

## Ice Age 561

### Chapter 561: An Email from Jiangnan District

Lu Keran's face turned even redder at Zhang Yi's praise, but she still spoke excitedly, "Big bro, I... I want to build a mech! Can I?"

Zhang Yi blinked in surprise.

"A mech?"

In his mind, that kind of thing only existed in sci-fi movies.

Of course, in the year 2051, humanity had already developed early prototypes of mechs. But they were ridiculously expensive and not yet advanced enough for mass production. No country had fielded a full-fledged mech army yet.

There were, however, a few independent workshops where enthusiasts had built exoskeletons for personal use.

Seeing Zhang Yi's skepticism, Lu Keran scratched her head awkwardly. "Actually, the reason I became a mechanical engineer in the first place was that I love robots. Building a mech has always been my dream!"

"I never dared to think about it before. The construction is too complicated—there are over ten thousand different components required."

"But now, I have Godly Mechanic!"

She clenched her right hand, confidence shining in her eyes.

"After replicating the Origin Bullet, I feel like my ability might be able to make mechs a reality."

"What normal humans can't achieve, maybe superhumans can!"

Zhang Yi chuckled.

"If that's what you want to do, then go for it! I support you."

Lu Keran fidgeted, clasping her hands behind her back. "But... it's going to take a lot of materials."

Zhang Yi waved a hand dismissively. "No problem. Just tell me what you need!"

Materials? That was the least of his concerns.

With an entire city like Tianhai at his disposal, how could he not get the materials she needed?

At that moment, he had no idea that his casual promise would bring him major trouble down the line.

He had forgotten to ask just how complicated the materials for a mech would be...

With his new weapons in hand, Zhang Yi was like a child with brand-new toys.

Ever since the apocalypse, he had developed an obsession with high-powered weaponry.

Though the war in Tianhai City was over, he remained vigilant. Every day, he spent hours training.

First, he practiced martial arts with Liang Yue.

His close-combat skills were a weak point, so improving his hand-to-hand combat was crucial. He didn't have to fight up close, but he needed to be capable of it.

Second, he worked on developing his superhuman ability.

By now, his power level was on par with Bian Junwu's. Though he wasn't as monstrous as Yuan Kongye, he was still a formidable superhuman.

With great power came subtle changes in his abilities. Zhang Yi needed time to familiarize himself with his upgraded skills.

His intense training set the pace for everyone else in the shelter.

Even Uncle You and Fatty Xu couldn't afford to slack off.

After learning about the ranking system for superhumans, they realized they were Delta-tier—meaning their potential had a hard cap.

But Zhang Yi had reminded them that power level wasn't everything.

A well-trained lower-tier superhuman could still take down a stronger opponent with skill and strategy.

So they trained relentlessly, determined not to be a burden in future battles.

Deep down, everyone sensed that their peaceful days wouldn't last forever.

At some point—maybe soon—they would face new challenges.

That day came sooner than expected.

Because an email from Jiangnan District had just arrived in Zhang Yi's inbox.

It was a rare clear evening. The snowfall had stopped, and the weak sunlight filtered through the clouds, casting a pale glow over the shelter.

The sun was white, its light cold and devoid of warmth—just bright enough to illuminate the frost-covered ground.

Inside the shelter, Zhang Yi lounged in the living room, sitting across from the roaring fireplace.

The firewood crackled, its orange flames flickering as wisps of smoke were drawn away by the air filtration system.

Zhang Yi wore a plush blue fleece robe, his bare feet resting on an imported Roman-style couch.

Yang Siyah sat beside him, practicing a new foot massage technique she had recently learned.

As he scrolled through his phone, Zhang Yi's eyes landed on an email labeled "Jiangnan District Supreme Commander's Office."

His instincts immediately went on high alert.

"Did Baili Changqing break his promise and leak my information?"

Zhang Yi frowned slightly.

His life was incredibly comfortable right now. The last thing he wanted was to be roped into working for someone else.

He clicked on the email and read through it carefully.

His expression relaxed.

It wasn't a personal message—it was an open letter.

The contents were a command issued to every major superhuman organization in Jiangnan District.

All superhumans were ordered to report to Jiangnan District Headquarters on April 8th—without exception.

The message was signed by Zhu Zheng, Supreme Commander of Jiangnan District.

There were no threats in the email.

But it didn't take a genius to figure out what would happen to anyone who refused to go.

Ignoring the summons would be the same as declaring war against Jiangnan District.

And that would mean facing the full wrath of Jiangnan's military.

Zhang Yi had no doubt that a unit like Bian Junwu's Black Robe Squad could wipe out an entire city's worth of superhuman factions with ease.

"So, the day has finally come. No surprise there."

Zhang Yi sighed lazily.

He wasn't thrilled about leaving Tianhai City, but he had always known this day would come.

Ever since the Glacial Age began, centralized governance had collapsed, leaving each region to fend for itself.

Countless independent factions had risen from the chaos.

Now that things were stabilizing, the larger powers were bound to start reasserting control.

If left unchecked, the fragmented warlord states would eventually plunge the world into deeper chaos.

And if an external enemy appeared, they would be too divided to fight back.

Jiangnan District was simply making its move—consolidating the scattered cities under its rule.

Zhang Yi understood their logic.

He just hated being dragged into it.

His only concern was managing his own little territory.

And he wasn't the only one who received this email.

Across Jiangnan District's hundreds of cities, every major faction had been contacted.

Reactions varied.

"Jiangnan District is calling us in? What is this, a pilgrimage?"

"Are we going to war? ...Nah, probably not yet."

"Damn, I don't wanna go! I'm living like a damn king out here! Too bad I can't fight them—guess I have no choice."

"I wonder what the outside world looks like now... Might as well go check it out."

Zhang Yi lazily scrolled through his phone.

He knew he couldn't refuse.

Even with his newfound strength, there was no point in going against the biggest power in the region.

But before making any decisions, he needed information.

He pulled up Baili Changqing's contact number, smirked, and pressed dial.

Chapter 562: Consolidating Power

Baili Changqing was now the captain of the Black Robe Squad, which meant he wasn't supposed to leak regional intelligence to Zhang Yi.

However, there was a deep secret between them. So when Zhang Yi reached out to ask about the gathering, Baili Changqing had no choice but to share at least some information.

Even if he could only reveal a fraction, it was still better than Zhang Yi making wild guesses on his own.

At this moment, in Blizzard City, Baili Changqing was dressed in casual clothes, sitting at the dining table, waiting for dinner.

Outside, snow was falling heavily, but inside, the scene was warm and cozy.

His eight-year-old son, a chubby little boy, was using chopsticks to poke at the food in his bowl, while his wife was busy in the kitchen making soup.

Despite its simple appearance, their home was classified as an A-grade residential area in Blizzard City—only captains and their families were allowed to live there.

Baili Changqing had just been promoted recently, and with good fortune came a good mood. Even his time with his wife had been especially passionate lately.

But when he picked up his phone and saw the caller ID labeled "Zhang Yi," his smile instantly froze.

His promotion had a big secret behind it—Zhang Yi's contributions had been divided among the entire investigation team.

If the headquarters had followed standard procedure, Zhang Yi would have been the one summoned, and while it wasn't guaranteed he'd be made captain, it certainly wouldn't have fallen to Baili Changqing.

With this leverage in Zhang Yi's hands, Baili Changqing's expression turned complicated.

Little Hu looked at his father's odd expression and asked, "Dad, what's wrong?"

Baili Changqing looked at his son and smiled. "It's nothing, just some work matters. You and Mom go ahead and eat."

He took his phone, walked into the bathroom, locked the door, and carefully glanced around before answering.

“Hello, Zhang Yi?”

“Who else would it be? Captain Baili, how have you been?”

Hearing Zhang Yi’s teasing tone, Baili Changqing took a deep breath.

“Thanks to you, I’m a captain now. What do you want?”

Zhang Yi got straight to the point. “What’s the deal with the Jiangnan District’s summons? Tell me about it.”

Baili Changqing relaxed upon hearing that.

“Oh, so it’s about that! You got the email, didn’t you?”

“Just now.”

“Then that’s right. The Commander recently made the decision to consolidate all available forces in Jiangnan District.”

“We also received the notice. Since many Superhumans from different places will be coming on the eighth day of Xiyue, we need to maintain order in Blizzard City.”

“At least two investigation teams will be present.”

Zhang Yi recalled that Bian Junwu had mentioned that the headquarters had a total of six investigation teams.

Each of them was powerful enough to sweep through an entire region.

Not only were their members all high-level Superhumans, but they were also equipped with the most advanced technology and resources provided by Jiangnan District.

However, Zhang Yi wasn’t concerned about that. His main focus was the true purpose of this gathering.

“Are they summoning us to recruit us into a unified Superhuman force under regional management?”

Baili Changqing scratched his head.

“That part, I really don’t know. The headquarters doesn’t exactly share their intentions with frontline operatives like us.”

“But honestly, I think you’re overthinking it.”

Zhang Yi’s eyes narrowed. “Oh? Why do you say that?”

Baili Changqing explained, “It takes a massive amount of resources to support a single Superhuman.”

“If the entire Jiangnan District’s forces were to be centralized, wouldn’t the district have to provide for all of your living, training, and equipment needs?”

“Even with all of Blizzard City’s wealth, it couldn’t sustain that kind of burden.”

Zhang Yi scoffed. “It’s just a few thousand people. You really can’t afford to feed us?”

Baili Changqing laughed heartily.

“Superhumans do have big appetites, but food isn’t the issue! We have our own agricultural zones for self-sufficiency.”

“The real problem is the specialized medicine needed to enhance Superhumans.”

Zhang Yi's eyes flickered. “There's something like that?”

“Of course! A district-level power like ours has access to the most advanced national technology and the best Superhuman training methods.”

“Otherwise, how do you think Blizzard City's Superhumans are generally stronger than those from other cities?”

Zhang Yi had learned something new, but he wasn't envious.

If gaining strength meant giving up his freedom, he'd rather not have it.

Besides—he was already strong enough.

After hearing Baili Changqing's explanation, Zhang Yi rubbed his nose.

“So, I can take this to mean that Jiangnan District wants us under their control but doesn't want to provide resources for us?”

Baili Changqing shrugged.

“Not exactly! Given the chaotic times, external Superhumans are an incredibly powerful force.”

“The Commander wants to harness that power while ensuring it doesn’t spiral out of control.”

“So they’ll definitely offer you something reasonable in exchange.”

Zhang Yi felt a little more at ease. If that were the case, it wouldn’t hurt to go and take a look.

As long as he concealed his true strength, no one would know his real capabilities.

“Alright, after all that talk, I guess I’ll have to see for myself.”

Baili Changqing grinned. “I’ll treat you to a drink when you get here!”

“Sure, don’t worry—I was planning to find you anyway.” Zhang Yi responded with a smile.

Baili Changqing, of course, wanted to stay on Zhang Yi's good side so he wouldn't expose their shared secret.

Meanwhile, Zhang Yi took the opportunity to extract as much intelligence on Blizzard City as possible.

Both got what they wanted.

After ending the call, Zhang Yi stretched and called out to Yang Siyah.

“Gather everyone. We've got work to do.”

Yang Siyah, having overheard the conversation, already had a general idea of the situation.

She sighed softly, realizing that their peaceful days were once again about to be disturbed.

She nodded and went to inform everyone to assemble in the living room.

Zhang Yi sat up on the sofa, grabbed a piece of frozen cake from the table, and took a bite.

He had to show some respect to Jiangnan District's summons.

But the message only stated that the leaders of various forces had to attend—it never said they couldn't bring others along.

Zhang Yi considered taking his team's main combatants with him.

This was the first large-scale Superhuman gathering in Jiangnan District.

No one knew how many regional powers would be meeting in Blizzard City.

Surviving the apocalypse and forming a stronghold meant that none of these forces were weak.

When so many powerful figures gathered in one place, conflict was inevitable.

Zhang Yi wasn't one to start trouble, but it was always best to be prepared.

While waiting for his team to assemble, he made a call to Xing Tian to see if he had received the same message.

Xing Tian confirmed it. "Yeah, I just got it too. Zhang Yi, are we going or not?"

Zhang Yi thought to himself—if Xing Tian had received the notice, then Xiao Honglian and Chen Jingguan must have as well.

That meant the entire Tianhai City faction would be heading there together.

### Chapter 563: Choosing Who Will Go to Blizzard City

Zhang Yi said to Xing Tian, “Of course we’re going. Let’s stick together—numbers bring strength. It’ll also help deter anyone who doesn’t know their place from causing trouble.”

His team operated on an elite structure, meaning they had fewer members.

Bringing along the other three factions would provide a buffer—if anything went wrong, they could take the hit first. A perfect plan.

Xing Tian was already fully committed to following Zhang Yi, so he readily agreed.

“Alright, just let me know when we’re leaving.”

“Done deal.”

After hanging up, Zhang Yi made the same proposal to the other two factions.

As expected, they had also received the summons from Jiangnan District and were willing to accompany him to Blizzard City.

By the time the calls were finished, everyone had gathered.

Hearing the summary from Yang Siyah, the group was already deep in discussion in the living room, curiosity and concern written all over their faces.

They didn't know much about Jiangnan District,

but they were well aware that it possessed immense power.

Aside from its advanced modern weaponry, the Superhumans from that region were all extremely strong.

Bian Junwu's Black Robe Squad alone had left a lasting impression on all of Tianhai City.

Zhang Yi straightened up and addressed the group.

"Alright, since everyone's here, let me explain why I called you over."

"Jiangnan District's headquarters has issued a summons to every faction in its territory. We are required to be in Blizzard City, Jinling, by April 8th."

"There's no room for negotiation, and we can't refuse. We have to go, so I'm telling you now to start preparing."

There was no point in discussing alternatives—they weren't foolish enough to oppose Jiangnan District.

Going was the only option.

Zhang Yi was simply informing them in advance.

The group immediately erupted into conversation.

Fatty Xu voiced his concern. "Why are they suddenly calling us over? Could there be some kind of scheme?"

Uncle You speculated, "I doubt it. It's probably just a large-scale military review, like a show of force."

Fatty Xu frowned. "Or... could it mean war?"

Uncle You hesitated. "Hard to say. But I doubt it."

He chuckled. "Even in the apocalypse, there are six major districts guarding Huaxia. Who would dare make a move against them?"

Listening to their concerns, Zhang Yi decided to share what he had learned from Baili Changqing.

"No need to worry. I've already spoken to my contacts over there."

"This gathering is likely meant to establish Jiangnan District's authority and bring all factions under unified control."

"It's not about forcing us to join them or making us leave Tianhai City."

Zhang Yi shrugged. "After all, if we left, Tianhai City would become a ghost town, and others would start eyeing it for themselves."

"I don't think Jiangnan District would make such a reckless decision."

"Now, let's decide who will be going."

Zhang Yi scanned the room and stated plainly, "Same as always: me, Uncle You, Fatty Xu, Liang Yue, and Hua Hua will head to Blizzard City. The rest of you will stay behind."

But not everyone agreed.

Zhou Ke'er looked at him with wide eyes. "Zhang Yi, this is a rare Superhuman gathering for all of Jiangnan District! I want to go too—maybe I can be useful!"

Zhang Yi chuckled. "You're a doctor. We're not going there to fight, so why would you need to come?"

"You never know!"

Zhou Ke'er clung to his arm, pouting. "You said it yourself—there will be all kinds of people there. If something happens and a fight breaks out, wouldn't it be better to have a personal doctor with you?"

Zhang Yi smirked. "You think Blizzard City won't have doctors?"

Zhou Ke'er raised an eyebrow and gave him a meaningful look. "Would you trust their doctors to treat you?"

Her expression carried a hidden warning.

Zhang Yi frowned and pondered for a moment before realizing the issue.

"You're saying... if I accept their treatment, they could obtain intel on my abilities?"

Jiangnan District had cutting-edge scientific research and specialized institutions for evaluating Superhumans.

If they examined him, they might uncover his true strength—even the specifics of his abilities.

Zhou Ke'er nodded seriously. "I'm worried they'll get a sample of your DNA and use it to create weapons against you."

Zhang Yi's eyes darkened.

He immediately thought of the Origin Bomb.

That weapon had been specifically developed to counter Superhumans.

If someone got his genetic data and designed a weapon tailored to him, it wouldn't be impossible.

The realization sent chills through the room.

"It's that serious?"

"So even if we go, we have to be extremely careful not to leave any traces."

Fatty Xu, his face grim, started considering his own habits and quietly decided to bring some chili water with him—just to make sure he didn't leave any DNA behind.

Zhou Ke'er's reasoning convinced Zhang Yi.

When it came to medical care, it was best to rely on their own people.

He nodded. "Alright, you're coming with us."

"Yes!" Zhou Ke'er beamed with excitement.

This was a rare chance to travel—of course, she didn't want to miss it.

At that moment, Lu Keran glanced at Zhou Ke'er enviously, then quickly volunteered. “Big Bro, take me with you too!”

Zhang Yi ruffled her hair. “Don’t make trouble. If too many of us go, who’s going to hold down the fort?”

But Lu Keran gave him a reason he couldn’t refuse.

“Big Bro, Jiangnan District has tons of advanced weaponry. The Origin Bomb isn’t their only trump card. Don’t you want to get your hands on some of their tech?”

She placed a hand over her chest and declared confidently, “If I get the chance to examine their weapons, I can analyze their construction and materials. There’s a high probability I can replicate them!”

Zhang Yi slammed his hand on the table. “You’re coming! Even if no one else goes, my genius little sister has to!”

And just like that, the team heading to Blizzard City was decided.

The others, however, had no plans to join.

Yang Siyah and Zhou Haimei preferred staying home, enjoying their peaceful days.

Yang Xinxin had to remain behind as well—she would provide technical support for Zhang Yi’s team while also maintaining the shelter’s security.

With Zhang Yi gone, the shelter’s safety rested in her hands.

Thus, the final lineup for the trip to Blizzard City was: six people and one cat.

## Chapter 564: Xiaomiao Mountain Subway Station

After confirming the number of people going to Blizzard City, Zhang Yi sent back a brief reply:

"Received."

It was basic courtesy—leaving a message on "read" without a response could come off as arrogant.

Not long after, another email arrived.

The message was straightforward:

"Please arrive at Xiaomiao Mountain Subway Station in Lu River District on April 7th at 2:30 PM. A designated contact will be there to receive you."

Zhang Yi was slightly surprised. He had assumed they would drive themselves to Blizzard City, but it seemed arrangements had been made for their transportation.

On second thought, it made sense. If everyone arrived in their own vehicles, the sheer number of people and cars would be a logistical nightmare.

With that settled, Zhang Yi instructed everyone at the shelter to start packing their things.

There were still two days until April 7th.

He then initiated a conference call, bringing in Xing Tian, Xiao Honglian, and Chen Jingguan.

The three appeared on screen without delay, not daring to be negligent.

“I’ve replied to Jiangnan District’s email,” Zhang Yi said. “They’ve arranged for someone to pick us up. What about your sides?”

All three reported receiving the same instructions—same time, same place.

No surprises there.

Zhang Yi nodded but couldn’t help feeling a bit uneasy.

If he had been careless and ignored that email, it might have caused some unnecessary misunderstandings.

“What’s so special about Xiaomiao Mountain Subway Station? Are we really taking a subway to Blizzard City?” Zhang Yi asked.

Xiao Honglian and Xing Tian looked puzzled.

Only Chen Jingguan remained calm.

“Huaxia’s transportation network has two systems: civilian and military.”

“Some railway and subway lines are not publicly accessible. They were built discreetly, and ordinary citizens have no knowledge of them.”

“I remember there’s a special rail line running through Xiaomiao Mountain.”

Before the apocalypse, Chen Jingguan had been the son of a high-ranking military officer, so he had some inside knowledge.

Zhang Yi nodded. “I see. If it’s a dedicated line, it makes sense that it’s still operational despite the apocalypse. Impressive.”

After a brief moment of admiration, Zhang Yi reminded them to limit the number of people they brought—only a few elite Superhumans should accompany them.

Of course, that was easier said than done.

The three major bases had already suffered immense losses, with most of their Superhumans wiped out in previous battles.

Now, even if they combined their remaining forces, they barely had ten Superhumans left.

They had fewer people than a single base used to have.

The silver lining was that those who survived were the absolute elite, which was at least somewhat reassuring.

Understanding the reality of their situation, the three bases began their preparations.

Two days later, April 7th, noon.

Zhang Yi and his group set out.

As a Spatial-type Superhuman, the biggest advantage was never having to worry about packing.

He could just bring everything.

Before departure, Zhang Yi carefully checked his weapons and gear—making sure his combat suit was intact, his dagger was in an easily accessible spot, and his firearms in Spatial Storage were loaded and ready to fire at a moment's notice.

With everything in order, six people and one cat left the shelter.

After saying their goodbyes to Yang Xinxin and the others, they headed for Xiaomiao Mountain Subway Station.

The station was only about thirty kilometers away.

Driving at a steady pace, they arrived in less than an hour.

Upon arrival, Zhang Yi spotted the vehicles from Xing Tian's three factions already parked there, waiting.

Despite Zhang Yi repeatedly telling them not to bring too many people, it was clear that each faction had brought at least ten heavily armed elite warriors or Superhumans.

As Zhang Yi stepped out of his vehicle, Xing Tian and the others quickly approached him.

“Zhang Yi, you’re here!”

Zhang Yi smirked at them. “At this rate, if every faction brings this many people, won’t there be tens of thousands of us?”

Xiao Honglian sighed. “We’re just being cautious. It’s better to be safe than sorry.”

Zhang Yi understood where she was coming from.

Since the apocalypse began, Tianhai City had been in constant conflict, and countless people had perished.

Now, heading into an unfamiliar environment filled with powerful factions, it was natural to feel uneasy.

“Fair enough.” Zhang Yi didn’t say much more on the matter.

Leading the group toward the subway station, he casually used his Spatial ability to store away their Snow Vehicles.

Seeing this, Xiao Honglian stepped forward with a grin.

“Zhang Yi, why don’t you store our vehicles too? If we leave them here too long, they might get damaged.”

Her request was a clear show of trust.

After all, Snow Vehicles were crucial strategic assets for their factions.

Xing Tian and Chen Jingguan chimed in immediately.

“Yeah, yeah! Your ability is super convenient. Do us a favor?”

Zhang Yi smiled and nodded. “If you trust me, I’ll help you out.”

“Of course we do!” everyone replied in unison.

With a simple wave of his hand, all their Snow Vehicles vanished into his Spatial Storage.

Seeing this, Xiao Honglian and the others were filled with envy.

Spatial-type abilities were truly incredible—perfect for both offense and support.

Upon reaching Xiaomiao Mountain Subway Station, they found it buried under thick layers of snow.

Fatty Xu stepped forward, activating his ability.

Spreading his fingers toward the ground, he unleashed [Snow Gust], instantly sending the heavy snow whirling away like a hurricane.

Within moments, the subway entrance—buried under ten meters of snow—was revealed.

As they descended, they immediately noticed that this station was different from civilian ones.

The walls were thicker and made of high-grade concrete.

Running a hand over the surface, Zhang Yi could feel its reinforced durability, capable of withstanding powerful impacts.

After all, this was a military subway line—its construction was leagues beyond standard infrastructure.

Uncle You turned on a spotlight, illuminating the dark underground as they moved toward the platform.

The air below was cold and dry.

With no signs of life, it was hard to believe a train would actually pass through here.

Since they had arrived early, there was still an hour before 2:30 PM.

The group sat around, chatting to pass the time.

Xing Tian and Xiao Honglian casually discussed their expectations for Jiangnan District.

They had no real knowledge of it.

But unexpectedly, Zhang Yi managed to get some useful intel from Chen Jingguan.

### Chapter 565: The Blizzard City Express

Chen Jingguan came from a distinguished background—his father was a high-ranking military officer.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have achieved the rank of navy major before the age of thirty.

Although the apocalypse had reshuffled all previous titles and authority, his resources and connections remained intact.

Just like how Chen Xinian, the leader of West Hill Base, had an old friendship with Zhu Zheng, the commander of Jiangnan District, Chen Jingguan also had friends in Blizzard City.

At this moment, the major factions in Tianhai City were all tied together, each hoping to gain Zhang Yi's protection.

So, Chen Jingguan eagerly approached Zhang Yi and shared what he knew about Jiangnan District's recent summons.

"I have a friend who serves as a company commander in the Blizzard City Defense Force. I asked him about the situation, and he does know a few things."

"This time, Commander Zhu Zheng has summoned all major and minor factions in Jiangnan District, mainly to plan for the future."

“First, it’s been half a year since the apocalypse began. By now, most places have formed stable factions instead of the previous chaos. Headquarters wants to unify and manage these forces.”

“Second, consolidating power is also a measure to defend against external threats or rampaging mutated creatures.”

Zhang Yi glanced at Chen Jingguan and asked curiously, “I understand the concern about mutated creatures, but what do you mean by external threats?”

“Right now, every country on Blue Star is struggling to survive in this Ice Age. They can barely protect themselves—who has the energy to harass us?”

As they spoke, the others perked up their ears and listened closely.

Chen Jingguan smirked knowingly. Despite losing an eye and now wearing an eyepatch like a pirate, his noble upbringing still lent him a certain elegance.

With both hands in his pockets, he chuckled lightly, “A large-scale war isn’t likely, but I’ve heard that small-scale border conflicts have never really stopped.”

“The key issue lies in Huaguo’s geographical position!”

“As everyone knows, our national borders are surrounded by numerous countries of varying sizes.”

“Huaguo is vast. While our military is still strong, our troop numbers are no longer what they used to be, making it exhausting to handle the frequent small-scale skirmishes at the borders.”

After a pause, Chen Jingguan added, “Of course, this situation isn’t unique to Huaguo. It’s actually happening everywhere across the globe.”

“Some smaller countries have even collapsed entirely.”

Zhang Yi rubbed his temples and said indifferently, “Too many pests to kill them all. But matters of state are for those in power to handle. That’s not something we need to worry about.”

“The higher-ups of each district will make the decisions—they have more experience dealing with these things than we do. As for us, at most, we’re just pawns. We should just focus on doing what we can.”

Zhang Yi’s philosophy in life had always been: If I succeed, I’ll help the world; if I fail, I’ll look after myself.

His priority was ensuring the safety of himself and those around him.

But if the time ever came when his country truly needed him, he wouldn’t turn his back.

At that moment, the veteran soldier You Jiguang spoke loudly, “If anyone dares invade our land, I’ll be the first to take up arms and drive them out!”

Xiao Honglian crossed her arms and said coolly, “That goes without saying. But if what you’re saying is true, at least I can relax a bit. Now that we know the purpose of this gathering, we won’t have to stay on edge all the time.”

The others remained silent, but their eyes burned with intensity.

They could fight each other for resources—that was an internal matter.

But if the day ever came when an outsider dared invade, they wouldn’t hesitate to lay down their lives to fight!

Ever since the apocalypse began, they had seen too much death. Their fear of it had dulled significantly.

If they had to die, they wanted their deaths to mean something.

Just as the conversation grew heated, Hua Hua, who was perched on Zhang Yi's shoulder, suddenly straightened up.

Its eyes widened like brass bells, staring intensely at the far end of the subway tunnel.

"Meow—"

With its white paws, it patted Zhang Yi's tactical helmet, signaling that something was ahead.

Zhang Yi immediately turned to look toward the tunnel's end.

After a long moment, a faint light suddenly flickered in the darkness, accompanied by the thunderous rumbling of an approaching train.

"It's here."

Zhang Yi spoke in a low voice.

Everyone turned to look, feeling both excitement and tension.

The unknown always carried a sense of apprehension.

Before long, the train's lights cut through the tunnel's darkness, illuminating the group.

A military-green train charged through the underground like a roaring dragon, swiftly arriving at the platform before them.

Its speed was incredible—it was practically an underground bullet train.

Speed is crucial in warfare. A military train moving at this pace isn't surprising.

“Hiss—”

The train came to a stop, releasing a burst of steam.

Then, the doors opened—but only one of them.

Standing in the doorway was a tall train attendant dressed in a black uniform.

She was nearly 1.9 meters tall, with skin as pale as snow. Despite the bright smile on her face, there was something chillingly cold about it.

It was an eerie kind of beauty—one that felt almost inhuman.

Sure enough, Lu Keran whispered to the group, “That’s a robot.”

Zhang Yi suddenly understood why she gave him such an unsettling feeling.

So it’s the uncanny valley effect...

The train attendant bowed slightly and said, “Ladies and gentlemen, please board the Blizzard 13 Express.”

After that, she stepped aside to make way for them.

Zhang Yi maintained a calm expression and was the first to step aboard.

Once inside, the group immediately noticed how different it was from an ordinary subway.

From the seats to the flooring and interior design, everything was distinct from a civilian train.

At the far end of the car, several massive green metal crates were stacked together, glowing faintly with red light.

No one knew what they were for.

Zhang Yi wasn't one to ask unnecessary questions. He simply found a seat in the middle and sat down.

Zhou Ke'er and Lu Keran quickly sat beside him.

The train car was spacious enough for everyone to have a seat.

Yet, no one dared to sit next to Zhang Yi, nor near the three major faction leaders.

Still, these survivors had been hardened by the apocalypse. They weren't delicate or fussy.

They simply found spots throughout the car, leaning against the walls to rest.

Before long, the doors hissed shut once more.

The train attendant remained by the door, her trademark smile frozen in place, staring straight ahead.

And just like that, the train once again became a roaring dragon, thundering forward into the darkness.

There were no stop announcements. No route map.

At first, Zhou Ke'er and Lu Keran sat rigidly, but boredom soon got the better of them. Eventually, they leaned against Zhang Yi's shoulder and dozed off.

But Zhang Yi didn't sleep.

With Blizzard City just ahead—the legendary fortress rumored to be one of the strongest in the new world—there was no way he could relax.

#### Chapter 566: Tigers and Leopards Gather

After traveling in darkness for an hour and a half, the train suddenly stopped midway.

However, the doors didn't open. Through the windows, Zhang Yi and the others could faintly see the dim, eerie light outside.

They pressed against the glass, peering out, only to witness a swarm of people flooding into another carriage.

Their attire was entirely different from Zhang Yi's group, though it was clearly a specialized outfit with advanced insulation, designed for extreme cold.

Due to the dim subway lighting, Zhang Yi couldn't make out their faces. However, he could sense the thick killing intent lingering in the air.

It was obvious—this was another group of apocalyptic overlords, individuals who had fought their way through mountains of corpses and seas of blood to claim dominance over their respective cities!

"So, only the most ruthless are heading to Blizzard City, huh?" Zhang Yi remarked with a sigh.

But when he said that, Xing Tian, Xiao Honglian, and Chen Jingguan all gave him strange looks.

Ruthless?

Was he talking about them?

If they were ruthless, then Zhang Yi was Satan himself!

Even though Zhang Yi had repeatedly reminded them never to disclose his abilities—especially his true strength—to outsiders, everyone in Tianhai City knew the truth.

After all, Zhang Yi had single-handedly slain Yuan Kongye, who had once ruled at the apex of the Ypsilon Realm!

Now that he had absorbed Yuan Kongye's core energy, who could even fathom the level of his power?

In reality, Zhang Yi often forgot just how strong he was.

He always saw himself as an ordinary person and constantly reminded himself of that.

Only by maintaining this mindset could he avoid arrogance and making the same mistakes as Yuan Kongye.

If the situation had been reversed back then, if Zhang Yi had been in Yuan Kongye's position, the outcome would have been completely different.

Yuan Kongye lost because she overestimated her own strength.

Zhang Yi crossed his arms, silently observing the situation outside.

Soon, the train resumed its journey.

This scene repeated itself nine more times.

Zhang Yi wasn't sure which group of passengers they were, but judging by the geographical order, they shouldn't have been too late in the lineup.

From this, he could roughly gauge how many cities in Jiangnan District housed significant Superhuman factions.

After all, minor groups wouldn't need a personal summons from Jiangnan District.

Take Tianhai City, for example.

Although the Followers of the Snow God war had left only the Western Alliance standing, the city itself was vast, surrounded by smaller towns and districts.

There were undoubtedly small pockets of human survivors scattered around.

Jiangnan District didn't need to govern these scattered groups directly. As long as they controlled the major powers, those factions would naturally manage the smaller ones.

After a long journey, the train finally arrived at a brightly lit platform.

The moment they pulled into the station, Zhang Yi knew immediately—they had arrived in Jinling.

That was the only place in Blizzard City still capable of maintaining operational subway systems, which explained the lighting.

Zhang Yi glanced at his satellite phone—the time read a little past 6 PM.

They had been traveling for over three hours, factoring in detours through other cities, which seemed reasonable.

At that moment, the robotic train attendant suddenly tilted her head, turning to face Zhang Yi's group.

With a smile, she announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, the terminal station—Blizzard City—has arrived! Please gather your belongings and disembark promptly."

"Everyone, the terminal station Blizzard City has arrived! Please pack your luggage and belongings and get off the car as soon as possible..."

Zhang Yi rose slowly, speaking in an even tone, "Let's go."

There was a hint of tension in everyone's eyes as they stood up instinctively, waiting for Zhang Yi to lead the way.

Zhou Ke'er and Lu Keran were especially cautious, sticking close to Zhang Yi without taking a single step away.

As Zhang Yi stepped off the train, he saw that all the carriages had opened their doors.

From them, waves of warriors clad in combat gear—armed to the teeth—marched out.

Each one resembled an ancient heavily armored soldier, encased in thick battle suits.

They stood shoulder to shoulder, warily sizing each other up with cold, hostile gazes.

Among them, a few dressed in peculiar outfits—some even in thin clothing—stood out.

And there were even giants over five meters tall, forced to crouch as they exited the train.

A chaotic mix of individuals, like a World Expo of the Apocalypse.

The atmosphere was heavy with murderous intent and unease.

Zhou Ke'er and Lu Keran's faces paled—they were struggling to endure the oppressive killing aura suffusing the area.

It wasn't that these warriors were deliberately trying to intimidate others.

Rather, killing intent was something that naturally emanated from a person who had slaughtered many.

It wasn't visible to the eye nor detectable by the nose, but the body could instinctively sense it.

Like how a dog would freeze in fear upon seeing a butcher who had slaughtered countless of its kind.

Of course, some individuals were purposefully exuding their aura to assert dominance.

Zhang Yi, however, was not among them.

Despite the sheer number of people he had killed, he wasn't a bloodthirsty maniac.

His nature was defensive—he only struck back against those who attacked him first.

Thanks to his philosophy of survival (The Art of Staying Low), he had mastered the ability to conceal his killing intent.

To those who didn't know him, he might even appear harmless at first glance.

Zhang Yi deliberately slowed his pace, avoiding taking the lead.

Because the one who walks at the front is always the first target.

While keeping a low profile, he quietly observed the other Superhumans around him.

Not just Zhang Yi—almost every faction leader here was doing the same.

Everyone was wary of the powerhouses from other cities.

In the apocalypse, there were no true friends or enemies.

People could cooperate for mutual benefit one moment and go to war the next over resources.

Most cities had stabilized now. Any new conflicts would likely be full-scale wars between cities.

Some Superhumans flaunted their power openly, making it known they were forces to be reckoned with.

Others remained shrouded in mystery, cloaked in black robes that concealed their faces entirely.

Some were relaxed, calmly observing others and allowing themselves to be scrutinized in return.

Suddenly, Zhang Yi felt several hostile gazes directed at them.

He instinctively turned his head.

A few teams from a neighboring train car were openly staring at them with ill intent.

Not just Zhang Yi—the rest of the team quickly noticed the unfriendly stares.

Chen Jingguan furrowed his brows and whispered, “They’re from Daze City! See that bald guy? His name is Sun Jianming, and he commands a naval fleet. We’ve clashed at sea before.”

“Daze City?”

Zhang Yi was quite familiar with it—it was right next to Tianhai City, just southwest of them.

He had even visited there often before the apocalypse.

Sensing their hostility, Zhang Yi turned to Chen Jingguan.

“They’re after you?”

At that, the others also glanced at Chen Jingguan.

If this was his personal grudge, no one wanted to get involved unnecessarily.

Chen Jingguan grew anxious and quickly explained, “We had some friction with Sun Jianming in the past, but right now, they’re not just targeting Chaoyu Base.”

“As I said before, many believe Tianhai City’s forces have weakened, and plenty of people have their eyes on us!”

Even without Chen Jingguan’s warning, Zhang Yi had already noticed several other groups discreetly eyeing them.

Zhang Yi’s expression remained neutral. “Ignore them for now. We’ll handle things after this gathering.”

This was Blizzard City—no one would dare make a move here.

And even if they were foolish enough to try, Zhang Yi had no reason to fear them.

The groups eyeing them took their lack of response as cowardice.

Sun Jianming sneered, crossing his arms. “Looks like Tianhai City really has fallen. They used to be so arrogant!”

But before anything more could happen—

From the front of the station, a thunderous march of black-clad soldiers filled the air.

The Blizzard City Defense Force—Yan Yun Battalion.

The elite of the elite.

A special forces unit among special forces.

### Chapter 567: The Yan Yun Battalion

For the first time, the Yan Yun Battalion revealed itself before the gathered crowd.

These men were the purest of soldiers—so much so that, in the apocalypse, calling them killing machines wouldn’t be an exaggeration.

Even among the 300,000 troops stationed in Blizzard City, only 5,000 of them were elite enough to belong to Yan Yun!

Unlike the ordinary defense forces, the sole purpose of Yan Yun's existence was to eliminate mutated creatures.

Strongmen like Bian Junwu and Baili Changqing had once been a part of this battalion before rising to their current positions.

Yet, even with only twenty Yan Yun soldiers standing before them, they managed to instill fear and awe into the hearts of over a thousand Superhumans from the twelve cities of Jiangnan District.

Despite having fought through fire and blood themselves, the difference between them and these trained killing machines was painfully obvious.

In the crowd, a stunning woman with a high bun and blazing red lips licked her lips as she gazed at the Yan Yun soldiers, her eyes burning with desire.

"So strong and disciplined... I'd love to taste one of them," she murmured.

Elsewhere, a grizzled old veteran carrying a black violin case squinted his eyes, as if silently measuring his strength against the battalion.

Though most people were intimidated by the presence of the Yan Yun soldiers, fear wasn't their only reaction.

For some, this was an opportunity—they were already trying to gauge Jiangnan District's true power through this elite force.

At that moment, a towering figure slowly stepped forward from behind the Yan Yun soldiers.

The sound of black leather boots stomping against the ground echoed across the platform.

Even Zhang Yi couldn't help but frown.

The deliberate loudness of each step was an intimidation tactic, carrying an air of disrespect.

Then, the owner of those boots came into full view.

He was a tall and gaunt middle-aged man dressed in a green military uniform, with golden general stars gleaming on his shoulders.

Over his uniform, he wore a large green cloak, its high collar obscuring half his face.

The only visible parts of his face were his sharp, hooked nose and piercing hawk-like eyes.

Yet, as his gaze swept across the crowd, everyone felt as if a blade had just sliced across their skin—sending a chill down their spines.

"What terrifying power!"

Zhang Yi immediately sensed danger.

It had been a long time since someone's mere gaze could make him feel like this.

The only people who had ever given him such a feeling were Bian Junwu when he activated Annihilation Mode, and Yuan Kongye when she had just ascended to the Ypsilon Realm.

His mind flashed back to something Bian Junwu had once told him—

Jiangnan District is filled with hidden monsters. There are at least six more like me among the Investigation Captains.

And this man in front of him... was undoubtedly the leader of the Yan Yun Battalion.

His strength was likely on par with, if not greater than, Bian Junwu!

After all, when Zhang Yi had met Bian Junwu, the latter had already been terminally ill, far from his peak condition.

"Jiangnan District's headquarters is no joke. There are powerful figures everywhere—I need to keep a low profile."

Zhang Yi silently reminded himself.

Without making a sound, he subtly moved to the back of the group.

If even he was being cautious, then the others were downright terrified.

Some of the more arrogant Superhumans, who had been releasing their auras to assert dominance, instantly broke out in cold sweat when the general's gaze landed on them.

One of them even felt his legs go weak, nearly collapsing to the ground.

Then, the man finally spoke.

His deep, rumbling voice was like the sound of a cannon being fired from its chamber.

"Welcome to Blizzard City!"

"I am Tu Yunlie, Minister of Combat Operations for Jiangnan District, and I will be overseeing your arrival."

Raising a single finger, his expression turned sharp.

"But before anything else, let me tell you about the rules of Blizzard City!"

“Listen carefully—because these rules are absolute. Anyone who breaks them will face severe punishment!”

“This is your first time here. Perhaps you’re used to doing as you please in the outside world.”

“But here? You will control yourselves!”

His uncompromising tone made it clear—there would be no room for negotiation.

Unsurprisingly, his harsh words made many people frown in displeasure.

But Zhang Yi understood.

This was a show of force, meant to subdue the outsiders before trouble could start.

After half a year of lawlessness, these men had all been ruling their own domains through violence and bloodshed.

Some had likely engaged in horrific and inhumane acts.

For instance, Yuan Kongye—her hatred for men was so extreme that she couldn’t even bear to witness intimacy between them and women.

She would castrate men on a whim just because she found them disgusting.

If Jiangnan District didn’t intimidate this group of warlords from the start, at least some of them would cause problems in Blizzard City.

Fortunately, no one here was stupid.

Although some were clearly unhappy with Tu Yunlie's attitude, no one dared to be the first to provoke him.

Tu Yunlie continued.

"Tonight, you will all be assigned living quarters."

"Tomorrow, the Commander-in-Chief will hold an official summit, and attendance is mandatory."

Finally, he ended with a stern warning.

"Remember—do not cause trouble here!"

"Leave your barbaric ways outside these walls."

With that, Tu Yunlie turned his back on them and strode out of the subway station—without even caring about their reactions.

To be honest, he was a little disappointed.

If anyone had dared to challenge him, he would have gladly executed them on the spot—as a lesson to the others.

But surprisingly, the twelve-city Superhumans were all disciplined enough to keep their mouths shut.

"Well, at least this will save us some trouble."

As soon as Tu Yunlie departed, a smiling attendant stepped forward to greet the group.

She was a woman dressed in a black-and-white uniform, with a professional and pleasant demeanor.

Bowing slightly, she said, "Esteemed guests, please follow me."

"I will be your designated attendant during your stay in Blizzard City."

"If you have any questions, feel free to ask."

"I will also be sending Blizzard City's official regulations to your communication devices—please read them carefully."

"Blizzard City follows strict military governance with many rules, so please be mindful to avoid violations."

Zhang Yi nodded and smiled.

"Much appreciated."

Under her guidance, the group exited the subway station.

And only then... did they witness the full grandeur of Blizzard City.

Situated in the eastern part of Jinling, Blizzard City was a fortress within a city, occupying only one-fifth of Jinling's total area.

It was entirely encased within towering walls that were dozens of meters high and incredibly thick.

Inside, the city's infrastructure didn't seem all that different from other places.

However, armed soldiers were patrolling everywhere.

Their eyes were filled with vigilance, their fingers resting on their guns, watching the newcomers like hawks.

For the first time, Zhang Yi felt what it truly meant for a city to be under military rule.

### Chapter 568: Points City

After arriving, the forces from Zhang Yi's city and eleven others were guided by staff members to their designated temporary living quarters.

Everyone's eyes were filled with curiosity.

Zhang Yi turned to the female staff member and asked, "Miss, what do ordinary people here do? Why don't I see anyone around?"

The woman smiled as she answered, but her expression was too professional—devoid of warmth, like a mask of politeness fixed onto her face.

"They're all working."

She led the way at a steady pace and continued, "In Blizzard City, everyone is assigned work based on their abilities."

"To keep this city running, someone has to be working 24 hours a day."

"So, most ordinary people work more than 14 hours a day."

“In other words, aside from eating and resting, all of their remaining time is dedicated to labor.”

“Of course, this only applies to basic-level workers. Those in specialized technical positions or rare talent roles enjoy a much higher standard of living.”

“The more capable someone is, the better their quality of life.”

“But the majority are just ordinary workers, meaning they spend most of their time laboring.”

After hearing her explanation, a glint of amusement flickered in Zhang Yi’s eyes.

“What about elderly people and children who can’t work? What happens to them?”

Lu Keran interjected, “They must receive special care, right? After all, seniors and children have different needs compared to young adults.”

The staff member’s smile widened, but there was a hint of bleakness beneath it.

“That’s not how it works! Whether elderly or children, unless their families can contribute enough to compensate for their lack of labor, they don’t qualify to live in Blizzard City.”

“What?!”

Lu Keran looked stunned. “That’s way too cruel!”

“This is just a basic rule of survival in the apocalypse.”

Zhang Yi responded calmly, “There’s no need to be shocked. Even though the Jiangnan District headquarters has plenty of resources, they still have to strictly control the population in this post-apocalyptic world.”

"If they can only sustain a limited number of people, it makes sense that the spots would go to those with greater value. It's logical."

Lu Keran sighed. "I get the reasoning, but... isn't this place supposed to still uphold human civilization? I thought it would be different from Tianhai City. At the very least... they should take care of the children."

Zhou Ke'er and Liang Yue both looked uneasy.

Indeed, at the very least, children should be protected.

Because children are the future.

If Blizzard City expelled children just because they couldn't provide enough labor value, what would happen in the long run?

The staff member, however, was unfazed.

"That's not a problem at all."

"As long as those with greater value have more children, it balances out."

"Blizzard City has a birth quota! In times of need, having children is a mandatory duty in the apocalypse."

Lu Keran opened her mouth but was at a loss for words.

She couldn't fathom that such laws were actually enforced here.

Zhang Yi, however, remained indifferent.

Upon reaching their destination, they found a bus waiting for them.

Everyone boarded. Xiao Honglian and the others were extremely cautious, keeping their conversations to a minimum.

They knew that anyone in Blizzard City could potentially report their words and actions.

One wrong statement could spell trouble.

Zhang Yi had already warned them about this before they set out.

Once on the bus, they received a message on their communication devices containing Blizzard City's regulations.

Zhang Yi quickly skimmed through them. The rules were extensive—over a hundred in total.

It was clear that these were hastily drafted post-apocalypse policies, yet they covered all aspects of life with strict guidelines.

Among them, more than a dozen were highlighted in red—special reminders for visitors like Zhang Yi.

For instance, Blizzard City imposed a strict curfew after midnight. No one was allowed on the streets unless they had special authorization from the city's leadership.

Another rule strictly prohibited fighting. Violators would face severe punishment.

The exact punishment wasn't specified—probably dependent on the circumstances—but it was safe to assume it wouldn't be light.

After all, internal conflicts were something the leadership wanted to avoid at all costs.

Zhang Yi carefully read through all the regulations.

Fortunately, most of them didn't impose too many restrictions on outsiders like him.

As long as he stayed put and waited for the conference to conclude, there wouldn't be any issues.

However, the way the city governed its residents left Zhang Yi feeling stifled.

He glanced at the female staff member with her ever-present fake smile.

Now he understood why she seemed so emotionally detached.

Here, survival came before living.

For those used to the freedom of a pre-apocalyptic society, suddenly being subjected to such strict governance naturally stripped away parts of their humanity—especially their sense of freedom and joy.

Zhang Yi flipped through the rules once more and checked the time.

It was a little past 7 PM.

There were still a few hours left before curfew.

Zhang Yi spoke up, "Miss, if I go out now and return before midnight, that shouldn't be a problem, right?"

The staff member's expression subtly tensed.

She politely replied, “I’d advise against it. There are patrols stationed throughout the city. Wandering around at night could cause unnecessary trouble.”

I already feel like this is more than enough trouble.

Zhang Yi thought to himself.

There was no way he was staying in his quarters all night.

Since he was here, he wanted to find Baili Changqing.

A face-to-face conversation could help him gather more intel about Blizzard City.

At the very least, given their shared secret, Baili Changqing might give him some pointers to avoid making any missteps in tomorrow’s meeting.

Any extra intelligence could prevent him from making a critical error.

That was crucial.

Zhang Yi didn’t argue further.

This staff member was just a low-level worker, clearly among the lowest ranks in Blizzard City.

He would contact Baili Changqing directly.

As an investigation captain, Baili Changqing’s status should be quite high in Blizzard City.

## Chapter 569: Undercurrents

Zhang Yi and his team were led to their designated rest area by the staff.

It was an apartment-style building, heavily guarded by soldiers.

The living conditions inside were decent, with each person receiving a private room.

The staff also sent information about the apartment's services to everyone's communication devices, including meal provisions and other available services.

Zhang Yi and the other superhuman organization members from various cities entered the apartment.

It was still early, and no one was ready to rest just yet.

Xiao Honglian, Xing Tian, and Chen Jingguan soon gathered in Zhang Yi's room to discuss the upcoming meeting.

Xiao Honglian's expression was grim.

As soon as she entered, she voiced her concerns anxiously. "I've been observing. We brought the smallest group."

"The other cities have hundreds of people each! And... I can sense that they have far more superhumans than we do."

"That's not all," Chen Jingguan interjected, his tone heavy. "I've noticed a lot of eyes on us. Some of them are anything but friendly."

Zhang Yi raised an eyebrow—he had felt it too.

Among the twelve city delegations, theirs was undeniably the smallest.

And word about Tianhai City's zombie crisis had surely spread by now.

That battle had been too massive to go unnoticed. The zombie horde had already started spreading to nearby cities, and the scale of the conflict alone would have caught the attention of others.

Now, Tianhai City was left in shambles, its once-thriving population of superhumans nearly wiped out.

It was no surprise they were being looked down upon.

Xing Tian scowled. “D\*\*n it! If this were before, would they have dared to treat us like this?”

Back in the day, Tianhai City had been formidable—with the West Base, a powerful sect, and Zhang Yi's team all stationed there.

Tianhai City was one of the most populous and economically prosperous cities in China.

Its strong foundation had ensured its power, even after the apocalypse. It had once been one of the strongest forces in Jiangnan District, second only to Blizzard City.

But now, after Yuan Kongye's massacre, Tianhai's superhumans had been reduced to a mere fraction of what they once were.

It was no wonder they were being underestimated.

Zhang Yi, however, showed no anger. He simply said, “This is Blizzard City. Even if they have their opinions about us, they won't dare make a move here. Until we understand Jiangnan District's stance, no one is to act recklessly.”

“If any of you break their rules, I won’t be able to protect you.”

To Zhang Yi, the other eleven cities were just small fry—not even worth his attention.

With his current strength, he was among the top in Jiangnan District.

If anyone was foolish enough to provoke him, he’d make sure they regretted it.

The real concern was Jiangnan District itself.

Not because they necessarily had hostile intentions, but simply because power in uncertain hands was always unpredictable.

Hearing Zhang Yi’s words, Xiao Honglian and the others suppressed their frustration.

But Chen Jingguan still looked uneasy. “I just worry that while we stay passive, they’ll grow bolder. After all... ‘The tiger may not wish to harm man, but man still fears the tiger.’”

Zhang Yi glanced at him with a faint smile. “Are you saying they might make a move against us?”

Chen Jingguan crossed his arms and spoke seriously. “Tianhai City was an economic powerhouse with abundant resources. But now, only a handful of us are left defending it, and the remaining human population might not even reach ten thousand. It’s only natural that others would see it as an opportunity.”

Zhang Yi narrowed his eyes, a sharp glint flashing through them.

This was something he had already considered.

“I’ve already said—don’t think about that for now. Focus on tomorrow’s meeting. We’ll deal with the rest when we get back.”

The others knew that Zhang Yi was the only one holding up Tianhai City’s top combat power.

If a conflict with another city ever broke out, it would all come down to him.

So, if he said to wait, they would wait.

After seeing them off, Zhang Yi prepared to meet Baili Changqing to gather intel for tomorrow’s meeting.

He called Baili Changqing.

As expected, Baili Changqing wasn’t surprised. He chuckled and said, “Your team is staying in Zone B. I’m just over in Zone A. I’ll send you a temporary electronic pass. Come find me at Password Bar.”

Zhang Yi grinned. “Sounds good.”

Soon, he received the pass.

He glanced around his room.

Zhou Ke’er and Lu Keran were sitting on the bed, watching him with wide eyes.

Though they each had their own rooms, Blizzard City’s oppressive atmosphere had clearly unsettled them, leading them to seek the comfort of his presence.

Zhang Yi chuckled. “You two stay here and rest. I’m going to meet an old friend.”

Zhou Ke'er smirked. "Someone from the Black Robe Investigation Team?"

Zhang Yi nodded. "Yeah, just having a chat."

It wasn't a secret—his only acquaintances in Blizzard City were from the Black Robe Squad.

Knowing this was important, Zhou Ke'er and Lu Keran didn't insist on tagging along.

Zhang Yi left his room and made his way outside.

That was when he realized he wasn't the only one ignoring the warnings.

Even though the staff had advised against leaving the apartment building, the hallways were already filled with people talking and making connections.

Some had even stepped outside, eager to explore Blizzard City.

Just as Zhang Yi was about to leave the building, the female staff member who had guided them earlier hurried over and blocked his path.

"Excuse me, where are you going?"

Zhang Yi smiled. "Out."

She looked even more anxious. "Didn't I tell you not to leave the apartment? If the patrol guards catch you..."

Zhang Yi cut her off. "As long as I don't break Blizzard City's rules, isn't that fine? The regulations you sent us didn't say we couldn't leave."

Her face darkened slightly.

“But... if something happens to you outside, the higher-ups might hold me responsible!”

Zhang Yi scoffed internally. So many rules, yet you want to use this excuse to restrict my freedom?

“I’ll follow the city’s regulations.”

His smile faded as he fixed his gaze on her.

“But remember this—we are guests here. Not subordinates. And certainly not prisoners.”

With that, he brushed past her without another word, ignoring the frustration on her face as he stepped out into the night.

#### Chapter 570: Password Bar

The female staff member had no idea who she was trying to stop.

If she did, she would never have dared to stand in Zhang Yi’s way.

Some people, when given even the slightest bit of authority, seem to relish making things difficult for others.

After stepping out of the apartment building, Zhang Yi found himself greeted by a light snowfall.

The roads were spotlessly clean, with barely any snowflakes in sight.

It was clear that the streets were swept daily to ensure smooth traffic flow—especially to accommodate the massive war machines that needed to pass through.

As Zhang Yi walked, he noticed numerous fresh footprints on the road.

Clearly, he wasn't the only one who had decided to go out.

Among the forces from the twelve cities, there were bound to be people with special connections, much like Chen Jingguan.

Zhang Yi pulled out his satellite phone and checked the map that Baili Changqing had sent him.

Following the directions, he headed toward Zone A.

Blizzard City Government District – Supreme Commander's Office

Zhu Zheng sat in his office chair, facing Tu Yunlie, the Minister of Operations.

Tu Yunlie stood like a steel spear, his face buried beneath his high-collared coat.

Zhu Zheng had just finished listening to Tu Yunlie's report, and his expression turned serious.

"What did you say? Of the thirteen cities we notified, only twelve have arrived? What about Linhai City? Why didn't they show up?"

Tu Yunlie's deep voice rumbled from within his heavy coat.

"According to the railway records, when the special train stopped at Linhai City, no one showed up at the station."

Zhu Zheng's face darkened slightly.

Instinctively, he rubbed his left fingers with his right hand.

He wasn't angry—he had instead picked up on the peculiarity of the situation.

Linhai City was located northeast of Tianhai City, another coastal city.

However, it was far less prosperous and smaller in scale than Tianhai.

Based on Jiangnan District's intelligence, Linhai City's superhuman forces weren't particularly strong.

They had six moderately sized factions, none of which—individually or combined—had the power to oppose Jiangnan District's authority.

Yet, despite receiving a direct summon, not a single person from Linhai had come.

That was highly unusual.

Had they lost their minds and decided to defy Jiangnan District?

That was highly unlikely.

Zhu Zheng turned to Tu Yunlie and instructed seriously, "Send someone to investigate this carefully. Try to establish contact and see if we can reach them."

Tu Yunlie responded immediately, "We've already tried contacting them, but there's been no response. However, we can confirm that they received our message."

Zhu Zheng's expression grew even more grave.

“Could something have happened to them?”

Tu Yunlie said, “I’ll send a team to investigate. If they truly dared to defy our orders, we will eliminate them on the spot.”

Zhu Zheng studied Tu Yunlie for a moment before nodding slowly.

“Proceed as you see fit.”

Zhang Yi arrived in Zone A, following the map’s guidance.

Blizzard City was divided into sectors based on hierarchy.

Each zone was separated by thick, towering walls, reinforcing a strict class structure.

Here, status wasn’t determined by birth but by how much one contributed to the city.

Despite the high walls, Zhang Yi could tell that life behind them was far better than in Zone B.

It was obvious just from the lights.

In the post-apocalyptic world, energy was incredibly valuable.

Zone B had adequate lighting, but only for basic living needs.

Zone A, on the other hand, was a spectacle—vibrant, multicolored lights spilling over the walls like a neon rainbow.

Zhang Yi could guess that life behind those walls was reminiscent of a pre-apocalyptic metropolis.

Not only did they have quality living conditions, but there were also numerous entertainment options.

However, there were significantly more armed guards stationed at the entrance to Zone A.

As soon as they saw Zhang Yi, they immediately blocked his path with stern expressions.

“Identification, please.”

Zhang Yi opened his device and showed them the temporary pass sent by Baili Changqing.

After verifying it, the guards immediately changed their demeanor, stepping aside and greeting him with respect.

As security personnel, they had no right to live in Zone A.

Anyone who did was automatically someone they envied.

Zhang Yi stepped through the gates.

The moment he entered, his vision opened up to a dazzling scene.

Towering buildings lined the streets, illuminated by flashing neon lights.

For a moment, he felt as though he had stepped back in time, returning to the bustling city life of the past.

Though the cold weather meant fewer people were out, there were still pedestrians strolling the streets.

Shops lined the roads, their brightly lit signs inviting customers inside.

Zhang Yi recalled Bian Junwu mentioning that Blizzard City had streets that still mirrored pre-apocalypse prosperity.

Now, he believed it.

But such luxury was only for the privileged few.

Following the map, Zhang Yi arrived at the entrance of Password Bar.

The place stood out immediately.

Dozens of heavily modified snow vehicles were parked outside, similar to the ones used by Bian Junwu's team.

The people entering and leaving the bar all had a tough, battle-hardened aura.

"If they're not high-ranking security forces, then they must be part of the investigation teams. Looks like this is a veterans' club."

It made sense that Baili Changqing would frequent a place like this.

After all, he had a military background.

As Zhang Yi approached the entrance, two black-clad security guards blocked his path.

"Are you a member?" one of them asked.

Password Bar operated on a membership system.

Most patrons were regulars, and since Zhang Yi was an unfamiliar face, they stopped him for questioning.

Zhang Yi smiled. "Hold on a moment."

He pulled out his phone and dialed Baili Changqing.

On the other end, Baili Changqing simply said, "Pass the phone to them."

Zhang Yi handed his phone to the guards.

After a brief exchange, their expressions instantly changed to one of respect.

To them, the leader of the Black Robe Investigation Team was the pinnacle of their profession.

"Apologies, sir. We didn't know you were a guest of honor. Please, go right in!"

The guards stepped aside, allowing Zhang Yi to pass.

This interaction made one thing clear—Baili Changqing's status in Blizzard City was quite high.

No wonder he had been so eager to become a captain.

The perks were abundant, and his rank had elevated his social standing significantly.

Zhang Yi stepped inside the bar.

A female server in a deep red uniform immediately approached him.

“Are you Mr. Zhang Yi?” she asked politely. “Captain Baili sent me to escort you.”

Zhang Yi responded casually, “That’s me.”

The server smiled and turned to lead the way.

“Please, follow me.”