

For a long time, the monitor displayed nothing but the void.

Then, faint red blips appeared—humanoid shapes glowing faintly against the black backdrop.

One figure became two, then three, then a dense throng.

Soon, the screen was filled with dark red, the individual shapes blurring into a sea of glowing bodies.

Unlike the bright red of human heat signatures, these were dim and eerie, belonging to lifeless corpses infected by the strange virus.

The camera feed moved, revealing more and more of the tunnel's interior.

The glow intensified, spreading deeper into the frame.

"How many are down there?" Fatty Xu asked, his voice tinged with alarm.

"Think about how many people died in Tianhai City," Uncle You replied grimly.

"Are you saying every corpse has turned into a zombie? What about us?" Fatty Xu hugged himself nervously, his large frame trembling like a scared child.

Yang Xinxin explained, "Not all corpses become zombies. The virus needs to infect them first."

“But given enough time, I believe this could happen on a large scale.”

Zhang Yi sighed. “Exactly. Tianhai City has far too many dead. Even if we tried to collect the corpses, there’s no way we could manage millions.”

“That’s why we must go after the source. Killing the Zombie King would alleviate much of this trouble.”

As he spoke, the screen revealed a larger, more distinctive figure among the sea of zombies.

Standing roughly three meters tall, its slender, insect-like body towered over the surrounding horde.

“Is that...?” Liang Yue asked, her voice tense.

The creature’s skeletal frame resembled a massive stick insect, and it moved with unsettling grace.

As they stared, its pale, ghastly face suddenly loomed into the camera.

It smiled—a grotesque, twisted expression that sent chills down their spines.

“Is this the Zombie King?” Zhang Yi whispered, his voice heavy with unease.

### Chapter 433: Taking the Initiative

The sudden appearance of the grotesque, pale face on the screen startled everyone.

The more timid among them screamed instinctively, while Zhou Ke’er and Yang Siyah clung to Zhang Yi, pressing against him as if seeking shelter from their fear.

This wasn’t a horror movie—it was a living nightmare.

The video abruptly cut out, leaving the screen filled with static.

Even Zhang Yi flinched momentarily. Not out of fear, but because the face had appeared so unexpectedly.

“We’ve been discovered,” he said calmly.

Then, to everyone’s surprise, a smile spread across his face. “But this also proves we were right. There is an intelligent entity down there!”

“That face... it has to be the Zombie King.”

“If we don’t kill it, the threat to the Shelter will never end.”

“How do we kill the Zombie King?” Fatty Xu asked nervously.

“The subway is swarming with zombies. Even if we go in fully armed, it’ll take forever to clear them out!”

Yang Xinxin added, “And with the subway tunnels connecting to all parts of Tianhai City, the Zombie King could escape the moment it senses danger.”

Zhang Yi folded his arms, his expression turning serious. “If we act, we need to ensure it’s decisive and thorough. The zombies may be numerous, but their combat strength is limited. If we commit, we can take them down.”

“But we must prevent the Zombie King from escaping. That’s the priority.”

Liang Yue suggested, “We could start by targeting Songzhuang’s subway tunnel. If we blow it up, it would block their retreat.”

“Our goal is to kill the Zombie King. As long as it can’t flee, the other zombies are manageable.”

Uncle You chuckled, arms crossed. “Zhang Yi, you decide the plan. This fight is unavoidable anyway.”

Everyone nodded in agreement. Avoiding this battle wasn't an option.

If they didn't act now, the zombies would only grow smarter, learning their weaknesses and mounting relentless attacks.

No matter how sturdy their Shelter was, it couldn't withstand endless assaults.

Zhang Yi took a deep breath and leaned back on the sofa, contemplating the feasibility of their options.

After a while, he made his decision. "Get ready. We move tomorrow."

Delaying even one day could allow the Zombie King to evolve further. It was better to strike while it was still growing.

This mission would involve the usual core team of five.

They prepared their gear—ammo, gas masks, and the energy-enhanced food Yang Siyah had been diligently crafting.

These resources would sustain them through prolonged combat in the tunnels, potentially lasting up to a week.

Everyone agreed without hesitation. None wanted to spend every day defending against zombie waves.

Still, Fatty Xu voiced his concern. “Boss, isn’t this a bit rushed? It doesn’t seem like your usual style.”

Zhang Yi was known for his meticulous planning, and this sudden urgency felt uncharacteristic.

“Are we really ready for what’s down there? What if we’ve underestimated the zombies’ strength?”

Fatty Xu, cautious to a fault, often worried more than Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi smiled reassuringly, patting Fatty Xu on the shoulder. “Don’t worry, I wouldn’t gamble with everyone’s lives.”

“I’ve prepared thoroughly. You’ll see soon enough.”

Seeing the confidence in Zhang Yi’s eyes—calm and unwavering—Fatty Xu relaxed a little. “Alright, Boss, but don’t keep us in suspense. What’s the big plan?”

“You just need to trust me,” Zhang Yi replied, still smiling. “Even if things go south, I’ll get us out safely.”

His cryptic assurance puzzled the group, but Liang Yue seemed to catch on.

She tilted her head and studied Zhang Yi before nodding. "Got it. If that's the case, we've got nothing to worry about."

Yang Siyah stood up from the sofa. "I'll go make more food for the trip."

"Perfect," Zhang Yi said. "The more, the better."

Thanks to Yang Siyah's ability to imbue food with energy-restoring properties, they had an ample supply. Stored in Zhang Yi's Spatial Storage, the food retained its potency indefinitely.

This was one of the reasons Zhang Yi felt confident leading a team deep into the subway tunnels.

While Zhang Yi's group prepared for their offensive, the situation for other factions worsened.

The Zombie King's influence allowed the hordes to learn and evolve at an alarming rate.

Each successive attack became more precise and strategic, tailored to exploit the weaknesses of their targets.

Unlike Zhang Yi's elite, small-scale team, the Western Alliance had vast numbers to defend—soldiers, workers, and slaves—and sprawling above-ground infrastructure to protect.

Their reliance on factories, refineries, and port facilities made retreating to underground shelters impractical.

Abandoning those resources would mean losing their standing in Tianhai City's power struggle.

Thus, they fought desperately, refusing to yield.

But as the zombies adapted, their defenses became increasingly ineffective.

Barriers that initially held the hordes back now failed as the zombies learned to climb walls and circumvent obstacles.

Frost-hardened bodies rendered wire fences and bullets ineffective, forcing them to rely on blunt weapons and heavy artillery to fend off the attacks.

Yet even heavy weaponry and Superhumans could only do so much against the seemingly endless tide.

After barely repelling another wave, Xiao Honglian, Xing Tian, and Wei Dinghai convened, their exhaustion evident.

They couldn't afford to lose their vital facilities, yet they were clearly losing ground.

"These zombies aren't just mindless corpses," Xiao Honglian said, her fiery temperament flaring. "They're coordinated—like an army or a swarm."

Xing Tian nodded grimly. "We need a new strategy. If this keeps up, we'll be bled dry."

"They're learning and adapting. It's not normal."

"They're evolving," Wei Dinghai said, his expression dark. "We may not have much time before they completely overwhelm us."

Their situation had grown dire, and they all realized one chilling truth:

The zombies weren't just a mindless plague. They were becoming something far more dangerous.

Chapter 434: Journey to the Depths

The leaders of the major factions weren't fools. They recognized that the zombies they were dealing with were no mindless horde.

But despite understanding the threat, they were stretched too thin.

Every day, fending off the relentless waves of zombies consumed vast amounts of manpower. Dispatching an elite squad to investigate the zombies' origin was a risky proposition.

What if their stronghold was attacked in their absence?

Even Xing Tian and Wei Dinghai, aware of the unsustainability of the situation, dared not risk dividing their forces.

Xiao Honglian, however, wasn't one to sit idly by.

Sitting on a steel beam, her body covered in blood, Xiao Honglian radiated her usual fiery determination.

"We can't just keep defending. If this continues, we'll be forced to abandon the refinery and retreat underground within a month," she declared.

Their energy reserves and her formidable [Purgatory Furnace] ability had allowed Yangsheng Base to fend off zombie attacks faster than other factions.

But the smarter and more coordinated the hordes became, the deeper her unease grew.

She feared that even retreating underground might not ensure their survival if the zombies continued to evolve.

Zhuge Qingtian approached her, his blood-stained white combat uniform bearing testament to the battle they'd just endured. He stood at attention and saluted.

"Commander, all zombies have been neutralized. Burning their remains is the only way to ensure they're truly dead. However, we've lost 67 warriors and slaves in the process."

Xiao Honglian's fiery eyes glowed with residual energy from her abilities as she met his gaze.

“We need to change tactics. Defense alone won’t cut it anymore.”

Zhuge Qingtian’s eyes widened. “You mean... an offensive into the zombies’ lair?”

Xiao Honglian nodded. “Their actions are clearly orchestrated. Whether it’s a Superhuman or some other intelligent being, we need information to end this crisis once and for all.”

“That’s too dangerous!” Zhuge Qingtian protested. “We don’t even know how large the horde is. A blind assault could result in total annihilation!”

“Besides, the other factions are struggling too. Maybe we should wait and see if they come up with a solution.”

Xiao Honglian scoffed.

“Look at the scale of this horde. Do you really think they’re faring any better? Especially the Followers of the Snow God—they’ve gathered over 10,000 people in one place, practically serving themselves up as a buffet!”

“No one’s coming to help us. If anything, they’d rather see us wiped out. If we want to survive, we have to rely on ourselves.”

Unable to refute her logic, Zhuge Qingtian remained silent.

Xiao Honglian stood up decisively. “It’s settled. Send Dong Hu with two Superhumans and 30 elite soldiers to investigate the zombies’ lair.”

Meanwhile, at the Followers of the Snow God’s base, chaos reigned.

With over 10,000 members, most of whom were ordinary people, their defenses were woefully inadequate.

While these survivors had enough skill to endure the apocalypse, their combat capabilities were no match for the relentless zombies.

Though unafraid of death, they certainly didn't want to die.

Under such circumstances, defeating the undead was a near-impossible task.

Despite Zheng Yixian's efforts to organize a rigorous defense, each wave of zombies claimed hundreds of lives.

As casualties mounted, discontent began to fester among the followers.

Priest Wu Huan approached Zheng Yixian to relay the growing unrest.

"Over 1,000 followers have already died, and those infected may turn into zombies themselves. This is causing serious doubt among the newcomers. If this continues, we could face a crisis!"

Zheng Yixian's expression remained impassive.

"Don't worry. They may grumble, but they won't act on it."

He clasped his hands behind his back, speaking calmly. "Spread the word among the followers: tell them that the outside world has been almost entirely overrun by zombies. Without the protection of the Followers of the Snow God, they wouldn't stand a chance."

"Mention that the other factions are suffering even worse losses. Tell them half their populations are already dead."

Wu Huan's eyes lit up. "Brilliant! A little comparison will remind them how lucky they are."

Zheng Yixian's lips curved into a faint smile. "Their complaints stem from a lack of faith. We need to intensify their indoctrination. Once they're devout believers, they'll understand how fortunate they are to be with us."

Wu Huan nodded eagerly. "Understood, High Priest. I'll see to it immediately."

Meanwhile, Zhang Yi's team had fully prepared to enter the subway tunnels and confront the Zombie King.

The five members of his core group, along with Hua Hua, were equipped with upgraded gear.

Their combat suits, modified by Lu Keran, offered exceptional protection—strong enough to deflect bullets from small-caliber sniper rifles. Zombie bites wouldn't even leave a scratch.

They carried a week's worth of energy-enhanced food, all stored in Zhang Yi's Spatial Storage for convenience.

The group arrived at the entrance to the Ci Qu subway station.

As they stood before the dark, yawning tunnel, Zhang Yi reiterated their plan.

"Our primary objective is to kill the Zombie King. Once we find it, I'm 100% certain I can take it down."

"In these confined spaces, my Divine Power can obliterate anything within 300 meters."

"But remember, our safety is the top priority. Don't waste time fighting the horde unnecessarily. Killing more zombies won't solve anything."

The team nodded in agreement, understanding the stakes.

Zhang Yi pulled a glow stick from his belt, cracked it, and tossed it into the tunnel.

The faint blue light illuminated a grim scene: bloodstains and viscera streaked across the ground.

“Uncle You, you go first,” Zhang Yi instructed.

As the team’s tank, Uncle You was the safest choice to scout ahead.

Without hesitation, Uncle You slid down into the tunnel.

After a cautious inspection with his tactical visor, he reported back through the comms. “All clear. You can come down!”

The rest of the group followed, descending into the dark subway entrance.

Through their night-vision goggles, the grim underground landscape came into focus.

Blackened blood streaked the walls, while rotting organs clung to surfaces. The ground beneath their feet squelched with a mixture of viscera, dried blood, and soil, emitting a nauseating stench.

Thankfully, their helmets filtered out the smell.

“Let’s move,” Zhang Yi said, his voice steady.

The Ci Qu station was a terminus. Following the main tunnel forward would inevitably lead them to the horde—and the Zombie King.

As they advanced, the tunnel was littered with skeletal remains, stripped of flesh and gnawed clean.

Fatty Xu muttered, “Why don’t they turn these corpses into more zombies instead of eating them?”

Zhang Yi, scanning the surroundings with his lever-action shotgun at the ready, replied, “Zombies are driven by hunger. Infection is just a passive side effect. If they’re starving, they’ll eat more than they infect. You can’t expect bones to mutate.”

“Well, they’ve got big appetites,” Fatty Xu mused. “But what happens when they run out of food? With more zombies than living people in Tianhai City, isn’t that inevitable?”

Zhang Yi paused mid-step. Liang Yue and Uncle You exchanged uneasy glances.

None of them had considered this before. Focused on their immediate survival, they hadn’t thought about the broader implications.

If the zombies exhausted their food supply, what then?

Would they spread beyond Tianhai City, into other cities?

Chapter 435: Vermin

Zhang Yi resumed walking, his footsteps steady and composed.

“What does it matter to us? As long as we keep the area around the Shelter clear of zombies, that’s all that matters.”

In the apocalypse, who had the time to worry about others?

Fatty Xu nodded in agreement. “Makes sense.”

The group advanced at a measured pace.

Starting from the terminal station, they didn’t need to worry about being ambushed from behind. It was just a matter of following the tunnel until they found the source of the zombie horde.

The route was littered with bones, stripped clean of flesh.

"Man, they're thorough eaters! Even the marrow's gone," Fatty Xu remarked, his chatter breaking the tense silence. "Look at these bones—not even a sliver of meat left. Talk about leaving nothing to waste."

Uncle You responded casually, "Maybe it rotted away?"

Fatty Xu countered, "In this cold? Meat doesn't rot in this kind of weather. Haven't you heard of frozen zombie meat? People pull it out of storage after years, and it's still good to sell!"

"Ugh, gross," someone muttered.

Despite the grim subject, Fatty Xu's humor lightened the atmosphere.

At the front of the group, Hua Hua's ears twitched, and it let out a low growl, its eyes widening in alarm.

"Stay alert!" Zhang Yi commanded, raising his gun.

A shadow darted across their path.

Before Zhang Yi could take a shot, Liang Yue drew a short knife from her waist and hurled it with precision.

The blade struck the shadow mid-leap, pinning it to the ground.

Lowering his weapon, Zhang Yi approached cautiously. In this environment, avoiding gunfire was best to prevent attracting more threats.

The group crowded around the creature, inhaling sharply at the sight.

The thing pinned to the ground was a massive rodent, its gray fur matted and filthy.

At first glance, it resembled a small dog, but its elongated tail and snout confirmed its identity: a rat.

“That’s a rat? It’s bigger than a cat!” Fatty Xu exclaimed, visibly unnerved.

No—it was twice the size of Hua Hua.

“A mutated rat,” Zhang Yi observed, his voice steady.

Rats, when provided with enough food, could grow to the size of a cat. But this one was unnaturally large, undoubtedly a product of mutation.

Looking back at the stripped skeletons they had passed, Zhang Yi realized the truth.

“All those bones we saw earlier... they were gnawed clean by these rats.”

Fatty Xu shuddered. “If there are this many corpses, there’s probably a whole swarm of them.”

A heavy silence fell over the group. Even Liang Yue, a seasoned Martial Arts Master, looked uneasy.

Despite her bravery, the thought of encountering a rat swarm stirred a primal disgust.

Just then, Hua Hua stretched its neck and let out a sharp, warning cry.

“Meowwww!”

The ominous sound reverberated, signaling the presence of a significant threat.

In the dimly lit tunnel, the air filled with a cacophony of squeaks and scurrying.

"They've got us surrounded," Zhang Yi muttered.

From the shadows emerged an endless tide of rats, pouring out like water from unseen cracks.

The swarm varied in size—some as small as typical rodents, others the size of cats and dogs. Among them loomed a monstrous white rat, as large as a pig.

"Disgusting!" Liang Yue exclaimed, her voice quivering. Her normally unshakable demeanor faltered as her body tensed.

Zhang Yi noticed the eerie red glow in the rats' eyes—a telltale sign of predators that had tasted human flesh.

It was clear how these creatures had survived in the dark, consuming the dead without hesitation.

Hua Hua bristled, growling menacingly, its fur standing on end. But outnumbered as it was, even the natural enmity between cats and rats offered little deterrent.

"Let's clear them out," Zhang Yi ordered.

Uncle You and Fatty Xu raised their flamethrowers, unleashing fiery torrents down the tunnel.

Though not as resilient as zombies, the mutated rats were still numerous. Thousands perished in the flames before the remaining rats hesitated, squealing and retreating just beyond the fire's reach.

The swarm didn't disperse entirely. Their glowing eyes glared from the shadows, waiting for the flames to die down.

"Persistent little bastards," Uncle You muttered.

Zhang Yi frowned. "Put the flamethrowers away."

The two hesitated but complied, extinguishing the fire.

No sooner had the flames died than the rats surged forward, a tidal wave of gray fur and gnashing teeth.

"Dimensional Gate!"

With a fluid motion, Zhang Yi summoned not one but two massive portals.

The translucent barriers spanned the width of the tunnel, trapping the advancing rats.

Unable to stop their momentum, the creatures hurtled into the portals, vanishing into the otherworldly void.

The sound of squealing rats was deafening, but not a single one reached the group.

As the rats continued pouring in, Liang Yue finally exhaled, her tension easing.

"Your Dimensional Gate... it's upgraded?" she asked, watching the spectacle.

"I've been refining its use," Zhang Yi explained. "Since the last major battle, I've learned to summon two gates simultaneously."

"That's handy," Liang Yue remarked.

Two gates provided defensive coverage from multiple angles, turning situations like this into manageable skirmishes.

In the narrow tunnel, the gates were impenetrable.

The rats soon realized the danger. Those at the front tried to stop, but the pressure of the swarm behind them forced them forward, sending wave after wave into the void.

Eventually, desperate squeals echoed as the rats warned their kin of the danger.

At a great cost, the swarm retreated, the remaining rodents disappearing into the shadows.

The enormous white rat let out a series of sharp cries before leading the swarm away.

Within moments, the tunnel was silent once more.

“They know when they’re outmatched,” Zhang Yi said, lowering his arms. “Smart little pests.”

#### Chapter 436: Under Surveillance

After driving off the rat swarm, Zhang Yi and his team pressed on.

For ordinary people, those oversized rodents would have posed a grave threat.

But for this group of elite Superhumans, they were little more than a nuisance.

Even so, Zhang Yi voiced a concern: “I just hope that rat commotion didn’t alert the zombies.”

Liang Yue furrowed her brow. “What’s the connection between these rats and the zombies? They’re both underground. Could there be some kind of relationship?”

“Who knows? Let’s keep moving,” Zhang Yi replied.

He had no desire to linger in the unsettling underground space any longer than necessary.

As they continued deeper into the tunnels, they couldn't shake the feeling of being watched.

Countless unseen eyes seemed to track their every move from the darkness.

These shadowy underground creatures hadn't given up yet, seemingly waiting for another opportunity to strike.

Zhang Yi, however, ignored them.

It wasn't until he stumbled upon a shredded piece of combat gear, torn and stained with blood, that he felt a twinge of unease.

"Those teeth are no joke. They tore right through this gear," he noted grimly. "Let's keep our distance from them."

Fatty Xu added nervously, "Do you think these rats hold grudges? What if they follow us back to the Shelter?"

"They won't," Zhang Yi reassured him. "It's damp and warm down here, while the surface is freezing cold. These rats aren't Arctic lemmings. Even if they can survive the cold, they wouldn't travel miles just to bother us."

Meanwhile, in the subway tunnels near Yangsheng Base, Dong Hu led his team of elite soldiers on a reconnaissance mission.

They hadn't gone far before they were ambushed by a massive rat swarm.

The rodents attacked from all sides, their sharp teeth easily piercing through protective gear.

“Ahhh!”

“These rats—they’re monsters!”

“Careful! Don’t let them bite you! They can tear through our suits!”

Screams filled the air as soldiers desperately fought off the swarm, using flamethrowers and rifles to burn and blast their way through the horde.

Dong Hu and two other Superhumans unleashed their abilities with full force.

Dong Hu’s [Blazing Fist] engulfed his hands in searing flames, incinerating entire clusters of rats with each strike.

After a grueling fifteen minutes, they finally drove the swarm back.

But by then, they had lost eight soldiers to the rats’ vicious bites, and several others were seriously injured.

Surveying the carnage, Dong Hu’s face darkened.

They hadn’t even located the zombie horde yet, and they were already in such a sorry state.

A soldier pried open a rat’s jaws, revealing teeth like icy daggers, and shuddered. “If these things ever reach the base, they could be even worse than the zombies!”

Dong Hu remained silent for a moment before declaring, “We press on. Our mission is to locate the zombies and gather intel. No matter what obstacles we face, we must overcome them.”

To retreat now would be to return empty-handed—a prospect Dong Hu couldn’t bear to face.

Back in the tunnels, Zhang Yi and his team continued their journey, eventually passing two more subway stations.

At the third station, they finally found the zombies.

The horde wasn't hiding, nor did it attack. Instead, they lay scattered throughout the tunnel as if in a deep sleep.

From wall to wall, the narrow passage was packed with dormant zombies.

"They're sleeping," Uncle You whispered.

"That makes sense," Zhang Yi murmured. "Even as virus hosts, their movements consume energy. Without orders, they conserve it by lying dormant."

Uncle You raised his flamethrower. "Should we torch them all?"

Zhang Yi hesitated, recalling Zhou Ke'er's observations. These zombies retained some biological traits, functioning more like a hive than traditional undead.

If they were truly asleep, there was no need to disturb them unnecessarily.

"That'd be ideal," he said. But reality rarely conformed to ideal scenarios.

A single zombie suddenly opened its eyes.

One by one, more began to stir, their twisted bodies rising in grotesque, unnatural motions.

Spotting the living intruders, they let out guttural snarls and surged forward in a frenzied mass.

“So much for that plan,” Zhang Yi muttered, his brow furrowing.

Rather than unleashing the flamethrowers, he activated his Dimensional Gate, blocking the zombies’ advance.

The glowing portals swallowed the rushing horde, preventing them from reaching the group.

While effective, this tactic carried a risk—it could alert the Zombie King deeper within the tunnels, making it harder to catch off guard.

As the tide of zombies poured into the portals, Liang Yue and the others watched in awe.

“Your Dimensional Gate really is a perfect defense,” Liang Yue remarked, her eyes gleaming with admiration.

Zhang Yi didn’t respond immediately, his focus on maintaining the gates. The ability was nearly invulnerable unless overwhelmed by massive energy attacks, making it the ultimate shield in situations like this.

Suddenly, the horde stopped as if on command.

The abrupt stillness was eerie, like someone had pressed a pause button.

Then, in perfect unison, the zombies began emitting guttural, mournful wails.

“The Zombie King knows we’re here,” Zhang Yi said grimly.

With their presence exposed, he decided there was no point in holding back.

“Burn them,” he ordered.

Uncle You and Fatty Xu stepped forward, unleashing twin jets of flame down the narrow corridor.

The fire swept through the front ranks of the horde, setting dozens of zombies ablaze. The tunnel was soon filled with the crackle of flames and the stench of burning flesh.

Despite their numbers, the zombies began retreating, shuffling back out of the fire’s reach.

Zhang Yi’s eyes narrowed as he watched their movements.

“The Zombie King is close. Pursue them!”

He dismissed the Dimensional Gate and led the team deeper into the tunnel.

The path ahead was choked with zombies, their sheer numbers forming a living blockade.

But instead of charging, the horde retreated further into the darkness, their eerie howls reverberating through the tunnel.

With the flamethrowers clearing the way, Zhang Yi’s group advanced steadily.

Their relentless use of fire turned the fight into a grotesque spectacle, as if they were grilling the undead en masse.

Zhang Yi’s Spatial Storage provided an endless supply of fuel and ammo, giving them a decisive edge.

The zombies’ inability to counter his spatial abilities made them seem almost feeble.

But Zhang Yi knew better. He had seen the devastation these same zombies wrought on the Western Alliance.

Their current dominance was no reason for complacency. The true threat was still ahead, waiting in the shadows.

#### Chapter 437: Shadows

"Whoooosh—whoooosh—"

The flamethrowers continued to spew torrents of fire, illuminating the dark tunnel and reducing the advancing zombies to ash.

Though the horde retreated in fear, unable to resist Zhang Yi's overwhelming abilities, his expression remained grim.

Burning through these ordinary zombies brought no sense of accomplishment.

His target was the Zombie King, the puppet master capable of creating an endless tide of these creatures.

But the ruckus they had caused undoubtedly alerted the Zombie King to their presence, making it harder to locate.

Still, Zhang Yi was determined to press forward.

Utilizing the near-invincible defensive power of his Dimensional Gate, he led the team deeper into the subway.

Hua Hua and Liang Yue hadn't needed to make a move.

But Liang Yue, ever cautious, glanced over her shoulder and said, “Those giant rats are still trailing us.”

The subterranean rats, capable of hiding in every crevice and shadow, were proving more tenacious than expected. Their numbers likely exceeded even the zombies, making them nearly impossible to eradicate.

“Forget about them for now!” Zhang Yi said firmly. “We need to find the Zombie King and kill it—that’s the only way to put an end to this.”

“But we’re moving too slowly,” Liang Yue replied, her tone laced with frustration.

The tunnel ahead was choked with countless zombies, their heads forming an undulating sea in the dim light.

At this pace, clearing the way could take forever.

“It doesn’t matter,” Zhang Yi assured her. “We’ve prepared for a long campaign. If it comes to a war of attrition, we’ll outlast them.”

Liang Yue’s eyes widened in surprise, realizing Zhang Yi had planned for this from the start.

A protracted battle in the tunnels wasn’t something she had even considered.

“It’s risky,” she muttered, her grip tightening on her Tang Sword. The deeper they ventured, the harder it would be to escape if something went wrong.

But Zhang Yi’s confidence stilled her doubts. She took her position on his left, ready to fend off any ambush.

Time passed, and the team carved a fiery path through the horde.

Despite the sheer number of zombies they incinerated, Zhang Yi's Dimensional Gate and flamethrowers remained as effective as ever. His abilities required no replenishment, and the energy reserves they carried went untouched.

The team began to notice a shift: the zombies were retreating faster, as if the Zombie King had decided to consolidate its forces.

Uncle You remarked, "The horde's thinning out. Let's pick up the pace!"

Fatty Xu's face lit up. "Maybe the Zombie King's running scared! If it escapes through the tunnels, we could just blow them up and seal it in!"

Zhang Yi shook his head.

"You're dreaming. The subway isn't a closed system. There are multiple exits at regular intervals. To completely seal it off, you'd need to collapse the entire tunnel. Do you think that's possible?"

Fatty Xu scratched his head sheepishly. "Not really."

Elsewhere, near the Yangsheng Base:

Dong Hu and his reconnaissance team pressed onward despite their earlier run-in with the rat swarm.

Their determination paid off—they stumbled upon a massive horde of sleeping zombies.

Dong Hu's eyes widened in shock.

"Retreat! Now!"

The zombies stirred at the scent of living humans. One by one, they opened their eyes and rose to their feet.

The tunnel was packed wall-to-wall with undead, stretching as far as the eye could see. There could be tens of thousands, perhaps even more.

It felt as though every corpse in Tianhai City had been dragged into the subway and turned into one of these monsters.

“Run! Don’t look back!” Dong Hu roared.

Flames erupted from his fists as he incinerated the closest zombies, but for every one he destroyed, dozens more surged forward.

The team used flamethrowers, grenades, and shotguns to slow the tide, but it was like trying to hold back an ocean.

“We can’t fight this! Get to the nearest exit and evacuate!” Dong Hu commanded, his voice steady despite the chaos.

They weren’t here to fight but to gather intelligence. Against such overwhelming odds, retreat was the only option.

But as they began to pull back, a soldier wielding a flamethrower froze, his eyes wide with terror.

“What the hell is that?”

The team turned to see a massive shadow emerge through the wall of fire—a towering figure with a grotesque head three times the size of a human’s.

“Roooooar!”

In an instant, the nearest soldiers were torn apart. Even Dong Hu and the other Superhumans felt a chill of despair.

“This is bad,” Dong Hu muttered, his fists tightening.

Back in Zhang Yi’s tunnel, the team pressed forward through a corridor of flames and charred corpses.

The retreating zombies thinned further, their numbers dwindling as they fell back into the shadows.

Finally, the group reached a spacious junction—a transfer station.

It was clear why the zombies had scattered so quickly.

“This is trouble,” Zhang Yi said, scanning the area.

The transfer station’s multiple exits provided countless escape routes, making it impossible to pinpoint the Zombie King’s location.

“How are we supposed to know which way to go?” Fatty Xu asked, his frustration evident.

“I have a feeling,” Zhang Yi said, his voice low.

His sharp gaze swept over the station, every corner of the dimly lit space falling under his scrutiny.

“That thing... it’s close.”

Just as the words left his mouth, a series of heavy footsteps echoed through the tunnels.

“Clack... clack... clack...”

“Thud... thud... thud...”

The sound reverberated off the walls, its source impossible to pinpoint.

It was as if something massive was stomping over bones, its steps deliberate and unnervingly slow.

The echoes made it seem as though the noise was coming from all directions, creating a suffocating sense of unease.

"They're here," Zhang Yi said grimly, his grip tightening on his weapon.

#### Chapter 438: The Bronze Armored Zombies

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

A series of heavy thuds echoed from deep within the subway, their oppressive rhythm growing louder.

Zhang Yi's group grew tense, their expressions grave.

It sounded like a terrifying creature had broken free from its cage.

"Stay sharp! Something big is coming," Zhang Yi warned the others.

Fatty Xu nervously swallowed and gripped his flamethrower tightly, scanning their surroundings.

The zombie horde, which had been forced into retreat just moments ago, seemed to be regrouping.

"It's fine!" Uncle You reassured them. "Even if more come, we can kill them all."

The group had already witnessed the combat abilities of the zombies. While far stronger than ordinary humans, they were no match for the team of top-tier superhumans, especially given their ample weapons, ammunition, and superhuman energy food.

But then, Hua Hua suddenly let out a sharp cry.

"Meow—"

Its tone was filled with caution, a stark warning of a deadly threat.

Hua Hua's combat prowess, especially in its enlarged form, surpassed even Uncle You. If Hua Hua was this alarmed, it meant the enemy ahead was extremely dangerous.

Zhang Yi's gaze hardened, and he murmured, "Could it be the Zombie King?"

The words "Zombie King" cast a heavy shadow over the group.

Though none of them had seen it before, the entity capable of commanding thousands—perhaps tens of thousands—of zombies was undoubtedly a fearsome foe.

No one knew its true strength, abilities, or even if it was a mutated human or an immensely powerful zombie.

From the distant corridor, the deep, resonant thuds grew louder.

A shadow emerged at the edge of their vision.

As it stepped closer, it drew everyone's attention.

From the darkness, a tall, skeletal figure resembling a giant stick insect emerged.

When Zhang Yi saw its form, his pupils constricted.

It wasn't human.

Instead, it was a humanoid monster with a body entirely covered in bronze-colored, hardened skin.

Standing over three meters tall, its elongated arms nearly touched the ground.

Its grotesque, reddish muscles were exposed in places, wrapped tightly by its bronze-like carapace.

A triangular head adorned with enormous ears framed its face, filled with glowing fangs and cruel, predatory eyes—brown, vertical pupils glaring with malice.

The horror didn't end there. The creature had eight eyes.

Two were on its head, while six more were spread across its arms and chest, constantly swiveling and scanning the area.

Despite having faced countless horrors in this post-apocalyptic world, none of them had encountered anything so nightmarish.

For a moment, they couldn't determine if this monstrosity was a mutated corpse or some other bioengineered aberration.

Uncle You muttered uneasily, "Could this thing be the Zombie King?"

Before anyone could respond, three more identical creatures appeared from other directions.

"These things... are they being mass-produced? There's no way they're naturally occurring!"

Zhang Yi's heart pounded. It was clear that something far more sinister was at play.

The creation of the zombie horde couldn't have been a random occurrence—there had to be a deliberate, orchestrated cause behind it.

And behind the bronze creatures, the zombie horde began to resurface, their glowing eyes fixed intently on the group.

The team was completely surrounded, the passageways now teeming with an unending sea of zombies.

Even the most battle-hardened among them felt a sliver of unease under the suffocating pressure.

Fatty Xu's face turned pale. "These things don't look like regular zombies at all!"

Zhang Yi's brows furrowed deeply. "I get it now! These bastards lured us here on purpose. Their goal was to trap and eliminate us!"

Though Zhang Yi had known the Zombie King was intelligent, he hadn't expected it to employ tactics so cunning.

His assessment of the Zombie King rose even higher.

A creature capable of controlling massive hordes while exhibiting such high intelligence posed an unparalleled threat—not just to Tianhai City but to humanity itself.

"Zhang Yi, what do we do now?" Uncle You asked.

Zhang Yi sneered. "What else can we do? We fight."

The open space robbed Zhang Yi's Dimensional Gate of its maximum effectiveness.

But even without it, every member of the team was a seasoned fighter.

Uncle You and Fatty Xu raised their flamethrowers and unleashed torrents of fire upon the encroaching zombies.

Liang Yue drew her Tang Sword—finally, it was her time to shine.

"Liang Yue, Hua Hua, stay close to me," Zhang Yi instructed cautiously. "We're outnumbered, so we need to stick together."

Liang Yue nodded, understanding that Zhang Yi's melee capabilities weren't his strength. He needed protection.

Hua Hua, as always, remained loyally by Zhang Yi's side. It would never let anything harm him.

Meanwhile, the massive bronze creatures began advancing steadily. Their hardened, armor-like skin gleamed faintly under the dim light, exuding a menacing aura.

The sight reminded Zhang Yi of a theory from a movie he had once seen—of zombies evolving into powerful forms called "Bronze Armored Zombies," their bodies impervious to ordinary weapons.

These creatures, whether mutated corpses or bioengineered creations, were formidable. Their ability to command the zombie horde was a testament to their power.

"Take down the leader first!" Zhang Yi barked.

"If we can deal with the Bronze Armored Zombies, the rest will be easier to handle."

"Understood!" the others replied.

At that moment, one of the Bronze Armored Zombies let out a bone-chilling roar, shaking the entire underground passage.

"Roar!!!"

The surrounding zombies echoed the cry in a deafening chorus before surging forward in a reckless charge.

Even the red-eyed giant rats, which had been lurking in the shadows, joined the fray, their bloodlust directed at Zhang Yi's group.

The horde surged like an unstoppable wave, their only goal to overwhelm and destroy.

The Zombie King, commanding from the shadows, had ordered them to create chaos and weaken the group's defenses, giving the Bronze Armored Zombies the opportunity to strike.

But Zhang Yi's team wouldn't go down without a fight.

In the darkness, Liang Yue's sword flashed like moonlight. Enhanced by the abilities she had absorbed, her strikes now carried a chilling blue aura, with each slash extending over three meters.

Her blade tore through the zombie ranks, leaving mutilated bodies in its wake.

Uncle You and Fatty Xu's flamethrowers created a blazing barrier, keeping the horde at bay.

Meanwhile, Hua Hua stayed close to Zhang Yi, guarding him vigilantly. Zhang Yi, focused on precision, fired his enhanced rifle, shattering the legs of approaching zombies to slow their advance.

Even the giant rats stood no chance, reduced to bloody pulp.

Though the horde was vast, they posed no immediate threat to the elite superhumans.

But then, one of the Bronze Armored Zombies entered the fray.

Grabbing two nearby zombies, it hurled them like projectiles toward Zhang Yi's group with terrifying force.

#### Chapter 439: The Power of Divine Might

A Bronze Armored Zombie extended its massive hand, grabbing a nearby zombie and hurling it at Zhang Yi's group like a thrown brick.

The other Bronze Armored Zombies followed suit, flinging zombies into the air toward their targets.

This aerial assault made the situation more precarious for the team, but Zhang Yi remained calm. He instantly deployed the Dimensional Gate overhead, catching the incoming zombies and sending them into spatial oblivion.

The Bronze Armored Zombies froze briefly in confusion but quickly resumed their charge, barreling through the horde with their enormous strides toward Zhang Yi and his companions.

Fatty Xu's face turned pale. With his abilities rendered ineffective underground, he could only rely on his flamethrower to maintain his combat strength.

From his direction, a three-meter-tall Bronze Armored Zombie charged straight at him.

Fatty Xu trembled at the sight of the creature's colossal and impenetrable body. He felt as though a single swipe of its claws could tear him to pieces.

"Ahhh!" Fatty Xu roared, turning the flamethrower to full power and unleashing a torrent of flames at the Bronze Armored Zombie.

But to everyone's shock, the high-temperature flames failed to ignite the creature. Its bronze-colored skin remained unmarred, barely slowing its movements.

Impatient, the Bronze Armored Zombie grabbed a handful of zombies and hurled them at Fatty Xu.

With the creature now dangerously close, Fatty Xu froze in terror, his movements faltering.

Just as disaster seemed inevitable, Zhang Yi stepped forward and activated his defensive technique—Twin Gates.

Two enormous dimensional portals materialized, blocking the tunnel in both directions. This effectively stopped the zombies coming from those directions but left the group vulnerable to attacks from the remaining sides.

As the zombies paused their assault in the blocked directions, the horde from the open flanks intensified their charge, accompanied by two more Bronze Armored Zombies.

"Damn it! The Zombie King must be orchestrating this! But how can we kill the Zombie King if we can't even deal with these hordes?" Uncle You shouted angrily.

Zhang Yi's calm voice cut through the chaos. "Don't panic. The more dangerous the situation, the more we need to stay composed and observant."

"I'm certain the Zombie King is nearby—I can feel it."

While their predicament looked dire, Zhang Yi knew that killing the Zombie King would solve everything.

With one half of the horde blocked by the Twin Gates, the remaining enemies could still be handled.

Sure enough, the two advancing Bronze Armored Zombies arrived with a wave of zombies and giant rats.

Uncle You and Fatty Xu had to put down their flamethrowers. Using them in such close quarters risked injuring themselves and their allies.

"Let's do this!"

Uncle You activated his skill, transforming into a towering two-meter-tall warrior, and charged straight into one of the Bronze Armored Zombies.

Bang!

The collision of their immense bodies was like two sumo wrestlers locked in a ferocious struggle.

Despite the Bronze Armored Zombie's superior size and strength, its clumsy fighting techniques left it vulnerable to Uncle You's martial expertise honed through years of training.

Meanwhile, Liang Yue confronted the other Bronze Armored Zombie with her glowing Tang Sword.

In a flash, she delivered a full-strength slash.

Shrrrk!

The sword tore through the creature's chest, leaving a deep gash in its bronze armor. Blue viscous fluid began oozing from the wound.

The Bronze Armored Zombie stumbled back two steps, while Liang Yue retreated five. Both looked at each other in shock.

Liang Yue hadn't expected that her full-power strike, capable of slicing through an armored vehicle, could only pierce its outer shell.

The wounded Bronze Armored Zombie roared in fury. Despite its hesitation, it charged forward again, its massive claws gleaming like ten deadly blades.

"This thing is ridiculously tough!" Liang Yue muttered as she prepared for another clash.

But it wasn't just the Bronze Armored Zombies they had to contend with. Zombies and giant rats were pouring in from all directions.

Even though Uncle You and Liang Yue were holding their ground against the Bronze Armored Zombies, the sheer number of lesser enemies made it impossible for them to manage everything.

At this critical moment, Zhang Yi gave a command to Hua Hua.

"Hua Hua, help Uncle You!"

Following Zhang Yi's order, Hua Hua leapt into action, joining the fray on Uncle You's side.

In its battle form, Hua Hua became a juggernaut of destruction. Rolling through the narrow tunnel, it crushed zombies and rats alike into paste.

With Hua Hua's aid, Uncle You's side was quickly cleared of enemies.

Hua Hua, following Zhang Yi's earlier instructions, avoided biting the zombies to prevent poisoning. Instead, it relied on its sheer bulk to pulverize anything in its path.

Now, only the zombies on Liang Yue's side remained.

Zhang Yi turned his attention there, his right eye beginning to glow with a white light that grew more intense by the second.

"Liang Yue, move!" Zhang Yi shouted.

Sensing the urgency, Liang Yue immediately leapt backward, clearing the area in front of Zhang Yi.

"Divine Might!" Zhang Yi growled.

The space before him distorted suddenly, like a mirage.

In an instant, a massive column of energy erupted, disintegrating everything within 300 meters.

The area was left as a cylindrical corridor, its walls coated with the pulverized remains of zombies, rats, and even the once-indestructible Bronze Armored Zombie.

The creature's upper body was completely obliterated, leaving only its legs standing in place.

This was Zhang Yi's most powerful attack—Divine Might.

Chapter 440: Leap

Witnessing this horrifying scene, even Liang Yue couldn't help but gasp in shock.

This was her first time seeing the power of Divine Power so closely.

Previously, Zhang Yi had used it once on the battlefield, but that time it was specifically to instantly kill a single Superhuman opponent.

This time, however, it wiped out at least 500 zombies, including the Bronze Armored Zombie, in one strike!

After the Bronze Armored Zombie was killed, only a few regular zombies and giant rats remained in Liang Yue's direction.

Fatty Xu froze for a moment before bursting into arrogant laughter.

"Ha! You useless things, watch me roast you all alive!"

Holding his flamethrower, he swaggered forward and began systematically torching the enemies.

On the other side, Uncle You gained the upper hand with Hua Hua's help.

Although the massive Bronze Armored Zombie wasn't immediately taken down, its supporting giant rats and zombies were mostly eliminated.

After finishing off the regular zombies and rats, Hua Hua turned to assist Uncle You in taking down the Bronze Armored Zombie.

Meanwhile, Zhang Yi sealed the other two passages with Dimensional Gates, leaving the zombie horde trapped behind them.

The zombies behind the gates could only watch helplessly as Zhang Yi slaughtered their kind, unable to come to their aid.

The situation on the battlefield took a dramatic turn, with Zhang Yi's group securing a major victory.

Even Liang Yue, usually so reserved, couldn't help but say to Zhang Yi, "Your strength is truly terrifying."

"I dare say that right now, across all of Tianhai City, no Superhuman could survive a strike from your Divine Power without preparation!"

Zhang Yi, however, merely smiled faintly.

"What's the big deal? For me, this is just basic stuff."

He then turned cautiously toward the west.

"It's too soon to relax. I think our real opponent is nearby. I'm still waiting for him to show up."

Though the Bronze Armored Zombies seemed to possess some intelligence and were far stronger than regular zombies, they certainly weren't the Zombie King.

If they failed to locate the Zombie King today, this mission could not be considered a total success.

No matter how many zombies or even powerful Bronze Armored Zombies they killed, it wouldn't stop the Zombie King from creating more underlings.

As if in response to Zhang Yi's words, the zombies began gathering in the two passages that weren't sealed.

From the depths of the tunnel, familiar heavy footsteps echoed.

In both directions, three more Bronze Armored Zombies emerged.

They stood there, coldly staring at Zhang Yi and his group with icy eyes.

Their elongated, insect-like bodies twisted grotesquely, a sight that was both disgusting and terrifying.

The despair they exuded caused everyone's morale to plummet.

"How could this be? Just how many of these monsters are there?"

Zhang Yi's Divine Power was a fearsome ability, but it consumed enormous energy.

At his current level, he could use it five times consecutively, but each usage required a cooldown period.

If the six Bronze Armored Zombies charged again, their current strength would be insufficient to hold them off!

Fatty Xu nearly collapsed in terror.

"We're doomed. What now?"

The zombies didn't give them time to think.

The next moment, six Bronze Armored Zombies, accompanied by hordes of regular zombies and giant rats, charged toward them.

"Are we going to die here?" Fatty Xu shrieked in panic.

Zhang Yi's expression grew even grimmer.

He sighed softly.

"It seems this zombie crisis is far worse than we imagined, and the mastermind behind it is even more terrifying."

"Even for me, this won't be an easy battle."

As the group prepared to face the terrifying horde, Zhang Yi suddenly shouted to Uncle You and Hua Hua, "Come back quickly!"

The Bronze Armored Zombie they had been fighting was now in pieces. Unlike other zombies, its dismembered body didn't writhe, hinting it might be a true organism rather than a virus-controlled host.

Hearing Zhang Yi's call, Uncle You and Hua Hua quickly retreated to his side.

Zhang Yi then dismissed his Dimensional Gates, leaving all directions open for the zombie horde to surge toward them with furious roars.

But Zhang Yi calmly opened a new gate in front of him and said, "Follow me!"

With that, he stepped through the gate.

The others hesitated briefly before following Zhang Yi into the Dimensional Gate.

When the zombie horde reached the spot, their targets had vanished without a trace.

The confused zombies let out enraged, haunting roars as their prey disappeared into thin air.

Moments later, about dozens of meters above the subway tunnel, Zhang Yi and his group reappeared on the snowy surface.

"Whew, that was terrifying!" Zhang Yi patted his chest in relief, taking a deep breath of the cold air.

Even though he had known the situation wasn't life-threatening, the experience was like watching a 3D horror movie—it still sent chills down his spine.

For anyone else in his place, the outcome would undoubtedly have been fatal.

Uncle You and Liang Yue emerged from the gate, momentarily stunned by the snowy scene before them. Realizing what had happened, they exclaimed, "Zhang Yi, is this a new ability of yours?"

Zhang Yi replied calmly, "Not exactly new. I've just developed a deeper understanding of Dimensional Gates."

Previously, Zhang Yi could only open a single gate. But as his abilities grew stronger, he learned to open a second gate.

Both gates connected to the same spatial dimension, allowing him to create a tunnel between them.

He now had the ability to traverse spaces within 300 meters, which was why he dared to venture into the treacherous subway tunnels.

Fatty Xu, who had nearly wet himself earlier, collapsed onto the ground, panting heavily.

"Boss, why didn't you tell us about this ability earlier? Do you know how close I was to dying of fright?"

Zhang Yi chuckled, "I just wanted to surprise you."

He rarely revealed his abilities, even to his teammates—not out of distrust but out of caution.

Avoiding unnecessary exposure was his survival philosophy.

His expression then turned somber.

"To be honest, I hadn't anticipated needing to use this ability today."

"This zombie crisis is far more complex and dangerous than we expected. Even now, I can't predict how it will end."