

Ice Age 571

Chapter 571: Deng Shentong

As soon as Zhang Yi stepped into the bar, he was immediately struck by the chaotic and lively atmosphere.

The scent of alcohol filled the air, and the hearty laughter of men echoed clearly.

However, the waitress in a red dress led Zhang Yi past the crowd to an elevator.

Seeing the confusion in Zhang Yi's eyes, the woman smiled and explained, "The first floor is for regular customers, while the upper floors are reserved for VIPs."

"After all, those with status and power wouldn't be drinking in a noisy public space like ordinary people, would they?"

Zhang Yi chuckled, "The class divide is really strict, huh?"

The woman giggled behind her hand.

"Of course! No matter the time or place, social stratification is inevitable."

A strange glint flickered in her eyes.

With her experience of dealing with countless people, she could tell that Zhang Yi was no ordinary person.

Although he lacked the polished air of an aristocrat, his calm and composed demeanor was entirely natural—definitely not an act.

He must be someone with a remarkable past.

As a waitress here, she wouldn't miss a chance to curry favor with a potential big shot.

She longed for the day she could climb up the social ladder and earn a place in Zone A.

"You seem unfamiliar. You must have just arrived from the outside, right?"

She asked with a smile.

Zhang Yi's lips curled slightly, but he only gave a faint smile without answering.

Trying to dig for information on him?

Did she think he was that naïve?

Zhang Yi was extremely cautious when it came to his personal details. He would never reveal anything easily.

Seeing that he ignored her, the woman's smile deepened, though a fleeting look of displeasure flashed through her eyes.

Before long, the elevator arrived at the 13th floor.

She gestured politely, "We're here! The person you're meeting is inside. Please, go ahead."

Zhang Yi nodded slightly in thanks before stepping out of the elevator.

He had expected to see Baili Changqing's familiar face.

But to his surprise, as he stepped through the doors, he found himself in an enormous, empty room.

At the center of the room sat a single chair.

Seated in that chair was a man with long silver hair and an unnervingly androgynous yet strikingly beautiful face.

He held a glass of red wine in one hand, lounging lazily in the extravagant chair, his gentlemanly smile directed at Zhang Yi.

"???"

Zhang Yi stared, his mind full of question marks.

He had clearly come here to meet Baili Changqing—so why was this complete stranger in front of him?

Or... was this person actually a woman?

Looking around, he confirmed that there was no one else in the room.

Feeling slightly awkward, he said, "Sorry, it looks like the waitress brought me to the wrong place. I'll be leaving now!"

But just as he turned to go, the man suddenly spoke.

His voice was unmistakably male.

"No, you're in the right place. I told her to bring you here."

Zhang Yi's eyes narrowed.

"Oh? But I don't believe we've met."

The man continued as if he hadn't heard, "Your name is Zhang Yi, isn't it? Anyone important enough for Baili Changqing to personally meet must have some skill."

He shrugged, adding with a smirk, "Of course, I don't particularly acknowledge him as a captain."

"But I have heard a little about you."

Zhang Yi's expression became serious.

This guy spoke as if Baili Changqing was beneath him.

And to outright bypass Baili Changqing and summon him here—what was his true intention?

Could he have figured out Zhang Yi's background?

"And you are?"

The silver-haired man glanced at Zhang Yi, his long, fox-like eyes glimmering with amusement.

"You should have heard of me before. My name is—Deng Shentong!"

Zhang Yi: "....."

Where did this guy get his confidence from?

The way he spoke, it was as if knowing his name was supposed to be common knowledge.

Feeling a little awkward, Zhang Yi forced a polite smile. "Ah... I've heard of you, of course."

But his obviously perfunctory tone made Deng Shentong frown.

His expression darkened. "Wait... You mean you really haven't heard my name before?"

Zhang Yi had no intention of wasting time with this man.

He had been dragged here without permission, interrupting his plan to meet Baili Changqing.

And now, this narcissist was acting like he was the center of the world?

What a freak.

"I'm not from Blizzard City. Is it really so strange that I don't know you?"

"I have a friend to meet, so if you'll excuse me—"

He turned to leave.

But the next second, a hand suddenly landed on his shoulder.

Zhang Yi's pupils contracted, and he reacted instinctively, swinging his arm in a knife-hand strike toward the offender.

However, his attack was easily blocked.

"Relax," the man chuckled. "I just wanted to get a good look at the kind of person Baili Changqing is meeting."

Zhang Yi turned around and saw—Deng Shentong.

But when he glanced back at the chair, he saw another Deng Shentong, still lounging elegantly, sipping his wine.

"Twins?"

Deng Shentong did not answer.

Instead, both figures spoke at the exact same time.

Their overlapping voices echoed through the air—until suddenly, the room was filled with ten... twenty identical versions of Deng Shentong!

Each one was a perfect copy, their voices flickering unpredictably.

Zhang Yi had no idea what kind of ability he was dealing with, but he immediately grew more cautious.

Deng Shentong grinned.

"I heard you're a spatial-type Superhuman."

"Why don't you show me your abilities? My team happens to be in need of someone like you."

"If your skills are good enough, I might consider making you a substitute member of the 'Celestial Squad'."

Zhang Yi's patience had reached its limit.

This guy had been looking down on him since the beginning—acting superior, making demands, and completely ignoring his opinion.

Zhang Yi didn't care how strong Deng Shentong was.

He was not the type to let others push him around.

His right eye glowed faintly as he prepared to create distance and counterattack.

If necessary, he wouldn't hesitate to unleash his Divine Power at this close range.

The air grew tense.

But just as the fight was about to break out—

Ding!

The elevator doors slid open.

A massive figure rushed in—it was Baili Changqing.

"Zhang Yi! What the hell are you doing here?"

"Come on, I've been waiting for you! Let's go drink!"

He laughed heartily and slung an arm around Zhang Yi's shoulders.

Deng Shentong's expression darkened slightly, clearly displeased.

He said lightly, "Baili Changqing, your friend interests me. I just wanted to have a chat with him. You don't mind, do you?"

Baili Changqing scratched his head with a grin.

"Hahaha, Captain Deng taking interest in my friend? That's quite an honor. However—"

His eyes narrowed slightly.

"Wouldn't it have been polite to inform me beforehand?"

Deng Shentong's smirk widened, his tone mocking.

"If Bian Junwu had said that, I might have cared. But you? You're not quite qualified to lecture me."

Baili Changqing's face darkened, his aura surging.

"Deng Shentong! Are you trying to cause trouble in Blizzard City?!"

Chapter 572: The Six Great Investigation Teams

Deng Shentong frowned, clearly displeased by Baili Changqing's attitude.

However, now that Baili Changqing had arrived, he couldn't press Zhang Yi any further.

Causing a scene here would only lead to trouble from those above him.

Besides, he wasn't particularly fixated on Zhang Yi—he simply found him to be a potentially useful Superhuman with some potential.

He figured Zhang Yi could be a reserve member of his Celestial Squad, maybe even help store some things for him.

But making a big deal over it?

Deng Shentong wasn't afraid, but he also had no interest in inviting unnecessary trouble.

So, with a dismissive wave of his hand, he said, "Forget it. You probably don't even realize what kind of opportunity you just missed. Our Celestial Squad is the strongest in the entire Jiangnan District!"

With that, he turned lazily on his heel.

The countless figures in the air vanished in an instant—along with Deng Shentong himself.

Zhang Yi pondered over Deng Shentong's words.

Bian Junwu had once mentioned that Blizzard City housed six investigation teams.

Clearly, Deng Shentong was the captain of one of them.

At the very least, Zhang Yi had now gotten a rough idea of his abilities.

Once Deng Shentong left, Baili Changqing finally exhaled in relief.

With a sheepish smile, he said, "Zhang Yi, sorry about that! You just got here, and you already ran into this mess."

Zhang Yi gave a faint smile and casually glanced around the room. "It's fine, not really a big deal. At least I got to meet a captain-level figure. Let's go."

Baili Changqing led him back to the elevator.

On the way down, he began explaining the identity of the man they had just encountered.

"That guy earlier—he's Deng Shentong, captain of the Celestial Squad, one of the six major investigation teams. He's incredibly strong, but his arrogance is off the charts."

"He comes from the prestigious Deng family in Jinling. With both exceptional talent and a powerful background, he's always looked down on others."

"That said, he's not exactly a bad person. Think of him as a privileged young master with overwhelming talent and an equally overwhelming ego."

Zhang Yi said indifferently, "Doesn't really matter to me."

From what he could tell, Deng Shentong had no particular hostility toward him.

However, that condescending attitude was definitely annoying.

"By the way," Zhang Yi continued, "Tell me more about the six investigation teams. I'd like to be prepared in case I run into them later."

Baili Changqing didn't hesitate. "That's no problem. Everyone in Blizzard City knows about us, anyway."

"The Six Great Investigation Teams were personally formed by Commander Zhu Zheng. They are: Celestial, Demon, Ironblood, Black Robe, Rose, and Reincarnation."

"Each team has its own distinct style, making them easy to recognize. Our Black Robe Squad wears all-black combat uniforms. The Celestial Squad wears silver armor—it's actually the Deng family's highest technological creation."

"Right now, four of the six teams are out on missions and not in Blizzard City."

"The Rose Squad is the most unique—because all of its members are women."

Zhang Yi nodded, keeping the information in mind.

Clearly, the Jiangnan District had its hands full.

Otherwise, they wouldn't have convened a regional meeting while still having four investigation teams deployed elsewhere.

In other words, they believed just two teams were enough to hold down the fort.

Deng Shentong

Zhang Yi recalled the elegant yet arrogant silver-haired man.

He muttered to himself, "How does he compare to Bian Junwu?"

Turning to Baili Changqing, he asked, "Who's stronger?"

Baili Changqing's expression turned serious.

"Like I said before, Deng Shentong is incredibly talented. And his power is heavily tied to the Deng Group, which is terrifyingly influential."

"The Deng Group has vast resources, spanning multiple high-tech industries—including biotechnology."

"His current level of strength is absolutely due to the full backing of his family."

"If we compare purely in terms of Superhuman abilities... Deng Shentong is actually stronger than Bian Junwu!"

"Unlike Bian, he has no severe side effects holding him back."

Zhang Yi's eyes narrowed.

He was well aware of the devastating power of Bian Junwu's Extinction ability.

And yet, Deng Shentong was supposedly even stronger?

That meant... this man's power was likely on par with Zhang Yi himself.

A dangerous individual, best not to provoke.

Baili Changqing added, "Of course, power alone doesn't determine everything. When it comes to actual combat experience, Bian Junwu could wipe the floor with him."

Zhang Yi nodded in agreement.

Having great power was one thing.

But knowing how to fully utilize it in battle was another.

It reminded him of the shuriken versus pebble theory—a skilled fighter with a pebble could be deadlier than an amateur with a shuriken.

Looking at Baili Changqing, Zhang Yi asked playfully, "So, do you know what his ability actually is?"

Baili Changqing shot him a glance. "Why do you want to know? I'm telling you now, even if you find out, you're better off not fighting him."

Zhang Yi quickly waved his hands. "I'm just curious. He completely messed with me earlier—I'd rather not get caught off guard in the future."

Baili Changqing chuckled.

"No need to worry! As captain of the Celestial Squad, Deng Shentong may be arrogant, but as long as you don't break the Jiangnan District's rules, he won't lay a hand on you."

"As for his ability... I honestly don't know. At this point, barely anyone in the district can make him fight seriously."

Baili Changqing shook his head, a trace of bitterness flashing in his eyes.

Even though he was the captain of the Black Robe Squad, that didn't mean he was on equal footing with the other captains.

He still had a long way to go before he could match Bian Junwu or Deng Shentong.

Zhang Yi's lips curved slightly.

Baili Changqing didn't know Deng Shentong's ability, but Zhang Yi had already figured out a part of it.

That multi-image technique wasn't cloning—it was merely illusion.

From the moment Deng Shentong first appeared seated in the chair, it had only been an illusion.

As a spatial-type Superhuman, Zhang Yi was particularly sensitive to distortions in space.

That was how he had realized it.

Deng Shentong had been hiding in the room the whole time, only revealing himself when he "teleported" behind Zhang Yi.

The whole "thousand clones" trick was just a visual deception.

Zhang Yi had let Deng Shentong touch his shoulder on purpose, just to keep his own abilities hidden.

That said, it was still an extremely powerful technique.

Used properly, it could allow silent assassinations.

However, against Zhang Yi, the stealth aspect wouldn't work.

Of course, if Deng Shentong was truly on Bian Junwu's level, he likely had other abilities.

If possible, Zhang Yi would rather avoid conflict with him.

Making an ally out of him would be even better.

But then he thought about Deng Shentong's pompous attitude...

And sighed.

Forget it. No way I'm wasting my time sucking up to some arrogant rich kid.

Author's Note

Chapter 573: Wu Di's Past

Baili Changqing led Zhang Yi to a private suite on the seventh floor.

From here, they could look down at the chaotic scene below—the wild revelry unfolding in the bar.

This was a place where people could indulge their deepest desires.

Burly men sat with bottles of alcohol in one hand and seductive women in the other, losing themselves in pleasure under the dim, hazy lights.

On the central stage, six scantily clad women danced under shifting blue lights, their movements enticing and sensual.

The atmosphere was decadent and intoxicating, a place where people surrendered to temptation.

Zhang Yi observed the scene and smirked. "Lively place."

Baili Changqing laughed. "What do you think? You like it here? Haha, you wouldn't find a place like this in Tianhai City so easily."

Zhang Yi cast him a lazy glance and said indifferently, "Trust me, if I wanted to, something like this wouldn't be hard to arrange."

Baili Changqing scratched his head helplessly. "Ah, right... I almost forgot. You're already the undisputed ruler of Tianhai City."

Zhang Yi leaned back onto the sofa, lazily crossing his legs.

Baili Changqing asked, "What do you want to drink?"

Zhang Yi shook his head. "No alcohol. Drinking clouds judgment. You can relax now that you're back in Blizzard City, but I came here for business."

Baili Changqing nodded. "Fair enough! So, what do you want to know? But let me say this upfront—there are some things I can tell you, and some things I can't."

Zhang Yi smiled meaningfully. "Don't worry, I'm not here to dig for secrets."

He locked eyes with Baili Changqing and said, "You know me. I have no interest in staying in Blizzard City. I just want to know—what exactly does this gathering require from us?"

Baili Changqing rubbed his hands together and sighed.

"This is actually related to Bian Junwu's death."

Hearing Bian Junwu's name, Zhang Yi's expression turned solemn.

When they had taken down Yuan Kongye, Bian Junwu had played a crucial role.

Baili Changqing continued, "This was the first time a captain-level figure was killed in action. Headquarters is deeply concerned."

"If they keep sending top-tier Superhumans on missions, more high-level casualties will be inevitable."

"That's why they're mobilizing regional forces—to preserve the strength of Blizzard City's elite fighters."

"And at the same time, this also helps avoid internal conflicts and allows for better management of the entire Jiangnan District."

Zhang Yi had already considered this possibility.

But what he really wanted to know was something else.

"Are they planning to enforce conscription?"

Zhang Yi was well aware that his strength was among the best in the entire Jiangnan District.

It was only a matter of time before his abilities became known.

And if one day headquarters forced him to join an investigation team, he wouldn't be happy about it.

Baili Changqing fell silent.

After thinking for a moment, he finally said, "I honestly don't know. But I can tell you this—recruiting powerful individuals has always been our priority."

"Blizzard City has a permanent population of over one million. Most of them aren't even from here originally."

"Every resident goes through a rigorous selection process. If they don't contribute enough, they're expelled."

"And when we find talented people outside, we bring them in."

"That's why, even someone as strong as Bian Junwu had to keep doing missions."

"He had a family to provide for. To maintain a high standard of living for them, he needed to keep earning points."

The Currency of Blizzard City: Points

Baili Changqing explained further.

"Money is useless here. Even jewels, gold, and silver are nothing more than scrap metal."

"The only real currency is points."

Zhang Yi took a sip of hot water, then asked slowly, "So, what you're saying is... this grand assembly might select certain people to join headquarters' investigation teams?"

Baili Changqing chuckled. "Hard to say!"

"But at the very least, for someone as outstanding as you? The higher-ups will definitely do everything in their power to keep you here."

Zhang Yi smirked at his teasing. "Well, if I do stay, you'll have a hard time explaining certain things."

In the official mission report about Yuan Kongye's death, Zhang Yi's contributions had been deliberately downplayed.

If he suddenly showed his true strength, Baili Changqing would have trouble justifying it to Zhu Zheng.

Sure enough, Baili Changqing's expression stiffened slightly.

He cleared his throat. "Don't worry. I already told the commander that you're strong, but your loyalty is questionable. If you joined the district, you could become an unstable factor."

"That's what Zhu Zheng fears the most. As long as you don't shine too brightly, he won't force you to stay."

Zhang Yi nodded, feeling slightly reassured. "That's good to hear."

A Visitor: Wu Di

Just then, the doorbell rang.

A waitress's voice came through the intercom.

"Mr. Baili, someone is here to see you. It's Wu Di from the Black Robe Squad."

Hearing this name, Zhang Yi frowned slightly.

Wu Di had always been hostile toward him, harboring a strange sense of animosity.

Zhang Yi had never liked him.

"Why is he here?"

Baili Changqing explained, "Our squad members come here often to drink. You know how it is—investigation teams like us are constantly on the front lines, dancing on the edge of death. When we get free time, we go all out to enjoy ourselves."

Zhang Yi remained indifferent. "I don't want to see him."

Baili Changqing smacked his forehead. "Ah, right. He really had it out for you back then!"

Then his expression turned serious. "But actually, I need to explain something to you."

"It's about Wu Di."

Zhang Yi leaned back on the sofa, tilting his head as he listened.

Baili Changqing's gaze became nostalgic as he slowly began to recount Wu Di's past.

Wu Di's Story

Wu Di wasn't originally from Blizzard City.

He was someone Bian Junwu had saved during a mission.

Back then, Wu Di was just an ordinary office worker, struggling to survive in the apocalypse.

On the brink of death, Bian Junwu rescued him—and that was also the moment when Wu Di unexpectedly awakened his Superhuman ability.

From that day on, Wu Di had followed Bian Junwu everywhere.

To Wu Di, Bian Junwu wasn't just his savior.

He was his mentor, the one who guided him in the world of Superhumans.

He was a father figure.

Baili Changqing sighed. "Wu Di doesn't hate you personally. He resents anyone who might replace Bian Junwu."

"Because of Bian Junwu's internal injuries, he could die at any time. And new team members only join when old ones die."

"So, when Bian Junwu started taking a liking to you—it meant he realized he didn't have much time left."

"Wu Di couldn't accept that. It became an obsession for him. Maybe in his mind, as long as no one new was brought in, Bian Junwu wouldn't die."

Chapter 574: The Challenge

Zhang Yi listened to Baili Changqing's explanation, feeling that the whole situation was utterly ridiculous.

So he had ended up shouldering a disaster for no reason.

"Heh."

He let out a faint chuckle, speechless but unwilling to stoop to the level of such a childish man.

“As long as he doesn’t come looking for trouble, that’s enough for me. How he sees me is his own problem.”

Baili Changqing shrugged, but he still wanted to clear up the misunderstanding between Zhang Yi and Wu Di.

“I think you two should talk more. Maybe you’ll realize he’s actually a decent guy—just a little too simple-minded sometimes!”

As he spoke, he signaled the waitress to bring Wu Di in.

The female server went ahead and opened the private room’s door.

Soon, Wu Di walked in.

He was dressed in casual black clothes, hands tucked into his back pockets, exuding a rebellious, ghostfire punk aura.

However, the once-dashing black hair he had was now a shade of gray-white—

a lingering aftereffect from the battle against Yuan Kongye.

Surprisingly, this change only made him look even more striking, with a mix of charm and dangerous allure.

When he saw Zhang Yi, there wasn't the slightest trace of surprise in his eyes. Instead, his gaze was sharp and intense as he strode directly toward him.

"Zhang Yi, I knew you'd come looking for Captain Baili!"

"I've been waiting for you for so long!"

At this point, both Zhang Yi and Baili Changqing felt something was off.

Wu Di had clearly come for Zhang Yi!

Baili Changqing quickly asked, "Wu, what are you trying to do? You should understand that the captain's death had little to do with Zhang Yi. If it weren't for him, we might all have died in Tianhai City!"

Zhang Yi's gaze turned slightly cold, his eyes never leaving Wu Di, in case this brat suddenly attacked.

Wu Di bared his teeth in a grin, his expression eerily sinister as he looked at Zhang Yi.

“Who said the captain’s death had nothing to do with him?”

“If he hadn’t persuaded the captain to use Ice Soul, the captain would have had at least a few more months to live. That time would have been enough for him to return home, to see his wife and children one last time, to spend some final moments with them.”

“And that happiness was taken away by him!”

Zhang Yi didn’t argue.

He admitted that when it came to this matter, the only person he felt he had wronged was Bian Junwu.

But as compensation, he had given Bian Junwu the majority of the credit for Tianhai City’s victory, ensuring his family would live the rest of their lives in comfort and security.

Exchanging a few months of Bian Junwu’s life for military merits that could protect his family for decades—it was a fair deal, even if he hadn’t asked Bian Junwu for his opinion.

But as for Wu Di, Baili Changqing, and the others, Zhang Yi felt no guilt at all.

Because they were all beneficiaries of the victory, just like him.

“If you’re just here to pick a fight, I’m not interested.”

Zhang Yi stood up from the couch, turning to leave and head back to his apartment for some rest.

But just as he took a step, Wu Di suddenly stretched out his arm, blocking Zhang Yi’s path.

“Hold on, I finally get to see you today—I’m not letting you off so easily!”

Zhang Yi glanced at the arm blocking his way, a glint of killing intent slowly emerging in his eyes.

“You want to fight me?”

Baili Changqing was also getting anxious. Even he wasn’t sure how strong Zhang Yi was now.

Wu Di was a genius, but he wasn’t on Zhang Yi’s level.

“Wu Di, don’t be reckless! Captain Bian chose to use Ice Soul himself. You can’t blame Zhang Yi for that.”

Wu Di grinned, but his gaze remained ice-cold as he stared at Zhang Yi.

“I know. But just thinking about how the boss died in Tianhai City makes me unwilling to accept it!”

“Zhang Yi, before he died, the boss kept saying he admired your abilities and wanted to recruit you to join us.”

“That’s why I’ve always wanted to fight you—to see just how strong you really are.”

“I never had the chance before, but now we’re both free. So let’s have a match!”

Zhang Yi couldn’t help but press his fingers against his forehead.

“You already know that Bian Junwu’s death wasn’t my fault, so why are you still trying to fight me?”

Wu Di grinned. “I just want to prove that I’m stronger than you—that I was more worthy of the boss’s expectations!”

Cold sweat started forming on Baili Changqing’s forehead.

“Wu Di, don’t be reckless! You’re no match for him right now.”

Wu Di just chuckled. “We won’t know until we fight!”

He turned to Zhang Yi.

“I already figured out your abilities back in Tianhai City. And you know mine. So this fight will be completely fair.”

Besides, he was sure of one thing—

Zhang Yi wouldn’t reveal his full power in Blizzard City.

At most, he would use the strength he had before absorbing Yuan Kongye’s abilities.

“So fight me with the power you had back then!”

Zhang Yi raised an eyebrow. “What’s the point of such a fight? I can’t think of any reason to accept.”

Zhang Yi only fought when it was necessary for survival.

He wasn't someone who enjoyed meaningless battles.

Fighting Wu Di in Blizzard City just because of his obsession? That was definitely not Zhang Yi's style.

"No reason."

Wu Di's smile widened as he stared at Zhang Yi.

"Except this is Blizzard City—my turf. If you don't accept my challenge, I'll just use my local advantage to make things difficult for you!"

His tone carried an unmistakable hint of threat.

As an investigator, creating trouble for Zhang Yi would be all too easy.

He was clearly banking on the fact that Zhang Yi wouldn't want to stir up trouble in Blizzard City.

Sure enough, Zhang Yi's expression darkened, his gaze turning sharp.

"You're playing with fire."

Baili Changqing also tried to stop him. "Wu, enough is enough!"

But Wu Di shook his head firmly.

"Captain Baili, you can only command me during missions. This is something I have to do. If I don't, I'll never be able to let it go. So please, stay out of this today!"

He bared his teeth in a grin, eyes locked onto Zhang Yi's.

"So? Do you accept my challenge or not?"

Zhang Yi narrowed his eyes. He could see the madness and burning determination in Wu Di's gaze.

This guy was a lunatic.

Zhang Yi understood that if he didn't accept this fight today, Wu Di might go to even greater extremes.

So, Zhang Yi's lips curled up slightly.

"Fine. If you want to play, I'll fight you."

Then, he held up a finger.

"But you don't get to call all the shots. I get to set a condition too. At the very least, we need to make this fight worthwhile."

It had been a while since he'd met such an oblivious fool.

But if he had to fight, he wasn't going to do it for free. He was definitely going to squeeze some benefits out of Wu Di.

Chapter 575: The Wager

Facing Wu Di's aggressive attitude, Zhang Yi couldn't help but feel a surge of irritation.

He didn't like fighting meaningless battles, but teaching this clueless fool a lesson? That wasn't entirely out of the question.

After all, he wasn't someone who just endured everything in silence.

But if he was going to fight, he wasn't going to do it for free.

Hearing Zhang Yi agree to the fight, Wu Di's eyes lit up with excitement.

"You agreed? Hahaha, great! As for the wager, name it—what do you want?"

Zhang Yi thought for a moment, then pointed at Wu Di.

"I'm only interested in weapons and armor. Jiangnan District is highly advanced in technology, so I'm sure you have some impressive gear."

In truth, Zhang Yi had a deeper plan in mind.

He had come here with Lu Keran.

As long as he got his hands on a top-tier piece of equipment, Lu Keran would have a chance to reverse-engineer it.

So even though Zhang Yi wasn't a weapons expert himself, he still made this request.

Wu Di frowned. "You want a weapon? Hmm, not impossible. But for superhumans like us, external weapons aren't all that important."

Baili Changqing sighed and rubbed his forehead in frustration.

Wu Di had no concept of Blizzard City's weapon policies.

Many of their weapons were highly classified.

Even though they used them freely in their missions, these weapons were never meant to fall into the hands of outsiders—

things like Origin Bullets or the black combat suits they wore.

With concern, Baili Changqing stepped forward to warn them.

"You two better not get carried away. A friendly spar is fine, but if things get serious, I won't sit by and watch!"

"As for the wager—Zhang Yi, do you have a preferred weapon type? Forget about firearms, but I can get you a melee weapon."

Zhang Yi was speechless. "A melee weapon?"

He was best with guns. Melee weapons were more for self-defense, and he rarely used them.

Even the Loong Roar Sword made of Adamantium, which was in his possession, was mostly used by Liang Yue during battles.

Right now, it was still with Liang Yue.

Seeing Zhang Yi's hesitation, Baili Changqing quickly smiled and reassured him.

"Don't worry, we're not giving you some scrap metal. The Black Robe Squad's armory has plenty of high-quality weapons. You've heard of Adamantium weapons, haven't you?"

"Adamantium?"

Zhang Yi was very familiar with the material.

Liang Yue's Loong Roar Sword was made from it.

But according to Lu Keran, this material was extremely rare and nearly impossible for ordinary people to obtain.

However, for Jiangnan District's Investigation Team, it was clearly much more accessible.

Zhang Yi's eyes flashed with interest. He really needed a weapon of his own.

"I prefer using blades."

Baili Changqing immediately pulled up a floating transparent screen.

The bluish display projected images of various weapons.

With a swipe of his hand, different weapon models appeared before Zhang Yi.

"Our standard-issue weapons are all made of Adamantium. These are exclusive to the Investigation Team. You can pick whichever one you like—no need to treat it as a wager, I'll just give it to you."

Baili Changqing grinned as he spoke.

For most superhumans, weapons weren't that important—

unless they were Enhancement-type superhumans who specialized in weapon-based combat.

In the Black Robe Squad, only Baili Changqing himself placed much emphasis on equipment.

Of course, the reason he was offering a free weapon wasn't because Adamantium weapons were common.

It was because he knew that with Wu Di's current strength, he had no chance of winning against Zhang Yi.

Rather than letting things turn sour between them, he figured he might as well do Zhang Yi a favor.

Looking at the collection of Adamantium weapons, Zhang Yi was genuinely shocked.

After all, Loong Roar Sword had once belonged to a high-ranking official's wife in Shengjing and was specially granted to Liang Yue.

That proved just how rare these weapons were.

But here, in the Investigation Team—one of the top combat squads of Jiangnan District—Adamantium weapons were everywhere.

Wu Di frowned slightly.

Technically, these weapons weren't meant for anyone outside the Investigation Team.

However, Adamantium's formula wasn't a national secret. Several top-tier nations had mastered the refining process.

So as the captain of the Black Robe Squad, Baili Changqing giving Zhang Yi a weapon wasn't a huge deal.

It was one of the privileges of his position.

Zhang Yi gave a light chuckle. He wasn't someone who liked accepting favors for free.

“No need. Since we agreed on a bet, I'll earn it with my own strength.”

He walked up and carefully examined the array of weapons.

Unlike traditional melee weapons, these had a distinct cyberpunk metal aesthetic—

sleek, futuristic, and highly advanced.

After browsing for a moment, Zhang Yi found a long blade.

It was a single-edged sword, about a meter long—shorter than Liang Yue's Loong Roar Sword.

The back of the blade was slightly thick, resembling a Tang Dao, but with a futuristic design.

Zhang Yi thought carefully.

He wasn't a superhuman who relied purely on weapons, and his raw power was weaker than Enhancement-type and Beast-type superhumans.

So, a weapon suited for close-quarters combat would be a better choice for him.

Simply put, this sword was ideal for defensive maneuvers—

because unless absolutely necessary, Zhang Yi avoided melee combat and preferred to keep his distance.

Finally, he pointed at the sword. "I'll take this one."

Baili Changqing confirmed the selection, then closed the display with a smile.

Still, he cautioned them.

"This is just a spar. Don't go too far. If necessary, I'll step in to stop it."

Wu Di grinned. "Don't worry, Captain! I know my limits. I just need to put him in his place, not kill him."

For him, this fight wasn't about personal hatred.

It was about his obsession—

and a purpose he couldn't reveal.

Zhang Yi's lips curled slightly. "Same here. Now, where are we fighting?"

Baili Changqing saw that the duel was inevitable, so he decided to at least ensure it happened under the right conditions.

“There’s a training arena in Blizzard City specifically for combat practice. It’s the only place where fights are legally allowed. Let’s go there.”

Zhang Yi glanced at Wu Di and nodded.

“Alright. Let’s go.”

Wu Di grinned, his eyes burning with battle intent.

Chapter 576: The Training Arena

Wu Di was determined to fight Zhang Yi to free himself from his lingering obsession.

Baili Changqing had no choice but to act as the mediator and referee.

So, he led them out of Cipher Bar and toward the Training Arena, a special facility within the district designed for soldiers.

This place was located within the Operations Command Center and remained brightly lit even at night, with elite soldiers standing guard.

Baili Changqing guided Zhang Yi inside without any obstacles.

Along the way, Zhang Yi carefully observed his surroundings.

This place felt almost futuristic, as if it was ahead of its time.

Every building was made of a dark silver, metallic-like material, seemingly even more advanced than the materials used in his Shelter—

its defensive capabilities were clearly on another level.

Even the first floor alone was over ten meters high, making anyone who stood there feel small and insignificant.

Suddenly, an idea crossed Zhang Yi's mind, and he turned to Baili Changqing with a smile.

"Can I invite my friends over?"

Baili Changqing looked at him in surprise.

“What? You don’t trust us?”

Zhang Yi shook his head.

“Not at all. But if I happen to get injured, I’d prefer to have my personal doctor treat me.”

Baili Changqing chuckled.

“Don’t worry, we have specialized doctors here. Besides...”

He glanced at Wu Di but didn’t finish his sentence.

With Zhang Yi’s strength, could he even get injured?

Zhang Yi smirked knowingly.

“I only trust my own doctor.”

After thinking for a moment, Baili Changqing understood Zhang Yi’s reasoning.

Although the Operations Command Center was a restricted area, the Training Arena wasn't part of its core zone—

so it wasn't a problem to let others come and watch.

"Alright! You can call your friends over. I'll issue them entry permits."

Zhang Yi nodded and contacted Liang Yue and the others, telling them to come over.

But in reality, his most important goal was to bring Lu Keran here.

He wanted her to use her Divine Machinery Control ability to analyze the materials used in this place.

If she could figure out how to replicate them, it would be a huge advantage for strengthening his Shelter in the future.

Zones A and B were considered high-end areas in Blizzard City and were close to the Operations Command Center.

So, in no time, Lu Keran and the others arrived.

As soon as they stepped in, their eyes were filled with awe, utterly amazed by the grand architecture.

The intense military atmosphere here was overwhelming—

every soldier exuded a chilling presence.

After all, even the guard soldiers stationed here belonged to the elite Yan Yun Forces of Blizzard City!

When Lu Keran and the others arrived, they immediately approached Zhang Yi, curious about why he had called them.

Zhang Yi briefly explained the duel with Wu Di.

Upon hearing this, everyone exchanged strange glances.

Wu Di wants to duel Zhang Yi?

Wasn't that a bit too ambitious?

Zhang Yi, however, spoke in a low voice.

“That guy isn’t stupid—he’s actually quite smart! He knows I won’t use my full strength here in Blizzard City. Otherwise, do you think he’d dare challenge me anywhere else?”

Lu Keran frowned in disgust.

“That’s so despicable!”

Uncle You was also puzzled.

“What’s the point of this? Even if he wins, it’s meaningless if you’re not fighting seriously.”

Zhang Yi remained calm.

“He just wants to prove that he’s stronger than I was during the Battle of Tianhai City. Some people are like that—

they need a personal victory to find peace of mind. This is his obsession.”

“But... there could be another reason behind it.”

Lowering his gaze, Zhang Yi murmured in a deep voice.

“In any case, I have to win this fight—without exposing my true strength.”

This would be slightly challenging, but not by much.

Zhang Yi already had thorough knowledge of Wu Di’s abilities.

However, the same could be said in reverse—aside from his new powers, Wu Di had also figured out most of Zhang Yi’s techniques.

Zhang Yi looked up at Lu Keran.

“Keran, since you’re inside the Operations Command Center, take this chance to study the materials used here. You get what I mean, right?”

Lu Keran’s eyes widened in surprise.

She had thought she was just here to watch a fight—she hadn't expected to be assigned a mission!

But soon, she grinned excitedly.

"Got it! I'll get it done!"

This was an exciting challenge for her, and she loved it!

Ever since she gained her superhuman ability, her favorite thing to do was analyze new materials and create new machines and weapons.

—

While they were talking, Baili Changqing pulled Wu Di aside.

Wu Di, now calm and composed, was putting on a tight black combat suit and wrapping black bandages around his wrists.

Baili Changqing frowned in concern.

“Wu, Zhang Yi is way stronger than before. He even withstood Yuan Kongye’s attacks. Do you really think you can beat him?”

Wu Di’s eyes gleamed sharply, and the arrogance from before had faded.

“I know. But, Captain, I studied his fighting style in that battle.”

His eyes burned with determination.

“His strength lies in defense, not offense. If Yuan Kongye had more combat experience, Zhang Yi wouldn’t have defeated him so easily.”

“When Boss Bian was alive, he always told me that power alone doesn’t decide everything—the real key is up here.”

Wu Di tapped his temple with his finger.

“I’ve already figured out a way to beat him.”

A smug smile crept onto Wu Di’s lips.

“This time, I have to win—even if it’s just once! Otherwise, I’ll never let it go!”

What he longed for most was Bian Junwu’s approval.

Even though Bian Junwu was dead, if he could defeat Zhang Yi, who had been Bian Junwu’s favorite, he would finally feel at peace.

More importantly, he knew Zhang Yi wouldn’t go all out here.

Winning—no matter how—was all that mattered.

Timing, geography, and opportunity.

A true warrior knew how to use the battlefield to his advantage.

Baili Changqing sighed helplessly.

“Let’s hope you’re right.”

Wu Di’s reasoning made sense.

Fighting someone like Zhang Yi, whose defense was nearly unbreakable, wasn't too dangerous—

as long as he didn't stupidly try to outlast him.

Of course, that was assuming Zhang Yi didn't use his terrifying Spatial Slash ability.

Baili Changqing turned and walked toward Zhang Yi.

He needed to have a word with him before the fight.

Soon, Baili Changqing stood beside Zhang Yi, smiling.

“Come on, let's get you changed.”

“Wait, I need to change clothes for a duel?” Zhang Yi asked, amused.

“Of course!”

Baili Changqing laughed.

“In the Training Arena, all fights are done in combat uniforms—they offer better protection against injuries.”

Just as he finished speaking, Wu Di stepped out of the locker room, now dressed in his tight black combat gear.

Zhang Yi nodded.

“Alright. Let’s go.”

Chapter 577: The Spatial-type Superhuman of Blizzard City

Zhang Yi, accompanied by Baili Changqing, arrived at the changing room.

Lining the wall were a series of lockers. Baili walked over, used his access privileges to retrieve a training suit, and handed it to Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi accepted the suit and stepped into one of the stalls.

He carefully inspected the outfit, checking for any hidden devices.

The suit felt unique—heavier than regular compression gear and significantly thicker than typical fabric.

Clearly, it was made from some kind of high-tech, specialized material.

“If I put this on, I bet it’ll start recording my personal data too.”

Zhang Yi’s eyes glinted sharply.

“Good thing I’m not an enhancement-type Superhuman. It’s no big deal if they collect some physical data. As for my Superhuman Ability data—I’ll just hold back.”

His basic abilities were already on record with the Jiangnan District.

What no one knew was the new combat style he’d awakened after absorbing Yuan Kongye’s source energy.

That power was his trump card—no way was he showing it here.

Zhang Yi took off his jacket and put on the tight-fitting suit.

Interestingly, there were no zippers or fasteners. Once it was on, all he had to do was press a button on the right wrist, and the suit sealed itself snugly to his body.

He didn't feel any discomfort at all.

In fact, as he moved around a little, he noticed something strange—his body felt more agile, and he seemed physically stronger.

“This thing actually boosts my stats?”

Zhang Yi said in surprise.

He stepped out of the stall, where Baili Changqing was waiting.

Zhang Yi voiced his question, and Baili chuckled.

“The training suit is made from the same material as the combat suits we use in the investigation team. We wear them during missions too. They enhance our overall physical capabilities.”

“In fact, no exaggeration—if a regular person put one on, they'd have the base-level physique of an Alpha-grade enhancement-type Superhuman.”

Zhang Yi looked down at the training suit on his body, stunned. “You're telling me this thing is that amazing?”

Noticing the interest in Zhang Yi's eyes, Baili smirked and said, "These training suits are rare. In Blizzard City, only the Yan Yun Forces and the six major investigation teams get to use them."

"If you like it, consider joining our Black Robe Squad."

Zhang Yi curled his lip. "Yeah, I'll pass."

Baili shrugged, already knowing Zhang Yi wasn't the type who liked being tied down.

"Well then, let's head to the training arena!"

Zhang Yi replied, "No rush. I need to hand off my satellite phone for safekeeping."

The satellite phone held personal secrets. Baili assumed Zhang Yi didn't trust the storage system here and could only smile.

"Alright, you're seriously cautious, huh?"

Zhang Yi grinned. "Better safe than sorry. It's the little details that decide victory or defeat."

His words had a double meaning, but Baili didn't pick up on it.

He walked out with Zhang Yi.

Meanwhile, Wu Di was already waiting at the center of the training arena, arms crossed, eyes closed, mentally prepping himself to be in peak condition.

Zhang Yi walked over to Lu Keran and the others and handed her the satellite phone.

“Keran, hold onto this for me.”

With his back to Baili, Zhang Yi shot her a look.

Lu Keran understood instantly and reached out to touch the training suit on his arm.

Zhang Yi chatted casually for a bit, deliberately buying some time.

Once Lu Keran had finished analyzing the suit's material composition, Zhang Yi turned around and headed for the arena.

“Zhang Yi, keep it light, alright? Just a friendly match!”

Baili called out, reminding him.

He was genuinely worried Zhang Yi might go too far—if he used Divine Power, he could probably one-shot Wu Di.

Even someone as physically strong as Baili himself couldn’t guarantee surviving a direct hit.

And Wu Di? Those skinny arms and legs wouldn’t stand a chance.

Zhang Yi waved a hand without looking back, signaling Baili not to worry.

He quickly made his way through the passage and into the training arena.

Baili, Lu Keran, Zhou Ke’er, and the others watched from the second floor.

The arena itself was about the size of half a soccer field, shaped like a stadium or an old Roman colosseum.

Surrounding it were multi-level structures that offered a clear view of the fight below.

Zhang Yi stood dozens of meters from Wu Di, scanning the space around them with a frown.

“This place feels a bit cramped. Not much room to maneuver.”

Battles between high-level Superhumans often caused massive destruction, and this little arena just wouldn’t cut it.

Hands in his pockets, Wu Di replied coolly, “Oh, you don’t have to worry about that.”

Before Zhang Yi could respond, his surroundings suddenly seemed to stretch out.

Wu Di, who had been only dozens of meters away, now appeared several hundred meters off.

The half-field-sized arena had somehow expanded into an area spanning several square kilometers!

Zhang Yi was briefly stunned, then realization dawned.

“A spatial ability?”

This was his first time encountering another spatial-type Superhuman.

Not only did the space expand for Zhang Yi and Wu Di—

Lu Keran, Zhou Ke'er, and the others watching from the second floor also saw the arena grow larger.

But it wasn't so much that the arena expanded—it was more like everything around them had shrunk.

Baili explained to them, “That's the administrator's ability. It's called Training Arena. A powerful spatial-type ability designed specifically for this purpose.”

In Zhang Yi and Wu Di's ears, a cold, mechanical voice echoed—

“Training match, begin!”

While the match was starting, no one noticed that aside from Zhou Ke'er and the rest, there were a few other spectators present.

This arena required high-level clearance. Only investigation team members and Yan Yun officers were authorized to use it.

And battles at this level didn't happen often, even in Blizzard City.

So the moment the arena was activated, it naturally attracted quite a crowd.

One of them was Deng Shentong, captain of the Celestial Squad.

He stood in a third-floor room, watching the two fighters with great interest.

He was more than a little curious about Zhang Yi.

"If he really manages to beat Wu Di... giving him a shot as a backup in the Celestial Squad might not be a bad idea."

Leaning on the railing, Deng Shentong narrowed his eyes and smiled.

Behind him stood two members of the Celestial Squad—

One was a short-haired, burly man with a scruffy beard.

The other, a pale, effeminate man dressed in white.

Chapter 578: Battle Against Wu Di

Up on the higher levels, Deng Shentong watched the match. Several members of the Black Robe Squad had also arrived one after another.

A fight this exciting was a rare treat—they weren't going to miss it.

But among all the spectators, they weren't the ones with the highest status.

Because today, Commander Zhu Zheng of the Jiangnan District was also present in the training arena.

He was seated in a private box on the fifth floor.

The glass wall in front of him had transformed into a massive screen, split into a dozen sections, providing views of the fight from various angles.

On the couch to his right sat the Minister of Operations, Tu Yunlie.

To his left stood his secretary, Lan Xincheng, and to his right, his personal guard, Sun Luxuan.

It was safe to say that at least half of the top brass still present in Blizzard City had shown up.

For a simple duel to attract this kind of attention—it was clearly anything but ordinary.

The battle began!

Zhang Yi and Wu Di were separated by several hundred meters, but since both were long-range fighters, the distance didn't pose much of a problem.

Zhang Yi drew both White Owls and immediately pulled the triggers, aiming straight at Wu Di.

[Precision Shot]!

The bullets locked onto Wu Di automatically.

However, Zhang Yi wasn't using his demon-breaking Sacred Silver bullets this time, but custom-made armor-piercing rounds.

Using Sacred Silver in Blizzard City would raise too many eyebrows—people might think he was trying to replicate Origin Bullets.

Zhang Yi wasn't about to make such a rookie mistake.

Even so, when enhanced with his Superhuman Energy, those armor-piercing bullets were still devastating.

But just as Zhang Yi raised his guns, hundreds of white orbs materialized around Wu Di, enveloping him completely.

The moment the bullets came near those orbs, they melted in mid-air!

Seeing this, Deng Shentong nodded.

"This kid's got some serious talent."

Wu Di's natural ability was extremely impressive. Even Bian Junwu held high hopes for his floating cannons—mental energy converted into weaponized orbs.

And after the battle in Tianhai City, his power had clearly leveled up again.

Zhang Yi, however, remained unfazed.

Wu Di knew his capabilities and was obviously guarding against his marksmanship. It would've been weird if he wasn't.

But so what?

You've got a lot of mental energy? Fine. I've got a lot of bullets.

Zhang Yi kept firing while steadily shifting his position, all shots aimed at the same spot—trying to punch through the floating cannon's defensive field with sheer volume.

“It's useless. I've already analyzed your combat style. You think this kind of attack can hurt me? Not a chance.”

Wu Di extended his right hand, and a dozen orbs fused into a massive floating cannon that blasted straight at Zhang Yi.

In an instant, a pillar of white light tore through space toward him.

But just before it hit, the beam vanished mid-air.

From the moment the fight began, Zhang Yi had already opened his Dimensional Gate.

Wu Di knew Zhang Yi's abilities, and Zhang Yi understood Wu Di's just as well.

At this level, it was all about hidden cards and counterplays.

"A spatial-type ability that can absorb attacks, huh?"

Deng Shentong rubbed his chin curiously.

Then he grinned. "But it's not unlimited, I'm sure. Wonder if he could handle one of my attacks?"

Behind him, the bearded, burly man chuckled.

"Spatial types rarely have strong offensive skills. Still, I wouldn't mind sparring with him myself."

The pale, effeminate man beside him gave a faint smile.

"Someone like you, a melee spatial-type, is a rarity. Wouldn't fighting him be kind of... bullying?"

The burly guy burst into laughter. “Yeah, fair enough!”

Sparring with someone like Zhang Yi, who was from outside Blizzard City, really would be overkill.

After all, he was the vice-captain of the Celestial Squad—Divine Fist Liao Honglei.

Deng Shentong leaned lazily on his hand, his delicate features almost feminine.

“No big deal. All I care about is his item storage ability. That alone would be super useful for our missions.”

“But if he can manage to surprise me with his spatial power... that’d be even better.”

His gaze was locked on Zhang Yi in the arena, a flicker of anticipation in his eyes.

The first wave of probing attacks had left both sides unscathed.

Still, the pressure didn’t let up—both were pushing forward, waiting for a crack to appear in the other’s defense.

Zhang Yi emptied both guns and swiftly hit a button. The empty clips dropped out—

Two fresh magazines appeared out of thin air, and he reloaded them one-handed.

Bang bang bang bang bang!!!

He kept firing nonstop.

Even Superhumans couldn't ignore a barrage like this.

But Wu Di's orb shield was truly impressive—not a single bullet made it close.

To Zhang Yi, though, that didn't matter.

As long as he could slowly deplete Wu Di's Superhuman Energy, even bit by bit, it was worth it.

Wu Di stared intently at Zhang Yi, not daring to let his guard down.

He knew Zhang Yi specialized in defense—offensively, he wasn't too dangerous.

But Divine Power? That move could seriously injure him if it landed directly.

Still, that technique wasn't flawless.

After the last fight, Wu Di had done his homework.

He found that Divine Power had an obvious wind-up and space distortion beforehand—it wasn't instant.

And it drained a massive amount of Superhuman Energy.

After using it, Zhang Yi entered a brief "energy void" where he couldn't use the move again right away.

As long as Wu Di stayed alert and dodged the first strike, he could use that opening to launch a counterattack!

"Let's see how you handle this. I made it just for you."

Wu Di smirked and spread his arms.

Tiny orbs, each the size of a droplet, began to appear around him—thousands of them!

These were miniature floating cannons. Not as powerful as the larger orbs, but they made up for it in sheer quantity.

Then, with a sweep of his arms, thousands of light dots tore through space, heading straight for Zhang Yi!

“Dimensional Gate!”

Zhang Yi remained calm and raised the gate in front of him.

But instead of slamming into it, the light dots scattered in mid-air, fanning out in all directions.

“He’s going for an AOE?”

Zhang Yi instantly grasped Wu Di’s intent.

Wu Di smirked.

“Captain Bian once said your ability counters my floating cannons. But with this kind of omnidirectional, no-dead-angle attack... how will you defend yourself?”

The countless light points floated in mid-air, completely surrounding Zhang Yi’s position.

In Zhang Yi’s sharp gaze, they grew brighter, burning hotter—

And then came a series of thunderous explosions!

Chapter 579: Floating Cannons

Boom!!!

Thousands of micro floating cannons detonated around Zhang Yi, flooding the space with dazzling light and intense energy. The sheer brightness caused massive light pollution in the arena.

Liang Yue couldn’t help but comment, “He really came prepared. With that kind of attack, Zhang Yi’s Dimensional Gate is going to struggle to hold up defensively.”

Uncle You crossed his arms and added, “Zhang Yi’s physical defense isn’t that strong to begin with, so even micro floating cannon blasts could still hurt him.”

But... would that be enough to defeat Zhang Yi?

At least for people like Uncle You, they weren't too worried.

Because when it came to large-scale AOE attacks, Zhang Yi still had his own ways of coping.

Sure enough, in the next second, Zhang Yi's figure reappeared in the distance.

Then he raised his guns and opened fire on Wu Di again!

He might not have been able to absorb the AOE with Dimensional Gate, but escaping its range was another matter entirely.

“Oh? Spatial jump? Now that’s an interesting survival skill.”

Deng Shentong’s eyes lit up slightly.

But Liao Honglei remained unimpressed.

“So he can run. That’s useful in the apocalypse, sure, but if that’s all he’s got, he’s not qualified to be an official investigation team member.”

The investigation teams needed real combatants.

Pure defense or escape skills wouldn't cut it—they needed people who could hit back.

In another room, Zhu Zheng and the others were closely observing the fight on the screen.

Zhu Zheng kept his gaze on Zhang Yi's feed.

Seeing how Zhang Yi's spatial powers leaned toward defense, Zhu Zheng immediately caught on to his ability profile.

"Looks like his ability links to a separate spatial dimension. Whether absorbing attacks or teleporting, it all runs through that space as a medium."

"But... how does he plan to go on the offensive?"

Most Superhumans only possessed a single core ability, which could evolve into multiple skills—but they all stemmed from the same root.

Zhang Yi's ability didn't seem naturally suited for attack. No matter how far it developed, it still seemed best for storage and defense.

So how would he beat someone like Wu Di, whose offensive capabilities were so overwhelming?

Behind Zhu Zheng, Sun Luxuan leaned in and quietly said,

“Commander, I have a feeling this Zhang Yi’s got a powerful trump card hidden up his sleeve.”

Zhu Zheng was slightly surprised by the comment.

He knew exactly how strong Sun Luxuan was—easily one of the top combatants in all of Blizzard City.

If even he had taken notice of Zhang Yi, that meant something.

“Oh?” Zhu Zheng asked.

Sun Luxuan stared at Zhang Yi’s calm, composed expression on the screen with a smile.

“It’s a feeling. He’s too calm. Almost like he’s already confident in how this is going to end.”

“It’s not just confidence—it’s like he believes his victory is a given.”

“Only someone who’s completely in control of the situation would wear that kind of expression.”

Zhu Zheng and Lan Xincheng both stared more intently at Zhang Yi’s emotionless face on the screen.

Sure enough, Zhang Yi looked cool and indifferent—like a gamer casually playing against a weak AI.

Tu Yunlie, half his face hidden behind a high collar, didn’t speak, but his gaze lingered longest on Zhang Yi.

“Interesting.”

Zhu Zheng chuckled, crossed one leg over the other, and settled in to enjoy the show.

“I knew it. This kid’s not as simple as Baili Changqing made him out to be.”

Back in the arena, Zhang Yi’s counterattack remained relentless and sharp.

He wasn’t even focusing all his attention on the battlefield.

Not out of arrogance—

But because he knew both his own strength and Wu Di's limits.

If he truly went all out, he could one-shot Wu Di.

Especially in a confined space like this—

Wu Di wasn't the type who excelled at movement or dodging. There was no escaping Zhang Yi's wide-range killing move.

But Zhang Yi couldn't

do that.

He'd already realized that Wu Di challenging him like this would definitely draw a crowd.

And among them were likely high-level figures from Blizzard City.

If he performed too well, there was a high chance they'd try to forcibly recruit him.

No way the district's higher-ups would allow such a powerful outsider to operate independently.

So he needed to win—

But win just enough, without making it obvious how strong he really was.

With that in mind, Zhang Yi started calculating his next steps.

He now knew exactly how to fight Wu Di.

That thought process took only a split second. Meanwhile, dozens of bullets had already flown from his guns.

Though all were blocked by Wu Di's glowing barrier, Zhang Yi swiftly reloaded—

His attack never let up, not even for a second.

Zhu Zheng nodded.

“Now this is an interesting style. His spatial storage must be massive. He can carry endless weapons and ammo...”

He’s basically a walking armory.”

“A war of attrition? Not a bad idea either.”

Even the strongest Superhuman would run out of energy eventually.

But who knew how much ammo Zhang Yi had stashed?

If Wu Di kept up this exchange, he’d be the one to lose in the end.

“So you’re trying to wear me down, huh?”

Wu Di had figured it out too. If he lost like this, it’d be beyond embarrassing.

One of the core fighters of the Black Robe Squad, taken down by pure gunfire?

He’d become the laughingstock of all Blizzard City.

“Too bad for you—I expected this!”

Wu Di suddenly kicked off the ground and began retreating at high speed.

Zhang Yi’s brows furrowed slightly.

Both of them specialized in long-range combat, but Zhang Yi had a deadly mid-range trump card.

Whether it was Divine Power or a surprise strike using Dimensional Gate—

Those moves were made for medium-distance engagement.

But he couldn’t use Divine Power here.

And if Wu Di was already prepared, a gate-based sneak attack wouldn’t work either.

So what was the point of pulling away?

Zhang Yi didn't rush.

He simply waited for Wu Di's next move while continuing to suppress him with relentless fire.

He was this close to switching to Sacred Silver bullets.

That surprise attack might pierce Wu Di's barrier when he least expected it!

But no—

Doing so would expose the existence of Sacred Silver bullets.

Plus, while Sacred Silver had great anti-demon effects, its armor-piercing strength didn't match regular rounds.

It might not even break through Wu Di's black training suit.

No point wasting it.

Thanks to the suit's enhancements, Wu Di moved incredibly fast—

He quickly widened the gap to 800 meters.

“This should be your teleportation limit, right?”

Wu Di halted and recalled the footage of Zhang Yi fighting Yuan Kongye using spatial jumps.

By his calculations, Zhang Yi’s max range back then had been around 300 meters.

Even if Zhang Yi had improved since then, 800 meters should be more than enough.

He’d been planning this battle for a long time,

And he had a strategy to beat Zhang Yi.

“Zhang Yi, try this next move. If you can take it—

I’ll admit your strength is above mine!”

Chapter 580 – Absolute Barrier Between Two Realms

Once Wu Di had moved more than 800 meters away from Zhang Ye, he raised both hands toward him. With a light shout, countless tiny points of light suddenly appeared around him.

There were so many of them—it was like someone had blown out a flood of rainbow-colored bubbles. Densely packed, they floated upward quickly, almost blanketing the entire dueling field.

Moments later, the glowing particles flew toward Zhang Ye and gathered around him.

Zhang Ye watched them cautiously, but they didn't explode right away.

Instead, they formed a massive bubble-like cloud around him, creating a spherical formation with a radius of 800 meters!

Wu Di looked at Zhang Ye and muttered to himself, "This move was made just for you. It's called Drifters—Bubble Mirage. There are 300,000 micro floating cannons in total, and the explosions will continue for two minutes!"

"This time, even with your weird spatial ability, there's no way you can defend against it!"

Although he had miniaturized the floating cannons into tiny particles, their destructive power remained formidable.

Wu Di wasn't trying to kill Zhang Ye—he just wanted to leave him looking like a total mess. That alone would be his victory!

Because he could still use this move three more times.

“Blow!!”

Without wasting a word, the moment the bubble cloud was fully formed, Wu Di began detonating the micro floating cannons in sequence!

Three hundred thousand particles exploded one after another, covering an 800-meter radius. Even if Zhang Ye wanted to escape, there was nowhere to run!

Even hiding in a different dimension would only buy him about a minute.

In other words, this move was nearly impossible for Zhang Ye to dodge!

The explosions lit up the scene with dazzling flashes of light, like countless soap bubbles popping under the sun!

Everyone stared at the scene, desperate to see how Zhang Ye would respond to such an overwhelming attack.

Even masters like Deng Shentong and Bai Li Changqing thought this was nearly impossible to avoid. The only way was to take it head-on with an extremely powerful defense.

But Zhang Ye wasn't a strength-type Variant. He didn't have that kind of terrifying defense.

While his training suit could protect his body, the damage it registered would still count directly toward determining whether he lost the match.

Even Zhang Ye's most confident supporters—Uncle You and Liang Yue—couldn't help but change their expressions when they saw Wu Di's move.

"This move was tailor-made just for Zhang Ye!"

Only now did they realize why Zhang Ye kept his abilities so tightly under wraps, not even revealing the full picture to those close to him.

Because once someone figured out your power, they could also pinpoint your weaknesses—and exploit them ruthlessly.

Even a high-level Delta Variant could suffer heavy losses if targeted with the right methods!

Everyone's eyes were glued to the dueling field.

They all wanted to see if Zhang Ye had a way to counter this attack that was specifically designed to exploit his ability.

The three-minute long barrage of floating explosions was visually spectacular, but it also made it hard for anyone to clearly see what was happening inside.

But after the three minutes were up, the announcement Wu Di had been expecting—"Duel over, Zhang Ye loses!"—didn't come.

As the lights faded, Zhang Ye was still standing there, completely unscathed.

His expression was calm, like nothing had even happened.

Everyone was stunned!

They could believe Zhang Ye might survive the move, but no one had imagined he'd come through it perfectly, without a scratch!

For the first time, Deng Shentong's eyes showed genuine surprise.

“Interesting. Very interesting! He’s clearly much stronger than what the district’s reports said!”

In another viewing room, Zhu Zheng was just as confused.

“How the hell did this kid pull that off? His ability shouldn’t have that level of defense!”

But behind him, Sun Luxuan adjusted his glasses and smiled, saying, “I think I’ve figured it out.”

Tu Yunlie also nodded slightly in agreement.

“That’s definitely a pretty clever defense move. This guy maxed out his defense skill.”

Seeing that Zhu Zheng and Lan Xincheng were still puzzled, Sun Luxuan explained, “Just as the explosions started, he opened up a flawless defensive barrier that absorbed every attack from all directions.”

Zhu Zheng immediately said, “Dueling Field, analyze the last combat sequence!”

This dueling field was designed for Variants to fight in. With the combination of the training suits and the field’s surveillance system, it could perfectly analyze the use of Variant abilities.

Of course, this also helped Variants identify and fix weaknesses in their skills.

As soon as Zhu Zheng gave the command, a response came right away—in the form of a 3D holographic playback.

In the footage, just as the 300,000 floating particles began to explode, Zhang Ye suddenly created a spherical membrane-like barrier around himself.

It was a dimensional gateway.

But unlike his previous move, Dimensional Gate

, this time the gateway was spherical—completely wrapping around his entire body.

Zhu Zheng looked visibly shaken.

“So... is this an absolute defense?”

Sun Luxuan smiled, “There’s no such thing as absolute defense. If there were, it would only mean the offensive power wasn’t strong enough yet.”

Lan Xincheng frowned slightly, looking conflicted. “But from beginning to end, he’s just been defending. Isn’t that a little too passive? If all he does is turtle up, how’s he supposed to go on the offensive?”

Everyone was curious about that too.

Still, seeing Zhang Ye walk out of the dueling field completely intact made it clear to them—he was, at the very least, unbeatable right now.

A Variant with absolute defense was born unbeatable!

Zhang Ye looked calmly at Wu Di. From Wu Di's expression, he could see the shock and unwillingness in his eyes.

Wu Di gritted his teeth, unable to accept it. "How is that possible?! How could you block my attack?! I've already studied your abilities inside and out!"

"This move should've been unstoppable! Even if my floating particles had their power reduced, they should've at least hurt you a little!"

He was starting to panic. He spread his arms again, sending another wave of bubble mirages into the sky, preparing to go again!

"Don't waste your time."

Zhang Ye looked at Wu Di coolly.

He had to admit, if this had happened a month ago, he would've been in deep trouble.

But after absorbing Yuan Kongye's source energy, his skills had evolved—especially in terms of fine control over his abilities.

Zhang Ye didn't move an inch. Another spherical dimensional wall appeared around him, wrapping him up completely!

Now, he was separated from the real world by an entire alternate dimension!

Unless someone could hit him with an attack strong enough to surpass the limit of his Dimensional Gate, nothing could breach this defense.

This move had become his absolute defense—a perfect barrier.

Absolute Barrier Between Two Realms.