

Ice Age 481

Chapter 481: Reuniting with Li Jian

After hours of discussion, the factions finally reached an agreement. The groups dispersed to organize and reinforce their respective defensive positions.

As part of the flexible action team, Zhang Yi had a lighter task—providing support wherever needed. After the meeting, he approached Yuan Kongye with a grin.

“Miss Leader, I need a small favor from you.”

Yuan Kongye raised her head, her deep and luminous eyes meeting his. They resembled the night sky—profound, infinite, and captivating.

Though her face remained expressionless and she had spoken little during the meeting, it was hard for Zhang Yi to ignore the Bai Xue Jiao’s symbolic leader.

Especially considering her unique ability.

Zhang Yi was particularly curious because one of his companions, Yang Siyah, had awakened her powers through her connection with Yuan Kongye’s Ice Soul.

Before Yuan Kongye could respond, Zheng Yixian stepped between them, his calm gaze fixed on Zhang Yi with a programmed smile.

“Mr. Zhang, if you have a request, you can tell me directly. I’ll assist you. Our Leader dedicates herself wholeheartedly to serving the gods and doesn’t involve herself in mundane matters.”

Zhang Yi raised an eyebrow. Protective much? He couldn’t help but wonder about their relationship. Could they be a couple?

Shrugging off the thought, Zhang Yi replied, “Here’s the deal: one of my people is an excellent doctor.”

Pausing for emphasis, he added, "She's my girlfriend. She's not a superhuman and has no combat abilities. I'd like her to stay here with your Miss Leader. What do you say?"

Zheng Yixian's expression tightened at the phrase "Miss Leader," his brows knitting slightly.

"Mr. Zhang, please mind how you address our Leader."

"Ah, sorry, sorry," Zhang Yi said with mock sincerity, his tone carrying a hint of sarcasm.

"I thought someone who serves the gods wouldn't care about worldly formalities."

Zheng Yixian chose not to escalate the tension. Of all the factions in Tianhai City, Zhang Yi's was the one he feared the most. Zhang Yi's rise had been nothing short of extraordinary, and he had repeatedly outmaneuvered and overpowered his rivals.

Before Zheng Yixian could respond, Yuan Kongye stepped forward and spoke calmly.

"Of course, that's fine. If Mr. Zhang is willing to bring his girlfriend to the battlefield, it shows his commitment to this mission, even at the risk of her safety."

"And doctors are indeed crucial to our logistics. She can stay at the cathedral with us."

Zhang Yi flashed a wide smile. "See? The Leader gets it! Done deal. Plus, with her here, I'll make sure the cathedral stays safe. Win-win for everyone!"

Turning on his heel, Zhang Yi left the cathedral.

Yuan Kongye and Zheng Yixian watched him go, their expressions unreadable. Zheng Yixian's eyes held a trace of unease.

“He really is the most unpredictable factor in Tianhai City.”

It was no wonder Zheng Yixian paid so much attention to Zhang Yi. His rise had been both astonishing and unsettling.

Starting as a warehouse manager, Zhang Yi had been an insignificant figure in Tianhai City. But then, he had taken down Wang Siming’s shelter, clashed with the West Hill Base, and destroyed it entirely.

During the Five Faction War, Zhang Yi had almost single-handedly crippled the Chaoyu and Yangsheng Bases, all while remaining elusive.

When the zombie wave hit, Zhang Yi was the first to secure his territory and avoid the chaos. His achievements were nothing short of legendary.

“I just hope he doesn’t become our enemy,” Zheng Yixian murmured to himself.

Zhang Yi headed toward the snow vehicles where his team was waiting, intending to update them on the meeting’s outcome.

As he walked, a familiar figure caught his eye—a gaunt middle-aged man wearing glasses and an exhausted expression.

Zhang Yi paused, narrowing his eyes. The man noticed him too, and their gazes met.

Li Jian?

It was his old neighbor, the former Walmart Tianhai City CFO, Li Jian.

Zhang Yi had assumed the man had been killed in Yuelu Residential Area during the zombie outbreak. To see him here, alive and part of the Bai Xue Jiao, was unexpected.

For a moment, Li Jian's eyes flashed with surprise, but he quickly averted his gaze and walked away as if he didn't recognize Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi immediately understood.

With the delicate balance between the five factions, showing familiarity with Zhang Yi could invite suspicion toward Li Jian within the Bai Xue Jiao.

Zhang Yi decided not to approach him. They weren't close enough for him to risk upsetting the current situation.

When Zhang Yi reached the vehicles, his team was relaxing nearby. Liang Yue cradled her Loong Roar Sword while chatting idly with the others.

Seeing the dire conditions of the Bai Xue Jiao followers, they couldn't help but feel grateful for their own circumstances.

The Bai Xue Jiao lived in what was essentially a massive slum. Most followers were emaciated, surviving on scant rations. For warmth, they huddled together, often lacking even firewood.

In contrast, Zhang Yi's team enjoyed the comfort of their luxurious, heated shelter. Their combat uniforms provided superior insulation, powered by internal batteries, allowing for mobility and warmth without bulk.

All of this was thanks to Zhang Yi's efforts in creating an enviable standard of living for his team.

After Zhang Yi briefed them on the meeting's details, no one was particularly surprised—they had anticipated this outcome.

The only downside was the prospect of staying in such an environment for an extended period. The team lamented the inconveniences, particularly one glaring issue: going to the bathroom.

In these freezing conditions, exposing one's lower body was almost a death sentence. For minor needs, it was manageable, but for anything else, even a small mistake could lead to frostbite—or worse.

While the Bai Xue Jiao had makeshift underground latrines, the enclosed, poorly ventilated spaces were unbearable for Zhang Yi's team. Lacking resources, the cult even used the waste for fuel or biogas production.

Zhang Yi quickly came up with a solution.

"We'll make do for now. I'll modify two vehicles into mobile toilets—one for men and one for women. We have the resources, so there's no need to make ourselves suffer unnecessarily."

Chapter 482: The Secret of the Bai Xue Jiao

Zhang Yi turned to Zhou Ke'er.

"For now, you'll sleep in the vehicle with Liang Yue. Once the battle begins, I'll take you to the cathedral. With the Bai Xue Jiao's leader there, they'll fight to the death to keep it safe."

"If we need treatment, we'll come to you there."

Zhou Ke'er nodded. "Alright, got it!"

Though nervous about her first large-scale battle, Zhou Ke'er also felt a spark of excitement. This was her chance to prove her value and adapt to the harsh realities of the battlefield. If she could grow through this, she'd be better equipped to help Zhang Yi in the future.

Zhang Yi's expression grew serious.

"There's something else you need to remember."

Zhou Ke'er, sensing the gravity of his tone, straightened up and listened attentively, as did the rest of the group.

After checking their surroundings to ensure no one was eavesdropping, Zhang Yi motioned for them to get into the vehicle. Once inside, he closed the door and addressed Zhou Ke'er.

"That Yuan Kongye isn't just anyone. She has the ability to awaken superhuman powers, but I don't trust her abilities."

He leaned closer, his tone firm.

"Listen to me carefully. If she offers to help you awaken, refuse. No matter what. Do you understand?"

Zhou Ke'er lowered her gaze, her expression conflicted. After a moment, she nodded slowly.

Zhang Yi knew she was disappointed. Zhou Ke'er had longed to awaken as a superhuman, believing it would allow her to contribute more meaningfully and not be left behind, merely praying for Zhang Yi's safe return.

But if Zhang Yi said no, she'd obey.

He gently cupped her face, his gaze unwavering.

"There's no such thing as a free lunch. Every blessing from fate comes with a hidden price tag."

"Don't fall for a quick gain—it will cost you dearly in the end."

Zhou Ke'er's smile returned, warm and reassuring.

"Alright, I get it! Geez, you're so worried about me!"

"It's not that I don't trust you," Zhang Yi said, his voice softening. "It's that I care too much about you."

Their bond had deepened over the months they'd spent together in the apocalypse. What had started as a practical partnership had grown into something more. Zhang Yi couldn't imagine risking her safety.

What if Yuan Kongye's abilities—like her Ice Soul—could influence minds, potentially turning Zhou Ke'er against him? Zhang Yi didn't want to face such a possibility. He'd rather eliminate any risk at the root.

The group couldn't help but tease them as they watched the interaction.

Uncle You chuckled, while Fatty Xu grumbled under his breath. Having been burned by love, he found their affection unbearable. Even Liang Yue, typically stoic, turned away with an awkward expression.

"There's one more thing I need you to do," Zhang Yi added.

"Keep an eye on Yuan Kongye for me."

Zhou Ke'er tilted her head. "What do you suspect about her?"

"Her very existence is a problem," Zhang Yi replied. "Just watch her carefully and report anything unusual to me."

Yuan Kongye's power to awaken superhumans, her so-called Blessing, was unsettlingly potent. With enough followers, she could create an army of superhumans, making her a formidable force.

Even though Zhang Yi couldn't pinpoint why, she set off his alarms. His instincts urged him to stay vigilant.

"Got it!" Zhou Ke'er said cheerfully.

As they talked, a knock on the vehicle's door interrupted them. Zhang Yi turned to see Xing Tian standing outside.

Rolling down the window, Zhang Yi asked, "What do you want?"

Xing Tian leaned against the frame.

"Everyone's busy setting up defenses. The zombie horde could arrive any time. You should familiarize yourselves with the area too."

Zhang Yi smirked. "You're awfully diligent."

"Of course!" Xing Tian said, looking toward his team's defensive position.

"I've brought everything I've got. We can't afford to lose this battle."

Then, gritting his teeth, he muttered, "Let's just hope Bian Junwu doesn't screw us over."

Zhang Yi exhaled sharply, patting Xing Tian's shoulder.

"We've got no choice but to trust them. Let's focus on the task at hand."

Zhang Yi and his team stepped out of the vehicle to scout the Bai Xue Jiao's surroundings. As the flexible unit, they needed to understand the layout to provide effective support when needed.

It didn't take long for Zhang Yi to identify the best defensive position: an abandoned commercial building adjacent to St. John's Cathedral.

Standing over 100 meters tall in the heart of the Bai Xue Jiao's territory, the building offered an ideal vantage point. From there, Zhang Yi could use his abilities to cover a 3.5-kilometer radius, monitor the battlefield, and direct his team effectively.

For the zombies, Zhang Yi had prepared new ammunition designed by Lu Keran. The rounds traded penetration for explosive power, ideal for blowing apart zombie bodies, which were no tougher than frozen pork.

For Bronze Armored Zombies, he had anti-material armor-piercing rounds ready.

The building's height also allowed Zhang Yi to keep an eye on the battlefield, ensuring his team could retreat quickly if needed.

However, as he approached the building, several Bai Xue Jiao superhumans stepped forward to block his path.

"This building is a restricted area. Please leave," one of them said sternly.

"Restricted area?" Zhang Yi raised an eyebrow, a bemused smile playing on his lips.

"Did you read that term in a martial arts novel?"

The Bai Xue Jiao had only been around for a few months, and this commercial building had nothing to do with them before. Now it was suddenly a "restricted area"?

"We're not at liberty to explain," the superhuman said coldly. "Mr. Zhang, please don't make this difficult for us."

Zhang Yi and his team exchanged knowing glances.

There was clearly something unusual about the building.

Chapter 483: Before the Battle Erupts

When Zhang Yi and his group attempted to approach the abandoned building next to the cathedral, several superhumans blocked their way.

Their attitude was resolute, refusing to let Zhang Yi's team near the structure.

The more adamant they were, the more curious Zhang Yi became.

However, he wasn't willing to cause a conflict over his curiosity. With a laugh, he said, "Alright, alright, I'll respect your wishes. I'll just pick another building!"

This was a commercial district, with plenty of tall buildings to choose from. Switching locations wouldn't make much difference.

Still, the incident piqued Zhang Yi's interest—he loved uncovering secrets because they often revealed weaknesses.

He chose the building next door and climbed to the top floor step by step. The height, over thirty stories, left him a bit breathless.

If not for his regular training, he might have collapsed from exhaustion, much like Fatty Xu, who refused to continue halfway up and stayed on the staircase, waiting for the others to come down.

Uncle You remarked, "Why don't you just use Dimensional Gate to traverse the space? Climbing step by step is so tedious."

With a smile, Zhang Yi replied, "I'll use it when no one is watching. But I don't want to expose my ability so easily."

Uncle You sighed. "You're so cautious!"

Even though the factions were working together, Zhang Yi remained as vigilant as ever.

From the rooftop, Zhang Yi observed his surroundings. His choice was spot-on—this vantage point allowed him to cover a 3.5-kilometer radius, with only a few blind spots nearby.

Within this range, Zhang Yi's sniper rifle could reach almost any target. At the very least, he could provide cover for the western defensive line.

"Alright, I'll hold my position here. As for the rest of you, stay inside this building. We're not on the frontlines, so we can adapt as needed."

After confirming the sniper point, Zhang Yi and his group descended from the rooftop and returned to their snow vehicle to rest.

They focused on conserving their energy in a comfortable environment to remain in peak condition.

Compared to others, their food supplies were abundant—one of the advantages of having a spatial superhuman in their team. While other factions had brought food, their rations were mostly military fare or canned goods, heated with melted snow and thermite.

The five thousand followers of the Snow God were even worse off, many surviving on small portions of rat meat.

Meanwhile, Li Jian, after encountering Zhang Yi, left in a hurry. On his way back, he wrestled with the decision of whether to share the secrets he knew with Zhang Yi in exchange for safety for his family.

Ultimately, he dismissed the idea. Zhang Yi wasn't a selfless saint and wasn't likely to take them in for no reason. In a chaotic world, fairness was something one could only create for oneself—trusting others was a luxury.

Back at home, Li Jian found that his son, Li Kaile, had recovered physically but was mentally broken. Having lost the essence of his manhood, the once-cheerful young man had become depressed, isolating himself in a tent and refusing visitors. Even meals went untouched.

The room reeked of urine, troubling Li Jian and his wife, Zhang Jianfang. Li Jian lowered his voice as he approached her. "Did he relieve himself in the tent?"

Zhang Jianfang pulled him aside and whispered helplessly, "He can't even go to the toilet normally anymore after... that incident."

Li Jian sighed. "At least he's alive. That's all we can hope for now. Forget about him carrying on the family name; I just hope he can move on."

Zhang Jianfang frowned. "Easy for you to say."

As the couple spoke, a familiar priest entered the room.

Li Jian quickly greeted him. "Old Liu, what brings you here?"

The priest, Liu Deming, was a superhuman and a member of the Snow God's followers. Li Jian, skilled in navigating social dynamics, had made a few connections, and Liu Deming was one of his closer acquaintances.

Liu Deming, aware of Li Kaile's recent ordeal, glanced at the tent but ignored the smell. After all, everyone here was accustomed to foul odors—be it bodily waste or the stench from unwashed clothes. Most of the followers hadn't bathed in half a year.

Liu Deming addressed Li Jian, "The battle is about to start. You've seen the scale of the preparations outside. Things won't be safe for a while."

"Your abilities aren't combat-oriented. The higher-ups sent me to tell you to take your family to the cathedral's underground shelter."

Li Jian frowned. "From the looks of it, this will be a brutal fight. Will we... survive?"

Liu Deming shook his head. “That, I can’t guarantee. We leave it to fate. In this world, surviving one day at a time is all we can hope for.”

After Liu Deming left, Li Jian stared at the tent where his son resided, torn with indecision.

Li Kaile became frenzied at the mere mention of the “Leader.” Taking him to the cathedral might trigger something disastrous.

Yet the looming danger meant staying behind wasn’t an option either.

After discussing it with Zhang Jianfang, they approached Li Kaile to persuade him.

“Son, the battle is about to start here, and it’s going to be intense. This place is too dangerous—you never know when the zombies will swarm. Come with us!”

Inside the tent, there was no response at first. But upon hearing they’d be heading to the cathedral, Li Kaile suddenly shouted like a wounded animal, “I’m not going! Just leave! All of you, go!”

Li Jian and Zhang Jianfang were heartbroken but helpless.

As they struggled to convince Li Kaile, a young woman appeared at the door—Li Kaile’s girlfriend, Xu Beibei.

Or rather, his close friend now.

“Uncle, Auntie, let me try,” Xu Beibei offered.

The couple exchanged a conflicted look. Xu Beibei’s presence wasn’t exactly welcome—after all, if not for her, Li Kaile wouldn’t have been mutilated by Yuan Kongye. But they also understood she wasn’t entirely to blame.

Inside the tent, Li Kaile fell silent upon hearing Xu Beibei's voice.

Seizing the moment, the couple approached Xu Beibei, their tone earnest.

"Please, young lady, convince Lele to come to the cathedral. It's too dangerous to stay here. We'll go together. Do you understand?"

Chapter 484: Uncovering Secrets

The followers of the Snow God saw the large number of armed forces surrounding their camp, but most were unaware of the higher-ups' plans.

Some even believed these forces were there to protect them and celebrated joyfully. Only a select few understood the magnitude of the coming crisis.

The leadership informed only priests and their families to seek refuge in the cathedral, keeping the regular followers in the dark. However, some, having survived in the apocalypse, were keenly attuned to danger—like Xu Beibei.

Whether Xu Beibei's actions were driven by her feelings for Li Kaile or her own survival instincts was anyone's guess.

Li Jian, needing her assistance, made his stance clear.

"Even though my son is crippled, I, Li Jian, still hold a certain status in the Followers of the Snow God. I can protect you. You know what you need to do."

Xu Beibei nodded obediently. "I understand, Uncle. I'll do my best to persuade Lele."

She approached the tent, crouching to speak softly with Li Kaile. His emotions shifted from agitation and rejection to eventual calm.

At sixteen, Li Kaile's mindset was still immature compared to Xu Beibei's. It didn't take long for her to soothe his wounded heart.

"It's okay, I don't mind. I love your optimism and positivity!" she said.

"Lele, I really want to see you. Or... do you not like me anymore?"

"I... I feel so lonely. I have no family left in this world, only you. So please, don't ignore me."

The injured boy slowly opened up and allowed Xu Beibei into his tent. After a private conversation, Li Kaile agreed to join Li Jian's family in seeking refuge at the cathedral.

What methods Xu Beibei used were not discussed in detail, but Li Jian and Zhang Jianfang, as adults, understood that joy didn't always come from conventional means.

Xu Beibei had opened Li Kaile's eyes to a new perspective, though no one dared question how an eighteen-year-old girl had learned so much. In the apocalypse, survival often required sacrifices.

After comforting Li Kaile, Xu Beibei approached Li Jian and smiled. "Uncle, Lele has agreed to go."

Li Jian glanced at her and then at his son, who seemed better.

In a serious tone, he said, "Once we're at the cathedral, be careful. Our leader doesn't seem to tolerate relationships."

Xu Beibei lowered her head and responded meekly, "Understood. I've learned my lesson."

The defensive line around the Followers of the Snow God was complete.

The combined armed forces of five major factions, along with the Snow God's followers, numbered over 8,000.

Considering the zombie outbreak, Tianhai City's population likely hadn't even reached 50,000. This made the area the city's most densely populated spot, hoping to attract the zombies to this location.

After observing the area, Zhang Yi and his group devised a simple plan: if things went south, they'd escape immediately.

The first day passed peacefully, with no zombies appearing near the Followers of the Snow God.

Some guards remained on duty overnight, rotating shifts to prevent a surprise nighttime attack, while others rested.

Around midnight, Zhang Yi suddenly woke up in the snow vehicle.

He sat up, hearing the loud snores of Uncle You and Fatty Xu nearby. Carefully, he lifted the curtain over the window and peered outside.

Even at this hour, patrols continued, though most people were asleep. The off-limits building was particularly well-guarded, with security visibly increased since the arrival of the factions.

Clearly, the building housed a significant secret.

Their snow vehicle was parked near the building Zhang Yi had chosen earlier. After calculating the distance, he activated Dimensional Gate, stepping from the vehicle directly into the off-limits building.

Wearing his tactical goggles, he scanned the surroundings. The interior was pitch-black, with every window blocked, making it impossible to see outside.

It felt like a concrete coffin.

"What are they hiding in here?" Zhang Yi's curiosity burned.

Knowing that something big was nearby and possessing the ability to bypass spatial barriers, he couldn't resist investigating further.

He decided to use Dimensional Gate again, transporting himself to one of the higher floors of the building. Based on his observations, the guards rarely stayed there.

Throughout the day, he had noticed people entering and exiting briefly, often pushing carts. Zhang Yi guessed the building might be a storage facility.

Grinning mischievously, he muttered, "Found something good? No way I'm leaving without a look."

The two buildings were less than 300 meters apart, and with Dimensional Gate, Zhang Yi crossed the distance in an instant.

He emerged in a room within the abandoned building. The darkness didn't bother him—his tactical goggles provided excellent night vision.

As he surveyed the area, surprise flashed in his eyes.

The room was filled with vines and foliage, with plants covering the floor, walls, and ceiling. Tendrils crawled beneath his feet, and whatever blocked the windows appeared to be the same plant material.

"Plants? Mutated plants?"

The room, likely once an office, still had damaged furniture and scattered documents. Every inch of the thirty-square-meter space was overtaken by vegetation.

A chilling thought crossed Zhang Yi's mind: what if this plant covered the entire building?

"So, this is the secret of the Snow God's restricted area?"

“But what’s the purpose of this plant? Food? Or something else?”

This was the first time Zhang Yi had encountered such an enormous and eerie plant. While it wasn’t unheard of for animals to mutate and grow larger, plants inherently possessed limitless growth potential.

Prepared to retreat at a moment’s notice, Zhang Yi stayed on guard. With Dimensional Gate, nothing could trap him.

He didn’t understand the plant’s purpose, but he was determined to uncover the truth. This might be a critical opportunity to grasp the Snow God’s weakness.

Chapter 485: Silent Night

Swish!

The Loong Roar Sword appeared in Zhang Yi’s right hand as he activated his superhuman ability, enhancing his speed and reflexes to eight times their normal level.

After months of personal training with Liang Yue, Zhang Yi’s close combat skills had improved significantly. The combination of a powerful weapon and formidable abilities made him a dangerous opponent, even in the cramped environment of the abandoned building.

Cautiously, Zhang Yi moved forward. The office door was blocked by vines. Instead of cutting through them, he sliced an opening in the wall with his blade and crawled through.

But what awaited him outside made him freeze in shock.

The center of the entire building had been hollowed out into a massive pit. The hallway beneath his feet had mostly crumbled, leaving only a narrow, one-meter-wide path to stand on.

However, Zhang Yi’s attention was quickly drawn to something else.

In the center of the building stood a massive, dark-red plant. It stretched from the deepest part of the structure to pierce through the ceiling, connecting all the way to the rooftop.

“Is this... the World Tree?” Zhang Yi thought of a colossal plant he had once read about.

But the plant before him was clearly not that. While the world had once harbored even larger trees, Zhang Yi could tell that this giant plant was a mutation, having grown to such a scale in just a few months.

What made it truly eerie was its appearance. The entire plant was blood-red, its bark pulsing as if it were breathing. Beneath its black outer layer, bright red veins ran like human blood vessels, making it appear less like a tree and more like a living creature.

Swallowing hard, Zhang Yi wondered if the mutated plant was hostile. He stayed as quiet as possible, observing his surroundings carefully.

The vines and leaves covered every corner of the building. Clusters of blood-red fruit, the size of a fist, hung from the branches. Meanwhile, the curled leaves formed oval pods resembling insect cocoons, dangling from the walls and ceiling. Whatever lay inside those pods was a mystery.

The scene was unsettling, sending chills down Zhang Yi’s spine.

Taking a few deep breaths to calm himself, Zhang Yi began weighing his options.

He had uncovered a significant secret of the Followers of the Snow God. Now he faced a choice: quietly leave and act as if nothing had happened, or collect some of the fruit, branches, and maybe even open one of those cocoon-like pods to investigate further.

The second option was risky. If caught, the Followers of the Snow God might fight him to the death.

But Zhang Yi reasoned that in such a critical moment, they might not dare. After some hesitation, he decided to take the gamble.

Approaching the branches, he carefully plucked two blood-red fruits while keeping an eye on the plant for any reaction. When nothing happened, he relaxed slightly, cutting a few branches and leaves to take with him.

Still unnoticed, Zhang Yi turned his gaze toward the cocoon-like pods hanging from the walls.

“What’s inside those? Big bugs?” he muttered, uneasy.

Like most people, Zhang Yi had an instinctive aversion to insects. The thought of slicing one open only to find a giant bug oozing green slime made his stomach churn.

But he couldn’t resist his curiosity. Gritting his teeth, he decided to take one.

He made his way to a pod along the fractured hallway, sliced through its supporting vine, and quickly stored it in his spatial storage.

Satisfied, Zhang Yi immediately activated Dimensional Gate, retreating from the building without hesitation.

Back in the snow vehicle, he pretended to rest, though he couldn’t sleep all night.

The next morning, Zhang Yi observed the Followers of the Snow God for any signs they had discovered his actions.

To his relief, everything seemed normal.

Zhang Yi surmised that his intrusion would be hard to detect. Spatial superhumans were rare, and the Followers of the Snow God likely hadn’t considered the possibility of someone bypassing their tight security.

Feeling more at ease, Zhang Yi resumed his routine, returning to the building he had chosen for defense.

But the lack of zombie activity was deeply unsettling.

Initially, Zhang Yi's group had expected only small zombie groups in the early stages of the conflict. However, Tianhai City's surroundings were known to harbor significant numbers of zombies, yet not a single one had shown up.

The regular followers of the Snow God celebrated, convinced that peace was near and that the human forces protecting them had scared the zombies away.

However, the leaders of the factions, including Bian Junwu, didn't see this as good news.

"The zombies' inactivity suggests they've detected our plans and are strategizing," Zhang Yi said during a meeting behind the cathedral that evening.

"This could mean their intelligence, especially that of the Zombie King, is higher than we anticipated."

Xiao Honglian frowned. "These creatures are far too clever. If someone told me humans were guiding them, I'd believe it."

"If they never show up, are we just supposed to stay here indefinitely?"

Bian Junwu crossed his arms, his expression calm. "Any news from your bases?"

The group shook their heads.

"No unusual activity has been reported. While our people are in underground shelters, surface monitoring hasn't detected any zombies," someone replied.

A thought occurred to Zhang Yi, and he turned to Bian Junwu. "Could it be because you killed a Zombie King?"

The Zombie King was a special existence, serving as the core of a zombie horde. When one was killed, the horde it controlled would descend into chaos.

If Tianhai City had multiple intelligent Zombie Kings, they might be connected in some way. Killing one could have alerted the others.

Chapter 486: The Mummy

Bian Junwu's face was calm and expressionless as he addressed the group.

"This is just the beginning. The horde might still be observing us. What we need to do is wait patiently."

"This is like fishing—it's a contest of patience between the angler and the fish."

No plan was ever perfect. Their current strategy was based on available intelligence. If it failed, they could try another approach.

As long as the zombies remained inactive, they wouldn't lose anything but time.

The others had no better ideas. Splitting up to investigate was too dangerous, so they decided to continue waiting and observing.

During the meeting, Zhang Yi discreetly watched Zheng Yixian and Yuan Kongye's expressions. Neither showed any sign of suspicion, which reassured him that his actions had gone unnoticed.

Still, Zhang Yi couldn't help but wonder—could the so-called restricted area be less important than he had assumed? If it were truly vital, the Followers of the Snow God would likely guard it even more heavily.

That night, Zhang Yi called his team together and took out the items he had retrieved from the building to show them.

The group, while nervous about Zhang Yi's infiltration of the restricted area, couldn't suppress their excitement. After all, uncovering someone else's secrets was thrilling.

Zhang Yi displayed the red fruits, branches, and the cocoon-like pod. When he brought out the pod, their expressions grew strange—it was eerily human-sized, as though it held a person.

"Ke'er," Zhang Yi said to Zhou Ke'er, "you're the one who's good with knives. Why don't you open this up?"

With surgical tools stored in his spatial inventory, they could conduct a proper examination here.

Zhou Ke'er looked at the items and said, "The fruit and branches should be analyzed in a lab; this environment isn't ideal. But this pod... it looks strange. Like a mummy!"

Her words resonated with the others, who nodded in agreement.

Zhang Yi hoped it really was a mummy and not a giant insect.

Under the group's eager gaze, Zhou Ke'er pulled out her surgical equipment. Instead of immediately cutting into the pod, she shone a small flashlight on it to examine its contents.

Through the light, they could make out a humanoid figure inside—emaciated, as if reduced to little more than bones.

"It really is a mummy!" Zhang Yi exhaled in relief. A corpse was easier to deal with than a massive bug.

"I think I understand its purpose now," Zhang Yi said, his mind racing with speculation.

"Tell us!" Liang Yue urged, curious.

"Let's open it up first. Maybe it's not as mysterious as it seems," Zhang Yi replied with a smile.

Zhou Ke'er nodded and began her work. With steady hands, she used a scalpel to slice open the dark red leaf-like shell, starting from the top.

As expected, inside was a corpse—skin tightly clinging to bone, completely drained of any flesh or blood.

Recalling the thousands of similar pods hanging inside the abandoned building, Zhang Yi finally understood the plant's purpose.

"So that's what it is!"

As the others looked at him quizzically, Zhang Yi explained:

"The abandoned building houses a giant mutated plant. It likely absorbs nutrients from these corpses to produce the red fruits."

"We've seen the Followers of the Snow God eating these fruits—they're probably their main food source."

"The so-called restricted area is essentially a living granary. No wonder they guard it so fiercely."

While the truth was intriguing, it left the group somewhat unimpressed. They didn't lack food, so a plant that could sustain thousands of people wasn't particularly useful to them. (a)NΘβΕś

However, Zhou Ke'er, prodding the corpse with her scalpel, confirmed that it had been entirely drained of nutrients—there wasn't a shred of flesh left.

Zhang Yi turned to her. "Analyze the fruit and branches when we're back. See if there's anything unusual about them."

Though he'd lost interest in the plant, Zhang Yi's cautious nature prompted him to ensure it held no hidden dangers.

Zhou Ke'er nodded. "Give me some time. This plant is fascinating—once I slice it for analysis, I'll examine it under a microscope with biological reagents."

Elsewhere, Meng Siyu of the investigation team removed her white gloves and studied the dissected corpse before her. Turning to Bian Junwu, who stood nearby, she said,

"It's just a corpse drained of nutrients. Nothing abnormal."

"As for the fruits, they have some hallucinogenic effects, likely helping the Snow God's leadership control their followers."

"No pathogens were detected, and the fruits are high in sugar, making them a nutrient-rich food source."

Bian Junwu adjusted his thick glasses. "Understood. When we return, bring back some roots and stems. Let's see if the lab can cultivate this plant—it could be very useful."

Deep within the abandoned building, Zheng Yixian stood before the massive blood-red vine, gazing at the suspended pods.

"3968, 3969, 3970... Ah, another one's missing."

"Their curiosity is really something," he murmured.

The next day, the absence of zombies continued, deepening the group's unease.

The longer the horde stayed out of sight, the more likely it seemed they were preparing a devastating attack.

Bian Junwu had already mobilized resources from the Jiangnan District, utilizing satellites to monitor Tianhai City for signs of zombie movement.

Finally, with the aid of advanced technology, they uncovered a clue.

Bian Junwu called everyone together and shared the latest findings.

“The zombie horde is gathering—and it’s heading this way.”

“Preliminary estimates put their numbers at no less than 100,000. Get ready for a tough fight.”

“100,000?”

The figure made everyone frown. Their combined forces numbered just over 2,000. Facing such overwhelming odds, especially against resilient creatures like the armored zombies, the battle promised to be perilous.

But Zhang Yi secretly thought: It’s definitely more than 100,000.

Bian Junwu’s estimate was meant to reassure the group while rallying them to act as bait for the horde. Zhang Yi suspected the actual number could be double, triple, or even more.

After all, he had seen tens of thousands of zombies in the remote Ci Qu Line. With the entire city’s undead converging here, a million-strong horde wouldn’t be surprising.

Still, Zhang Yi kept this thought to himself.

Their small team could always retreat if necessary. If the situation became too dangerous, Zhang Yi resolved to take his group and escape Tianhai City. Survival was the ultimate priority.

Chapter 487: The Zombie Horde Arrives!

Bian Junwu addressed the group calmly.

“You don’t need to eliminate the entire horde. Just hold them off long enough to give our investigation team a chance.”

“Once we head underground and eliminate the Zombie King, the horde will lose its coordination and become much easier to handle.”

Xing Tian shook his head in disbelief.

“Ten thousand zombies? Even more? Even without coordination, that’s still overwhelming! Heck, we couldn’t catch ten thousand pigs in three days, let alone zombies.”

“Stay focused!” Bian Junwu snapped.

“Their numbers work to our advantage. It’s a rare opportunity to wipe them out in one strike.”

“Endure now, and we’ll reap the rewards later.”

Xiao Honglian folded her arms, her expression grim.

“I just hope we can hold out long enough. Otherwise, the horde will drown us, and we’ll all die here.”

No one in the group was naive. Bian Junwu’s estimate of 100,000 zombies was clearly an understatement. The reality was bound to be far worse.

In the past, their underground bases had provided an escape route. But here, at the Followers of the Snow God’s camp, they had no fallback positions—only a vulnerable group of ordinary followers to protect.

While no one cared much about the followers, letting the zombies breach their defenses would shatter the coalition’s battle line, leaving everyone to perish. Reluctantly, they resolved to defend against the horde with everything they had.

Bian Junwu adjusted his dark glasses.

“If you think your defensive position is too demanding, you can swap with others. Or,” he added, glancing at Xiao Honglian, “take our mission instead.”

Xiao Honglian’s expression turned uneasy.

Defending against the horde was difficult, but it was nothing compared to the investigation team’s task—venturing underground to confront hordes of armored zombies and who knew what else.

The seven-member investigation team was made up of elite fighters, each at least second-in-command level within their respective factions. At least three of them, Zhang Yi suspected, were on par with the most powerful faction leaders like Xiao Honglian.

As for Bian Junwu himself, his combat prowess was widely acknowledged as unrivaled among Tianhai City’s superhumans—at least outwardly. Alongside him was Baili Changqing, his seemingly harmless yet enigmatic second-in-command.

Xiao Honglian sighed. “I understand. At this point, we have no choice but to fight. Captain Bian, we’re counting on your team for this.”

“Of course,” Bian Junwu replied evenly.

As defenses were bolstered, the atmosphere grew heavier. Everyone knew the outcome of the battle would determine the survival of Tianhai City.

Failure meant the city would become a wasteland, likely prompting the Jiangnan District to use the Lover’s Death Reaper

—a weapon capable of erasing the city from the map.

Even Zhang Yi, who had initially taken a lighter approach, began to feel the tension. What would he do if they failed? His only option might be to use Dimensional Gate to escape with his close allies and later return for Yang Xinxin and the others.

With these concerns in mind, Zhang Yi sought out Bian Junwu.

“Captain Bian, I have a question. May I ask for your insight?”

Bian Junwu, who valued Zhang Yi’s potential, nodded.

“Go ahead.”

“If we know that taking out the Zombie King will end the crisis, why hasn’t Jiangnan District sent reinforcements? Wouldn’t a squad of their elite forces be able to handle this easily, sparing us from such a burden?”

Zhang Yi clarified, “I don’t mean to sound entitled. But with the district’s strength, this situation shouldn’t be so hard to resolve. Why put us under so much pressure?”

Jiangnan District governed all cities in its region and had a vested interest in preserving lives—human resources were invaluable in the apocalypse.

Zhang Yi believed they wouldn’t want excessive casualties in Tianhai City, which was why they had dispatched the investigation team in the first place.

Bian Junwu chuckled at the question and looked at Zhang Yi.

“Do you think the situation in Tianhai City is dire?”

Zhang Yi hesitated. “Isn’t it? A zombie outbreak of this scale could turn the city into a dead zone and threaten nearby regions.”

“Not really,” Bian Junwu replied with a stern expression.

“Tianhai City is just an ordinary place in the grand scheme of Jiangnan District. It’s not particularly significant.”

“New problems arise across the district every day—superhumans, mutated creatures, and inexplicable phenomena. This era of mutations has made the world chaotic.”

“The district has limited investigation teams and resources. Unless a situation becomes utterly unmanageable, they won’t mobilize a large force to intervene.”

He patted Zhang Yi’s shoulder.

“This world is vast, far bigger than Tianhai City. If you ever travel beyond here, you’ll realize this place is relatively stable.”

“In the heartlands, along rivers and mountains, true horrors roam.”

Zhang Yi’s curiosity was piqued, but he felt reluctant to leave Tianhai City. He shook his head.

“I’m a homebody. I’m fine staying here.”

Bian Junwu smirked. “If you ever change your mind, you can...” He paused, reconsidering his words. Given his condition, he wasn’t sure how much longer he had left.

“Well, let’s deal with the zombies first. We can talk afterward.”

As days passed, the area around the Followers of the Snow God’s camp remained eerily quiet. The barren landscape seemed devoid of zombies, giving the illusion they had vanished from Tianhai City entirely.

But Zhang Yi and the others knew better. The horde wasn't gone—it was consolidating its forces for a decisive strike.

Finally, on the fifth night, the horde arrived.

The first to detect them were Bian Junwu's sentries, who had access to the advanced Xingyun satellite system, capable of real-time monitoring across Tianhai City.

When hordes of zombies began pouring from three subway entrances around the camp, Bian Junwu immediately sounded the alarm.

"The horde is here! Prepare for battle!"

Chapter 488: The Flames of War Ignite

The zombie horde had arrived.

They poured out from three subway entrances, a black tide surging forth as if an anthill had been disturbed, sending countless ants scurrying out in waves.

Within moments, the entire land was overrun by zombies, with more still emerging from the depths of the subway tunnels.

In just a few minutes, the Followers of the Snow God were surrounded by seventy to eighty thousand zombies!

Among them were Bronze Armored Zombies, towering two to three times the height of regular zombies, and swarms of mutated rats surging through the horde.

Even though everyone had mentally prepared for this, seeing it in person still made them want to curse out loud.

Bian Junwu and his team had already driven away from the Followers of the Snow God's stronghold.

They were responsible for the decapitation operation and would not participate in the front-line battle.

That meant the pressure of holding the line fell entirely on the five major factions.

Zhang Yi wasted no time. He led Zhou Ke'er straight to St. John's Cathedral, handing her over to Yuan Kongye.

"Please, protect her at all costs!"

Zhang Yi fixed Yuan Kongye with a serious gaze.

Yuan Kongye didn't respond, but stationed outside the cathedral doors were two Superhumans assigned specifically to defend the church's interior.

With them present, even if the zombies broke through the outer defenses, they would still be able to hold out for a while.

Once Zhang Yi completed his task, he rushed back to his position.

Meanwhile, outside the Followers of the Snow God's territory, the sound of artillery fire erupted!

To prepare for this battle, every major faction had thrown in everything they had.

The three main base organizations had brought out their stockpiled artillery and rocket launchers, setting them up at the rear of the battlefield.

Regular firearms had little effect on zombies, but these were a different story.

As long as it was a carbon-based lifeform, getting blown to pieces meant there was no coming back.

The roar of cannons shook the air as flares shot skyward, illuminating the entire area around the Followers of the Snow God as bright as daylight!

Under the harsh light, the densely packed zombies and surging rat swarms covering the ground created an overwhelming sense of dread.

"Boom!"

"Boom!"

"Boom!"

Each cannon blast wiped out dozens of zombies, blasting gaping holes in the horde.

But the gaps were quickly filled as more zombies swarmed forward.

Before long, the zombie tide had reached just over a kilometer from the defense line.

The second defensive measure was activated!

Three firewalls had been set up around the Followers of the Snow God.

Underneath them lay vast amounts of flammable materials.

As soon as the zombie horde got close—ignite!

Given the sheer density of the zombie tide, once the firewalls were ablaze, a chain reaction would incinerate wave after wave of the undead.

From atop a high vantage point, Zhang Yi activated the Dimensional Gate and methodically began sniping zombies.

At his feet lay ten full duffel bags, packed with tens of thousands of bullets.

From his elevated position, he had a clear view of the battlefield and the crushing pressure each faction was under.

"How many can I even kill, shooting one by one like this?"

Zhang Yi let out a sigh and raised his sniper rifle.

"Pfft!"

A single shot rang out, and a zombie thousands of meters away had its head blasted into a mist of blood.

Even headless, the zombie hadn't completely lost its ability to move, but without sight, it staggered around aimlessly before being trampled by the zombies behind it.

Zhang Yi swiftly adjusted his aim, his firing rhythm smooth and uninterrupted.

"Pfft!"

"Pfft!"

"Pfft!"

With his precise shooting ability, he was taking down a zombie every two seconds.

Zhang Yi prioritized the closest zombie clusters, adjusting his targets based on the battlefield conditions.

It almost felt like he was playing a tower defense game.

But the tension on this battlefield couldn't be described with just the word "game".

Despite his skills, Zhang Yi knew his impact on the battlefield was limited.

Even if he could kill hundreds of times more zombies than a regular soldier, it wasn't enough to shift the tide of battle alone.

Unlike Bian Junwu, Zhang Yi lacked abilities that could deal large-scale, high-impact destruction.

The zombie horde roared as they pushed past the firewalls, storming toward the defensive lines.

And waiting for them behind those lines—were heavy machine guns and cannons!

Handguns and rifles were useless against these creatures.

But these weapons? They could shred through armored vehicles—against zombies, they'd tear them apart entirely!

"Aim for their legs!"

Xiao Honglian barked commands from the front line.

In these five days of preparation, humanity had developed new battle strategies.

If the zombies had learned from past encounters, why couldn't they refine their tactics too?

If killing zombies was too hard—then just cripple them!

The heavy machine guns spat blue flames as they fired.

"Ratatatatata!!"

The bullets tore through the zombies' legs, severing their lower halves in an instant.

The downed zombies continued to crawl forward, roaring.

But they were quickly trampled by their own horde, as the zombies behind them used their bodies as stepping stones.

The horde was accelerating, charging like a pack of wild beasts.

But the warriors of humanity's front line were already waiting for them.

Each fighter had injected a military-grade red stimulant, allowing them to fight for extended periods without fatigue.

With their nerves heightened, they no longer felt pain, and even fear of death was suppressed.

These were the elites of each faction, clad in highly durable combat gear.

Their suits were tough enough to withstand regular bullets, and even in close combat, zombie claws and teeth wouldn't be able to break through.

The only real threat—were the mutated giant rats, whose steel-crushing teeth were a problem.

Their weapons weren't guns—but steel battle axes and heavy cleavers!

These weapons, provided by Qingfu Base, were razor-sharp.

In the hands of a trained warrior, they could decapitate a zombie in one clean strike!

Once the zombies pushed past the earlier defenses, it would be these warriors' turn to take the field!

And behind them—stood the five factions' strongest Superhumans.

Zhang Yi remained stationed on the rooftop, sniper rifle in hand, delivering precise and deadly shots.

Each time he emptied a clip, he swapped to another rifle to prevent overheating.

In just a few minutes since the battle began, he had already killed over two hundred zombies.

On any human battlefield, that would be an insane kill count.

But against an army of over a hundred thousand zombies, it was nothing more than a drop in the ocean.

Still, Zhang Yi wasn't worried.

Regular zombies were just warm-ups.

What truly interested him—were the Bronze Armored Zombies lurking in the horde.

From the previous battle, Zhang Yi had studied their defenses.

Their skin, muscles, and bones were as tough as steel—even heavy machine gun rounds struggled to harm them.

That was why Zhang Yi had Lu Keran prepare high-caliber armor-piercing rounds specifically for them.

Now, combined with his anti-materiel sniper rifle and his Superhuman Energy—would he be able to turn the tide of battle?

Chapter 489: The Human Frontline

The zombie horde rapidly closed in on the human defensive line.

Fully armed warriors roared as they charged forward, wielding battle axes and cleavers!

Meanwhile, the Bronze Armored Zombies remained in the back, unmoving.

There weren't many of them—compared to the hundreds of thousands of regular zombies, there were only a few hundred Bronze Armored Zombies.

But each one of them possessed combat strength equal to a Superhuman!

Upon seeing them, Xiao Honglian felt a chill run down her spine.

She vividly remembered how one of these monsters had torn Dong Hu apart in their last battle.

"How the hell are we supposed to fight that many Bronze Armored Zombies?"

Zhuge Qingtian was in shock.

He had assumed these creatures were extremely rare, yet now hundreds of them had appeared!

Xiao Honglian's sword-like eyebrows furrowed as she bellowed, "What's there to fear? However many come, we kill that many!"

At this point, there was no turning back—the only option was to fight to the death!

No matter how overwhelming the numbers seemed, battle was the only answer!

The zombie horde was strategic—they sent in the mutant rats and regular zombies first, forcing the humans to expend their energy.

Then, when the frontline was weakened, the Bronze Armored Zombies would move in as the elite force to finish the job.

What they didn't realize, however, was that Zhang Yi had already marked them as his prey.

Lying prone on the balcony of a high-rise, Zhang Yi switched to a massive anti-materiel sniper rifle, chambering a special armor-piercing round.

His crosshairs locked onto a Bronze Armored Zombie's triangular skull—more specifically, its eye socket.

"Let's see if you can surprise me."

BOOM!!

The thunderous shot echoed across the battlefield.

The armor-piercing bullet—enhanced with Tianhai City’s strongest Spatial Superhuman Energy and crafted from specialized materials—punched into the zombie’s skull! rAn0BĖŠ

The sheer impact slammed the zombie to the ground.

But its skull was absurdly durable—the bullet hadn't pierced all the way through!

However, the moment the high-energy round entered its cranial cavity, it ignited the zombie's brain matter!

Unlike regular zombies, Bronze Armored Zombies possessed intelligence.

Or rather, they were a completely different existence—they had a form of life beyond simple reanimation.

The injured zombie let out a furious, agonized roar, wildly flinging nearby zombies aside before finally collapsing.

Zhang Yi's lips curled into a wide grin.

"It worked."

After his last encounter with Bronze Armored Zombies, Zhang Yi had spent countless hours preparing at the Shelter.

With intelligence gathered from Liang Yue and Uncle You, he had a solid understanding of their defenses.

Using that data, he had modified his sniper rounds to maximize their destructive power.

That last shot? It could've pierced the armor of a tank!

And now, all that effort had paid off.

"Alright then—let's keep going."

Zhang Yi knew that Bronze Armored Zombies posed the biggest threat to the human factions.

So, he began systematically hunting them down.

Their massive frames made them impossible to miss.

Adjusting his scope, Zhang Yi focused entirely on their eyes.

BOOM!

BOOM!

BOOM!

The anti-materiel sniper rifle roared, and bullets streaked through the night sky, striking one Bronze Armored Zombie after another before they even had a chance to react.

One by one, the towering monsters collapsed into the zombie horde.

The sight sent shockwaves through the human ranks.

A moment ago, they had been terrified of these elite zombies.

Now, they were watching them get taken out like weeds being cut down!

"Someone's actually sniping Bronze Armored Zombies?! Who the hell is doing this?"

Following the trajectory of the bullets, they turned their gaze toward the high-rise.

And there, standing tall with a sniper rifle in hand, was Zhang Yi.

Xiao Honglian, Wei Dinghai, and the others stared in stunned silence.

So this was Zhang Yi's power?

They couldn't help but recall the Five Armies Battle from before.

Back then, Zhang Yi had single-handedly turned the tide against them, forcing their forces into a state of absolute caution.

But this time—his strength had evolved even further!

"Zhang Yi... what a terrifying man," Xiao Honglian murmured.

Wei Dinghai sighed. "We'd better avoid making an enemy of him in the future. Otherwise, we might not even realize how we got played to death."

But right now, Zhang Yi was on their side.

His sniper kills on the Bronze Armored Zombies sent a surge of morale through the allied troops!

Zhang Yi had proven that these seemingly unstoppable monsters could be slain.

With their fear diminishing, the soldiers roared in fury and charged forward to clash with the zombie horde!

At the same time, Superhumans from all factions entered the battle!

Across the defensive lines, thousands of warriors stood like a frail wall of straw, barely holding back a wave of over a hundred thousand zombies!

And yet, this seemingly fragile line of defense was forcing the horde to a standstill!

On the battlefield, Xing Tian sat astride his massive Demon Wolf, his expression unyielding—like indestructible metal.

A radiant white light surged from his body, enveloping him entirely before spreading to the warriors behind him.

【Xing Tian Legion】!

This ability empowered the entire force, granting them a massive boost in morale and combat strength!

Their bodies visibly transformed, becoming bulkier, tougher, and brimming with energy.

"Kill!!!!"

With massive battle axes in hand, they let out earth-shaking roars, their voices drowning out even the zombie horde's cries!

Xing Tian raised a colossal battle axe, taller than himself and as wide as a wooden door, before leaping off his Demon Wolf—slamming straight into the zombie horde!

The whirlwind force of his axe swept through the battlefield, cleaving dozens of zombies in half in a single swing!

With their commander leading the charge, his warriors were not about to lag behind.

They roared and crashed into the horde, engaging in brutal melee combat!

Meanwhile, the massive Demon Wolf lunged into the fray, unleashing a freezing breath, turning a vast number of zombies into ice sculptures.

With a mighty shake of its body, the frozen zombies shattered into pieces.

Among the five major factions, only Qingfu Base's warriors were willing to fight the zombie horde head-on like this!

Surprisingly, the faction facing the least pressure was Chaoyu Base.

By combat strength alone, they weren't the strongest of the five factions.

After the Five Armies Battle, their fighting force had been cut in half!

But on this blizzard-covered battlefield, Wei Dinghai's 【Ice and Snow Lord】 ability was too overwhelming.

"One-on-one combat isn't my strong suit," Wei Dinghai declared.

"But in the realm of ice and snow—I am king!"

Clad in frost-forged armor, he raised both hands high.

Within seconds, across a thousand-meter radius, the thick layers of ice beneath the battlefield shattered violently!

Thousands of zombies, caught off guard, plummeted into gaping snow pits, instantly buried beneath an avalanche of ice!

For Wei Dinghai, clearing out lesser zombies was effortless.

Sure, these creatures couldn't truly be killed, but killing them wasn't the goal tonight.

Their mission was to stall the horde, buying time for the Investigation Team!

As Wei Dinghai swept his hands across the battlefield, massive fields of snow erupted, turning the battlefield into a chaotic mess.

His movements were graceful, like a maestro conducting an orchestra, with the frozen battlefield dancing at his command.

The once solid, trampled ground was now a death trap, where zombies struggled desperately to escape.

With their insanely high numbers, many zombies ended up tripping and piling over each other, leaving them stuck in the icy trenches.

For now—the human frontline held strong!

Chapter 490: Temptation

On the battlefield, what should have been the zombie horde's ultimate weapon—the Bronze Armored Zombies—were being methodically sniped down by Zhang Yi, who had come fully prepared.

This drastically eased the burden on the allied forces!

Had they been forced to engage the Bronze Armored Zombies in direct combat, the coalition would have had to sacrifice countless soldiers just to hold the line.

The battle was still brutal and deadly, but at least they could maintain their position.

Even as Zhang Yi fought, a lingering doubt nagged at him.

The Followers of the Snow God's defenses were shockingly weak—virtually nonexistent.

No high walls, no barbed wire, just a group of fearless zealots and some Superhumans—how had they survived this long without being wiped out by the zombie horde?

"This doesn't make any sense..."

Muttering to himself, Zhang Yi adjusted his aim and took down another Bronze Armored Zombie.

The zombie army was endless.

He had already eliminated more than a dozen Bronze Armored Zombies, but since the horde lacked communication, they weren't even trying to defend against him.

There were simply too many—their only directive seemed to be:

Kill everyone here.

While the five major factions held the frontline against the zombie horde, Bian Junwu's team had taken a different route, just as they had before.

They had circled behind the horde, positioning themselves far from the main battlefield.

From their vantage point, satellite imaging revealed the sheer scale of the undead army.

Zombies kept pouring out of the subway tunnels, their numbers surging past a hundred thousand—and still increasing!

The sight was horrifying enough to make anyone suck in a cold breath.

"How many of these damn things are there? Could we actually be dealing with over a million zombies?"

Kong Sheng spoke with clear concern.

"How long do you think they can hold the line against the horde?"

Wu Di crossed his arms and sneered.

"They'll fight to the death if they have to. Survival instinct will keep them going. As long as they buy us enough time to eliminate the Zombie King, it doesn't matter if they all die."

He didn't care about the fate of Tianhai City's fighters.

The only thing that mattered to him was completing the mission.

If they failed, the horde would continue to expand, spreading its infection into new regions.

That was the real concern for the Jiangnan District leadership.

A few sacrifices were a small price to pay.

Bian Junwu remained silent, simply adjusting his aviator sunglasses while watching the battlefield with a cold expression.

After what felt like an eternity, the flow of zombies from the subway tunnels stopped.

He glanced at the battlefield, watching the ocean of zombies swarm toward the Followers of the Snow God's stronghold.

Then, Bian Junwu spoke.

"Let's move. It's our turn to act."

The zombie horde above ground was terrifying, but they knew the underground tunnels held just as many threats.

That intelligent, white-furred mutant monkey was cowardly, and it had definitely kept a large force behind for protection.

As ruthless as Wu Di's words were, their mission was far more dangerous.

Upon arriving at the subway tunnels, they let Meng Siyu scout ahead using her detection abilities.

Moments later, she reported back with grim news.

"There's an insane number of zombies below—including a large force of Bronze Armored Zombies."

Bian Junwu's expression remained icy cold.

"It's a trap."

"They've learned from their past mistakes. They know we use this strategy to execute decapitation strikes."

"These bastards are trying to outplay us."

The Zombie King's learning speed was frightening.

Perhaps their brains weren't so different from humans after all.

"What do we do now?"

Baili Changqing asked.

If the zombie numbers underground were too high, it would be suicidal for just seven people to charge in.

The real problem was—if they couldn't kill the Zombie King, then everything tonight would be for nothing.

"We wait," Bian Junwu said calmly.

"They can hold out for a while longer. Let's wait for more zombies to be drawn out."

Meanwhile, the battle raged on.

Even with Zhang Yi's sniper support, the overwhelming numbers of the undead couldn't be ignored.

A rough estimate put the zombie count at over 200,000—and that didn't even include the mutant rats.

The battlefield grew bloodier with every passing second.

The zombies fell like wheat, cut down by the thousands—but the humans, too, were suffering heavy casualties.

The sheer difference in numbers was too overwhelming.

To make things worse, the mutant rats had armor-piercing fangs, capable of tearing through the soldiers' combat suits and inflicting serious injuries.

Had it not been for the many Superhumans holding the line, the human defense would have crumbled in minutes!

Realizing the dangerous weak points in the defense, Zhang Yi dispatched reinforcements.

He sent Liang Yue, Uncle You, and Fatty Xu to reinforce the most vulnerable sections of the front.

As for Hua Hua, it remained by Zhang Yi's side—as always.

In many ways, Hua Hua was Zhang Yi's most trusted blade.

Its close-combat skills were unmatched, its mobility superb, and its defensive power on par with an armored vehicle.

With Hua Hua around, Zhang Yi never had to worry about ambushes.

And if things went south—escaping would be easy.

Zhang Yi wasn't naïve enough to throw everything he had into this battle.

His top priority was ensuring his own people survived.

Inside St. John's Cathedral, the atmosphere was eerily calm.

Yuan Kongye stood before the statue of the crucified Jesus, hands clasped in prayer, reciting silent hymns.

The sounds of gunfire and battle cries echoed clearly through the church walls.

The Followers of the Snow God hiding within the cathedral wore anxious expressions.

Yet, despite the raging chaos outside, Yuan Kongye's face remained serene—as if the battle had nothing to do with her at all.

Zhou Ke'er sat on a wooden pew inside the church, her medical kit resting beside her.

Though she wasn't a believer, she still prayed silently in her heart.

"God, if you truly exist... please protect Zhang Yi and the others."

She intertwined her fingers and whispered softly.

Just then, a cold and serene voice sounded above her.

"Only the most devout believers receive the blessings of the divine."

Zhou Ke'er looked up, meeting the clear, captivating gaze of Yuan Kongye.

There was something hypnotic about those eyes—an almost soul-piercing intensity that made it difficult to look away.

"You... hello," Zhou Ke'er smiled awkwardly, quickly shifting her gaze away.

Yuan Kongye studied her carefully before speaking again.

"You're troubled, aren't you? You feel helpless, unable to aid your man in battle."

Zhou Ke'er's heart skipped a beat.

She wasn't used to having her inner thoughts exposed so bluntly.

With a small, self-conscious laugh, she touched her neck and replied, "Maybe... a little. I'm a doctor—I belong in the rear lines. There's no way I could be on the battlefield with him." R&OBS

Yuan Kongye's voice became even more alluring.

"Perhaps... you have the potential to become a Superhuman."

Those words struck deep.

Superhumans—an existence Zhou Ke'er had always envied.

She never felt the desire strongly before, but ever since Yang Siyah awakened her powers, the longing had only grown stronger.

Once upon a time, she had been independent—a woman of high status and strong ambition.

Born into a wealthy family, highly educated, and with a successful medical career, she had earned a reputation as one of the youngest attending physicians at Tianhai City's First People's Hospital.

But now?

Standing beside Zhang Yi, she felt herself fading into the background.

A reality she refused to accept.

Even though Zhang Yi still treated her well, she knew one thing for certain—Zhang Yi wasn't someone who put emotions first.

If, one day, someone more capable replaced her role, wouldn't she fall further and further behind?

She had to think ahead.

Zhang Yi was constantly evolving.

But what about her?

The moment Yuan Kongye spoke, her words stirred the deepest insecurities within Zhou Ke'er.

But...

Zhang Yi had warned her—not to trust the people of the Followers of the Snow God.

So Zhou Ke'er remained distant in her response.

"Is that so?" she smiled politely. "No one's ever told me that before."

Yuan Kongye's icy fingers suddenly reached out, gently caressing her cheek.

"Don't underestimate yourself. Many times... all you lack is an opportunity."

"Believe in yourself. You have the potential to become a Superhuman."

Zhou Ke'er's heart pounded.

She wasn't so sure anymore.

Could she really awaken Superhuman abilities?

She always thought becoming a Superhuman required extreme risks, a gamble with life itself.

One failure, and death was the only outcome.

She never had the courage to take that chance.

But then, Ice Soul appeared... offering her a new possibility.

Yuan Kongye's gaze remained locked onto hers.

Her eyes were crystal clear, yet held an unexplainable power—a force that commanded obedience.

Simply staring into them made one feel overwhelmed, as if surrendering was the natural choice.

"We need strength," Yuan Kongye murmured.

"Your man needs your help."

"Zhou Ke'er, I can help you awaken."

"Will you accept?"

Zhou Ke'er's heart raced.

She knew this woman held the power to awaken others.

But she also knew... this woman was dangerous.

Too dangerous.

Zhou Ke'er hesitated for only a few seconds, before finally steadying herself.

With a calm smile, she replied, "Thank you... but I don't need it."

Her eyes narrowed slightly, her tone cool and unwavering.

Yuan Kongye's expression faltered briefly—just for a moment, a flicker of disappointment flashing through her gaze.

"It's alright," she said softly.

"You can take your time. When you change your mind, come find me."

"Divine blessings are a rare gift—not everyone is offered the chance."

With that, Yuan Kongye turned away, returning to her silent prayers before the altar.

At the back of the church, a family of three—Li Jian, his wife, and his child—sat together with Xu Beibei.

As non-combatants and high-ranking members of the Followers of the Snow God, they were granted special privileges to take shelter here.

Yet, Li Kaile refused to even glance at Yuan Kongye—the woman who had destroyed his happiness.

Hatred.

And fear.

He wrapped himself tightly in a blanket, avoiding her gaze at all costs.

Beside him, Xu Beibei squeezed his hand, silently offering comfort and reassurance.

Outside, the sounds of war intensified.

The roars of the zombie horde, the screeches of the mutant rats, the thunder of gunfire and explosions—

Even covering their ears, they could still hear it reverberating in their skulls.

And yet, all they could do was pray—

Pray that the warriors outside would win this battle.