

Ice Age 651

Chapter 651: Xia Lingling

Daiku Kai Enzu's eyes were locked onto the ground. The next second, he raised his right leg—

And stomped down with full force!

BOOOOM!!!

The ground shattered like glass under his foot. The very soil beneath began to rupture and explode, and the entire terrain became fragmented and unstable.

More than ten meters below, Jia Heting suddenly felt the earth compact tightly around him—

Tens of thousands of tons of pressure crushing down on him in an instant.

“Aaahhh!!!”

A wail of agony burst from his throat.

Splurt!

Blood gushed from his mouth. His organs felt like they had been mashed into pulp.

Trapped deep underground, he completely lost the ability to move.

Although not yet dead, he couldn't hold his transformed state for long.

If no one came to rescue him, he would die from a combination of his injuries and suffocation.

Fortunately, even in this desperate moment, Jia Heting didn't forget that headquarters was watching.

With the last of his strength, he sent a distress signal to the Operations Command Center.

“Headquarters... need backup...”

The operator responsible for his region received the message and immediately reported it to Commander Zhu Zheng.

Zhu Zheng frowned upon hearing it—

But gave no reply.

So far, they still hadn't gathered enough useful intel.

They needed to make sure that anyone the Celestial Squad deployed could take down Daiku Kai Enzu.

What's more, behind Daiku Kai, there were still two members of the Moon of Corrosion who hadn't even made a move yet.

Just then, Tu Yunlie, Chief of Operations, finally spoke up.

"This mission's difficulty is too high. We need to send in someone with real strength."

"How about sending in Liao Honglei?"

Liao Honglei was the vice-captain of the Celestial Squad, second only to Deng Shentong in combat strength.

Plus, his ability made him particularly well-suited to fight someone like Daiku Kai Enzu.

But Zhu Zheng slowly and firmly shook his head.

“Not yet. There are still two who haven’t acted.”

He had his eyes on Kurosawa Akira and Sakuraba Yushimitsu.

Those two were clearly there to support Daiku Kai.

If Liao Honglei went in, he wouldn’t have the upper hand in ability synergy.

Zhu Zheng laced his fingers under his chin, staring coldly at another battlefield.

“We can’t deploy the Celestial Squad lightly. We must extract enough intel first.”

Northern Battlefield — the fight was happening simultaneously.

This was Zhuo Feiyu’s squad, facing off against Kamiya Gedou and Akutsu Shinichiro.

Unlike Daiku Kai, these two didn’t care for the thrill of going one-on-many.

They were genuine villains—

The type that enjoyed torturing their opponents.

To them, any method was fair game, as long as it led to victory.

So the moment they showed up—the battle had already begun.

Kamiya Gedou was a Beast-type Superhuman. His ability codename: Serpent.

He burst out from the mist, and mid-air, his body began to twist and morph.

His head transformed into a flat white snakehead; his limbs retracted, and white scales began covering his entire body.

In seconds, he became a giant white snake—fifteen meters long!

The serpent roared as it lunged toward the five of them, jaws open wide, revealing rows upon rows of terrifying inward-curving fangs.

Anyone caught in that maw—unless ripped apart—would never escape.

Just the sight of it was oppressive enough to throw Zhuo Feiyu's squad into disarray.

They quickly scattered, avoiding being crushed under the massive snake.

Wherever the white serpent slithered, it left a deep trench in the ground behind it.

Zhuo Feiyu remained calm under pressure. He opened his tactical backpack and, with a swing of his arm, flung out dozens of black rifles.

Each rifle had a bayonet affixed to the front, glowing with a ghostly blue light.

“Xia Lingling!”

Zhuo Feiyu shouted her name.

Xia Lingling frowned. “Got it!”

Just as her feet touched the ground, she stomped forward and sprinted toward the returning serpent.

She didn't look delicate in the first place—

But what no one expected was just how explosive her strength could be.

Facing the massive serpent, she dodged its attack mid-air and landed behind it—at the tail.

With both arms, she grabbed its tail and let out a furious yell, “Haaah!!!”

Then—

She lifted the enormous fifteen-meter-long beast into the air, spun it around a few times—

And hurled it away!

Zhuo Feiyu raised both arms—

The thirty-six rifles floated before him in a line, and in an instant, they shot forward like lightning toward the snake!

These were specially-made weapons, each coated in lethal poison.

Even a small cut could kill a grown man instantly.

The serpent glanced at the flying rifles with a mocking look.

Such crude weapons could never pierce his hardened scales.

However, he was a bit surprised by the girl's monstrous strength.

After hitting the ground, the serpent's tail lashed into the air, sweeping across like a giant whip to smack away the rifles.

But Zhuo Feiyu never took his eyes off him.

Just as the tail swept, his fingers made a graceful loop in the air—

And the flying rifles twisted mid-flight, dodging the serpent's counterattack.

“Telekinesis? Interesting...”

A deep, guttural voice came from the serpent’s mouth.

The thirty-six rifle bayonets now aimed straight at his head.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!...

Gunfire rang out in a rapid stream, bullets pelting the serpent’s body.

“Not even itchy,” the serpent sneered.

Zhuo Feiyu frowned.

These bullets were Origin Bullets—highly effective against superhumans, and issued directly by headquarters.

But the serpent’s outer layer was made of scale armor,

And scale armor didn't react much to Origin Bullets.

Just as the serpent was basking in smugness—

He suddenly felt a sharp gust heading straight for him.

Whoosh!

A large-caliber armor-piercing round smashed into his eyeball.

Even with a thick protective membrane over it, the impact blurred his vision for a moment.

“Who did that?!”

The serpent snarled, turning toward the bullet's origin.

Far off in the distance, he spotted a sly sniper aiming a heavy rifle directly at him.

A standard sniper rifle wouldn't harm him—

But that shot had come from Yu Zhengyang, a veteran whose ability could enhance weapons, drawing out their full potential.

Just like his codename—Weapon Master.

While the serpent was locked in intense battle, Akutsu Shinichiro had crept through the mist.

He seized the opportunity to target the most delicate-looking team member—Yuan Hao.

Grinning savagely, he raised his metal bat and swung it straight at Yuan Hao's head.

Yuan Hao turned and saw the attack coming. His face went pale, and clutching his chest, he screamed,

“Lingling!!”

In the next moment, Xia Lingling, who had just been battling the serpent, suddenly appeared in front of Yuan Hao with uncanny speed.

Clang!!

Akutsu's metal bat slammed into her arm, producing a dull, heavy thud.

Akutsu was stunned.

He knew exactly how much power he'd put into that swing.

But he hadn't shattered this woman's arm—let alone her entire body?!

Xia Lingling stared him down, her eyes overflowing with murderous intent.

"You dared lay a hand on my husband?"

"Are you tired of living?"

Chapter 652: Playing It Safe

Xia Lingling had blocked Akutsu Shinichiro's metal baseball bat with just her bare body.

Even Akutsu couldn't help but be surprised.

Even among Enhancement-type Superhumans, few would rely solely on physical combat without a weapon.

“What an arrogant little brat!”

Akutsu chuckled darkly. He ramped up his strength, swinging the metal bat wildly and ferociously in a chaotic flurry.

As a yakuza thug, he relied on just two things when fighting: experience and presence.

Though he looked like a street brawler, he could pull off a wide array of techniques, making him an expert in real combat.

Xia Lingling snorted and hopped lightly on the ground, moving with a butterfly-like step that was incredibly refined.

Her punches were also lightning-fast!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Her fists collided over and over with the metal bat.

Xia Lingling showed no signs of pain on her face—

On the contrary, the more they fought, the more excited she looked.

Akutsu, on the other hand, was dumbfounded.

He could feel massive recoil through his metal bat—

Power like this... was she even human?

The force erupting from Xia Lingling's body was terrifying—

Even for someone with a strengthened physique, it seemed unnatural.

Daiku Kai Enzu's overwhelming strength made sense—

He'd been a Yokozuna in the sumo world long before becoming a Superhuman.

But this girl in front of him didn't even look that physically built.

Where on earth was her strength coming from?

Soon enough, Akutsu spotted the clue.

Standing behind Xia Lingling the entire time was her boyfriend, Yuan Hao, cheering her on non-stop.

He cupped his hands like a megaphone and shouted, "You got this, Lingling! You're the best!"

Akutsu immediately understood.

Yuan Hao was clearly a Support-type Superhuman.

His cheering was giving Xia Lingling a power boost.

"Take out the support first!"

Akutsu tried to bypass Xia Lingling and go straight for Yuan Hao.

But Xia Lingling had been keeping a sharp eye on him—there was no way she was letting that happen.

“Don’t even think about it! Anyone who lays a hand on my husband—dies!”

Her pupils flared with a demonic red light as she shot forward and cut him off like a bolt of lightning.

Her speed was so fast that Akutsu couldn’t break past her guard at all.

“Tch! Annoying woman!”

Akutsu scowled. “Fine, I’ll just take you out first!”

The western and northern battlefields were already blazing with combat.

But in the southeast, where Zhang Yi was stationed, everything was eerily calm.

So calm, in fact, that no one could figure out what was going on.

Listening to the battle reports over the comms, Zhang Yi felt a growing sense of suspicion.

“Why haven’t the Moon of Corrosion people come yet? Could they be planning something big?”

Back at the Operations Command Center, Commander Zhu Zheng was frowning.

“Why hasn’t anyone shown up in Zhang Yi’s direction? Is it something on Zhang Yi’s end—or something off about the enemy?”

Tu Yunlie, Chief of Operations, turned to Zhu Zheng and said,

“Commander Zhu, the way Zhang Yi’s group is operating doesn’t support our overall plan. Let’s order them to advance toward the Jiangning Plaza center.”

Zhu Zheng thought for a moment, then nodded.

He switched to Zhang Yi’s comms channel and issued the command:

“Zhang Yi, keep moving! The enemy’s behavior in your area is too strange. Head toward the center of Jiangning Plaza. Gather intel.”

Zhang Yi replied calmly, “Roger that.”

After ending the transmission, he looked toward the depths of Jiangning Plaza.

That area was shrouded in thick fog, making it impossible to see clearly.

Moving in could mean running straight into the main Moon of Corrosion force.

After all, eight of their members were still unaccounted for.

Even with Zhang Yi's strength, he wasn't fond of taking unnecessary risks.

Noticing his expression shift, Liang Yue asked,

"What's wrong? What did HQ say?"

"They said the enemy's acting weird and told us to go deeper in to investigate," Zhang Yi replied.

Liang Yue frowned too.

"Going deeper means greater risk."

She looked at Zhang Yi.

“What do you plan to do?”

Zhang Yi grinned.

“What else? Since HQ gave the order, we’ll follow it.”

Liang Yue looked surprised.

Zhang Yi didn’t usually strike her as someone that obedient.

But when she caught that subtle, meaningful smile on his lips—

She realized things weren’t so simple.

Sure enough, Zhang Yi led them out of the building and down to the base where Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li had been standing guard.

He told them,

“No sign of enemies here. HQ wants us to move forward.”

Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li exchanged glances.

They both thought—finally.

Sitting here waiting for the enemy to show up didn’t feel like a search and destroy mission at all.

“Yeah, it’s about time we got moving.”

The two women nodded, and Zhang Yi took the lead, walking deeper into Jiangning Plaza.

But after advancing a bit over a hundred meters, he came to a sudden stop.

Pointing to a building ahead, he said,

“This spot gives us a better view. Let’s hold position here.”

Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li were stunned.

“What? We’re stopping here?”

“Didn’t HQ tell us to go investigate the center of Jiangning Plaza?”

Only Liang Yue quietly covered her mouth and giggled.

She knew Zhang Yi’s style way too well.

Expecting him to follow orders to the letter?

That’s just wishful thinking.

Zhang Yi, in all seriousness, declared:

“This mission is critical—we must proceed with caution. Therefore, I’ve decided to observe from here first before making any decisions.”

All he had agreed to was “advance.”

No one said how far.

What, was he supposed to lead the whole team straight into the enemy core at the heart of Jiangning Plaza?

He wasn't stupid.

There were likely Epsilon-level Superhumans among the enemy.

Even Zhang Yi wasn't arrogant enough to think he could keep everyone alive under those conditions.

After all, Outer City Superhumans weren't the main force.

They were just given some gear.

Why the hell should they risk their lives?

Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li were speechless.

They both knew the other two battlefronts were already in full combat.

If they didn't do anything, wouldn't that just mean handing over all the mission points to someone else?

"Zhang Yi, if we do this, didn't we just come here for nothing?"

Chen Xiaoxiao couldn't hold back her frustration.

She glared at Zhang Yi, clearly unhappy.

But Zhang Yi responded calmly,

"Missions are endless. But we only have one life. I believe protecting that comes first."

Chen Xiaoxiao's tone turned cold.

"But we came here with a purpose. Sorry, I'm not like you—clinging to life and scared of death.

I won't just sit by and let these punks rampage on our land."

Zhang Yi glanced at her and slowly clapped.

“Well said. You’re really something.”

“So? If you’re not happy, you’re free to go.

I never forced you to follow my lead.”

Chapter 653: Breaking Up the Team

The situation between Zhang Yi and Chen Xiaoxiao had reached a breaking point.

Truth be told, Chen Xiaoxiao had never been fully convinced of Zhang Yi's authority as team leader.

Now, seeing him acting so cautious—stalling her from completing the mission and earning contribution points—her impatience finally boiled over. She confronted Zhang Yi head-on.

Zhang Yi didn’t back down one bit. He plainly told her: If you’re unhappy, you’re free to leave.

Chen Xiaoxiao stared daggers at him, fists clenched tight, absolutely furious.

In her mind, she'd been cursed with terrible luck—getting stuck with a coward of a teammate like him.

Before the tension could fizzle, Peng Li jumped in, unable to hold back.

She stepped up, arms akimbo, and scolded Zhang Yi:

“Fine, we’ll leave! Following a captain like you, we won’t even scrape together a single point. People like you? You’ll never accomplish anything. No guts at all!”

She snorted coldly, then tugged Chen Xiaoxiao’s arm.

“Come on, Xiaoxiao. We’ll act on our own!”

Chen Xiaoxiao frowned even harder.

If they split up now and ran into a strong Moon of Corrosion member, the two of them might not be able to handle it.

But Zhang Yi’s passive strategy left her totally opposed.

Staying here would just mean more wasted time.

They might as well try on their own.

After all, their mission wasn't to defeat the Moon of Corrosion—just to lure them out.

Even if they ran into a powerful enemy, the Celestial Squad was supposed to be their backup.

With that in mind, Chen Xiaoxiao said,

"Fine then. If we don't share the same path, there's no point sticking together. We'll go our separate ways."

Peng Li lifted her chin toward Zhang Yi and scoffed:

"Just wait. When we get the points and seize the Linhai City territory, you're gonna regret it!"

The two turned and walked away without a second's hesitation, cautiously heading into the thick fog.

Zhang Yi watched their silhouettes vanish into the mist and raised an eyebrow.

“They have no idea what kind of enemies they’re walking into.”

Not everyone had been through a battle like the one in Tianhai City.

To Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li, being Delta-level Superhumans might’ve seemed impressive—

But they didn’t understand that even within the same level, the gaps could be enormous.

Currently, humanity’s classification system for Superhumans was still vague.

Even without subdivisions like Level 1 to 9, power differences at the same rank could be massive.

A peak Delta-level Superhuman could obliterate an average Delta in seconds.

Even Zhang Yi didn’t dare act recklessly—so what made them so confident?

Count on the Celestial Squad to protect them?

Heh.

Putting your life in someone else's hands was a childish move.

"You asked for it. If you die, don't blame me."

Zhang Yi ignored them and chose to stay put, continuing to observe the surroundings.

It wasn't that he didn't want to contribute to the mission—

He just understood something they didn't:

Outer City Superhumans were just bait.

The real action would be carried out by the Celestial Squad.

And if the Celestial Squad got to sit back and wait for the perfect opportunity—why couldn't he?

When it came down to it, Zhang Yi's combat power was more valuable than most members of that elite squad.

So he wouldn't act blindly.

He needed patience—waiting for the enemy to expose a weakness.

Still, there was one thing he couldn't figure out.

Why hasn't anyone come to this sector yet?

“Why haven't they shown up? Do they just... not want to?”

Zhang Yi rested his chin in his hand, lost in thought.

After leaving, Chen Xiaoxiao immediately contacted headquarters.

“Headquarters, this is Chen Xiaoxiao. We've separated from Zhang Yi and Liang Yue.”

“They're refusing to follow orders and are idling around the edge of Jiangning Plaza. Their attitude is far too passive. We can't tolerate this behavior—so we've chosen to act independently. Over.”

Zhu Zheng listened quietly, then simply closed his eyes and replied calmly,

“Understood. You’re authorized to proceed on your own.”

Chen Xiaoxiao was a bit taken aback.

She’d expected Zhu Zheng to erupt in anger, maybe even come down hard on Zhang Yi.

But he stayed completely calm.

She couldn’t figure out the leadership’s mindset, so she let it go.

On Zhu Zheng’s end, he watched as Zhang Yi’s team had advanced briefly... and then stopped again.

Rubbing his forehead, he chuckled with some helpless amusement.

“I almost forgot. That guy’s always been a defense-and-counterattack type. Making him a scout was a mistake.”

A general in the field does not always obey the emperor’s orders.

Outer City Superhumans were technically under Blizzard City's command,

But that didn't mean Blizzard City could issue unrestricted orders to them.

Especially now—sending Zhang Yi's team deeper into the fog to locate the Moon of Corrosion?

That was basically sending them to their deaths.

So Zhang Yi had played with the wording—he moved a bit, then stopped.

Zhu Zheng could only sigh.

Still, this wouldn't affect the overall operation much.

The Outer City units were primarily bait.

And if no enemies showed up in the southeast, Zhang Yi couldn't exactly be blamed.

"We'll wait and see."

Hands clasped behind his back, Zhu Zheng shifted his attention back to the other two battlefields.

At this point, the fighting had reached a fever pitch!

Western Battlefield — Wu Shifang's Squad

Things were becoming more dangerous by the second.

Jia Heting, the Earthburrow Hermit, had his internal organs ruptured by a single stomp from Daiku Kai Enzu. His condition underground was unknown—life or death.

Even with teamwork between his main body and clone, Wu Shifang couldn't withstand more than three strikes from Daiku Kai.

The Yokozuna's raw strength was terrifying on its own.

Now that he'd transformed into the Myth-Class Beast Tidal Tiger, his sheer might was enough to bulldoze anything in his way.

"Hold him off!"

Mo Zhongning shouted toward Wu Shifang.

Then he summoned a horde of self-destructing Soul Beasts, preparing for a massive assault.

Wu Shifang's real body already had torn and bleeding hands.

Helpless, his clone put away the longbow and switched to melee combat.

He took the Drum-Urn Hammers from the main body and stepped up to the front lines.

The clone could be sacrificed—

At most, Wu Shifang would lose a bit of vital energy.

But if it created the right opportunity, it might deal some damage to Daiku Kai.

Seeing them still struggling to resist, Daiku Kai sneered.

“Trying to stop me? With just you lot? Keep dreaming.”

He charged like a freight train toward Wu Shifang and his clone!

Wu Shifang and his clone braced on either side, shouting defiantly:

“No retreat! We fight to the death!”

If they backed off now, they were finished.

But if they risked everything, there was still a chance!

BOOM!!!!

A thunderous impact echoed out.

The clone, who stood in front, was smashed so hard his body twisted like a pretzel.

The real Wu Shifang, using the recoil, was knocked flying.

He slammed into the ground, clutching his chest, and began coughing up blood.

His internal organs were severely ruptured.

If he weren't an Enhancement-type Superhuman, he'd already be dead.

Just as Daiku Kai raised his Dragonfly Cutter, ready to finish him off—

His body suddenly vanished from the ground.

By the time he realized it, he was already suspended dozens of meters in the air.

At the last second, Li Weihai had used his spatial transfer ability to relocate Daiku Kai.

Not only that—

Mo Zhongning's explosive Soul Beasts were now all over him.

Hundreds of crab-shaped bombs clung to his body, locking on tight!

BOOM!!!!!!!

A string of deafening explosions lit up the sky.

But as Daiku Kai crashed back to earth—

Everyone could see with their own eyes—

Aside from some singed hair, he didn't have a single wound.

Chapter 654: Celestial Squad — Enter the Gods!

At that moment, Wu Shifang and the others were gripped by absolute despair.

Faced with an opponent like this—how the h*ll were they supposed to fight?

Before accepting this mission, they'd tried to estimate the strength of the Moon of Corrosion members.

Sure, there had been the first battle as a reference,

But that had merely been a test run, with weaker superhuman groups involved.

This time, the dozen or so who were selected were all among the top-tier Outer City Superhumans in the Jiangnan District.

Three of them fighting one opponent—maybe they wouldn't win against Daiku Kai Enzu,

But they should at least be able to pose a threat, right?

But reality was far more brutal.

Though they were all Delta-level Superhumans, the difference in strength between them was like a bottomless abyss.

“H-He’s... a freaking monster...”

Mo Zhongning clutched his head, muttering in despair.

Daiku Kai Enzu looked at them with interest.

“Your teamwork isn’t bad.

It's just too bad... you're way too weak."

Mo Zhongning's explosive Soul Beasts excelled at stealth, launching surprise attacks without warning.

But transforming his power into scout-type beasts—part illusion, part bio-mimicry—had made it difficult to fully weaponize their destructive potential.

And against a top-tier Beast-type Superhuman like Daiku Kai, his power was basically a joke.

Daiku Kai Enzu raised his Dragonfly Cutter.

"Playtime's over. I'll send you all on your way."

He brought the blade down toward Mo Zhongning with crushing force,

A thunderous strike that even made the air crack with shockwaves!

But just as the blade was about to hit—

A meteor-like object shot out of the distant fog, slamming hard into Daiku Kai Enzu's left side!

His eyes narrowed—the timing was viciously precise.

The strike came at the exact moment he swung his weapon, targeting his open left flank.

There was no way to block it in time.

His left arm tensed and rose instinctively to shield himself.

BOOM!!

The meteor slammed into his arm, carrying such terrifying weight that even this Yokozuna's massive body staggered.

He had to retreat a dozen steps just to absorb the impact.

In that moment of despair—Wu Shifang, Mo Zhongning, and Li Weihai saw a glimmer of hope.

They knew—the Celestial Squad had arrived!

That legendary unit—boasting the highest mission success rate in the entire Jiangnan District.

Thud!

The “meteor” crashed to the ground.

Daiku Kai took a closer look—

It was a massive ship anchor, wrapped in heavy chains.

Clink, clank—

The chains rattled, and from the fog, silhouettes began to emerge.

“You can fall back now,” a voice rang out.

“From here on, we’ll take it from here.”

Three figures stepped out of the mist.

Each of them wore gleaming silver combat uniforms, looking almost godlike in their presence.

At the center walked a man with shoulder-length hair, soft features, and a subtle, mysterious smile—

Bai Chunyu, one of the two vice-captains of the Celestial Squad,

And someone who had once spoken face-to-face with Zhang Yi.

At his side stood two others:

One had blue hair and a cold, sharp demeanor.

The other was encased in full-body silver armor, his right hand wrapped in a thick iron chain.

It was he who had thrown the anchor.

Li Taichang raised his arm, gave the chain a light tug—

And the massive ship anchor soared back through the air, curving in a graceful arc before landing weightlessly in his hand, now resting casually on his shoulder.

The moment the three of them appeared, Daiku Kai Enzu's attention left Wu Shifang and the others entirely.

Even the two Ronin in the back—Sakuraba Yushimitsu and Kurosawa Akira—narrowed their eyes.

“Celestial Squad...”

“Word is, they’re pretty badass.”

“How badass?”

“We’ll know soon enough.”

Bai Chunyu turned to Mo Zhongning and the others.

“You should leave—your task is complete. The farther you go, the better.”

He shot a side glance at them.

“Once the fight starts, we won’t be able to protect you.”

Mo Zhongning and Li Weihai nodded frantically like bobbleheads.

At this point, they wished they could vanish immediately—anything to avoid being dragged deeper into this hellish battle.

To their credit, they didn’t forget their fallen comrade—

They dragged Wu Shifang, who was barely clinging to life, away from the battlefield.

As for Jia Heting, buried somewhere deep underground at Daiku Kai Enzu’s feet...

They didn’t dare save him—and couldn’t, even if they tried.

The three of them retreated in a panic.

Once they reached a safe distance, medics sent by headquarters finally arrived, stretcher in hand.

“Hurry! Save him! He’s not gonna make it!”

Mo Zhongning yelled urgently.

The medics checked Wu Shifang’s pulse—

Then slowly shook their heads.

“He’s already gone.”

As the main force absorbing Daiku Kai Enzu’s blows, Wu Shifang had taken every last ounce of that beast’s power.

That final hit had shattered all of his internal organs.

Though he died, he hadn’t failed in his duties as squad leader.

Mo Zhongning and Li Weihai stared at his rapidly cooling body.

Neither of them said a word.

A long silence passed.

Staring at Wu Shifang's corpse being zipped into a body bag, Mo Zhongning finally spoke, his voice hollow:

"We really overestimated ourselves..."

Northern Front

Things were only getting tougher for Zhuo Feiyu's squad.

Kamiya Gedou, transformed into a giant serpent, had terrifying defense and brutal attack power.

He forced them to commit three members to hold him back.

After adjusting to Zhuo Feiyu's gunblade, and pinpointing Yu Zhengyang's sniper nest,

Kamiya soon took control of the battlefield.

Desperate, they brought in a third fighter.

From Wugu City—Liu Yuchun.

While Zhuo Feiyu and Yu Zhengyang held Kamiya's attention, Liu Yuchun snuck into position.

From his hidden spot, he activated his ability.

He opened his mouth—

And a long stream of green mist surged out like a dragon, wrapping around the serpent.

The whole area was soon blanketed in a nauseating, rotten stench.

“That stuff is... poison, isn’t it?”

The serpent immediately understood what it was.

Liu Yuchun sneered.

“Your scales may be tough—but you still need to breathe, don’t you?

I’m betting your organs aren’t as hard as your hide.”

Zhuo Feiyu and Yu Zhengyang instinctively backed out of the fog’s range.

They knew how deadly Liu Yuchun’s poison was.

0.01 milligrams was lethal.

Even with tactical helmets, they didn’t want to take any chances.

Inside the toxic cloud, the serpent writhed violently—

Then suddenly tilted his head back and burst into mocking laughter.

“Hahaha! You stupid f***s—

You think that can kill me?!”

Not only did he not retreat from the poison—

He opened his jaws and began swallowing the fog in massive gulps!

The scene left all three of them with their scalps tingling.

“W-What the hell is he doing?!”

Kamiya Gedou’s cold, vertical pupils glared down at them.

“I’m a f***ing viper, idiots.”

Kamiya Gedou’s serpent form—

Was a venomous snake.

Chapter 655: Zombie

Liu Yuchun never imagined that his ability would be completely countered by Kamiya Gedou!

His poisonous mist was utterly ineffective against a venomous snake.

In this fight, he'd become completely useless.

“Hhrrgh!”

The serpent opened its jaws and spat a large mouthful of pitch-black saliva at Liu Yuchun!

Snapping out of his shock, Liu Yuchun tried to flee in a panic.

But he wasn't fast enough—the spit still splashed all over him.

Ssshh—

His finely made Yan Yun combat suit was corroded instantly,

And the corrosive fluid spread rapidly underneath,

Melting away nearly half his shoulder on contact!

“AAAHHHH!!”

Liu Yuchun let out a heart-wrenching scream.

He writhed on the ground like a maggot—

But in no time, his entire body turned pitch black and stopped moving completely.

This... was the fate of a Superhuman whose ability had been completely countered.

In that moment, he was no stronger than an ordinary person.

Yu Zhengyang and Zhuo Feiyu felt a chill settle into their hearts.

He was killed instantly?!

Now it was two versus one—how the hell were they supposed to deal with this prehistoric beast?

The serpent raised its upper body and stared coldly down at them.

“Now... it’s your turn.”

Meanwhile, on Akutsu Shinichiro’s side, he was still locked in a fierce clash with Yuan Hao and Xia Lingling.

Compared to Kamiya Gedou and Daiku Kai Enzu,

Akutsu’s ability seemed far more ordinary.

He was just a standard Enhancement-type Superhuman,

Using a thug’s favorite weapon—a metal baseball bat.

At first, Xia Lingling had the upper hand.

Her monstrous strength was terrifying—rare even among Enhancement-types.

She could even go blow for blow with Akutsu's weapon using just her bare hands.

All of this came from the presence of the man behind her—Yuan Hao.

Yuan Hao looked soft and delicate, completely non-combative.

But he stood there, earnestly cheering her on with all his might.

“You've got this, Lingling! You're amazing!”

As his encouragement rang out, Xia Lingling's pupils began to glow with a strange purple light.

Her strength and speed surged dramatically.

Akutsu quickly figured it out—Yuan Hao was a Support-type Superhuman.

But with Xia Lingling blocking his way, he couldn't get to him.

So, Akutsu chose the simplest, most direct solution—

Take her out first!

As the fight dragged on, his metal bat moved faster and faster.

Gradually, the tide began to turn.

In repeated power exchanges, Xia Lingling started to fall behind!

A flicker of worry appeared in Yuan Hao's eyes.

"This... this can't be. Lingling's supposed to be invincible!"

His pale face puffed up in frustration.

"My cheering must not be loud enough—I'll shout even harder!"

He cupped his hands around his mouth and yelled louder.

Xia Lingling's body began to shimmer with a glowing purple aura.

She opened her mouth—her sharp fangs began to lengthen,

And her fingernails extended into ten-centimeter-long black claws, sharp like daggers!

She now looked like a vampire.

“AHHHHH!!!”

She screamed as she charged at Akutsu.

Akutsu let out a wild laugh, swinging his bat toward her with a manic grin.

“This game’s over!”

Akutsu Shinichiro—Enhancement-type Superhuman.

Codename: Yakuza Brawler.

A street thug from Chiba, fighting was second nature to him.

What he thrived on was indomitable will—the more he fought, the stronger he became!

His ability matched his personality.

As long as he stayed in combat, his strength would keep growing.

In theory, if the fight went long enough,

He could even take on Epsilon-level Superhumans!

(Though in practice, that was still hypothetical.)

Against those on par with him, if the fight dragged on, he would always win in the end.

Right now, Akutsu had built up enough momentum.

His bat clashed once more with Xia Lingling—

But this time, he cunningly avoided her claws and struck her in the side!

It's hard to imagine a blunt object like a bat ripping a person in half.

But when swung fast enough, a baseball bat wasn't that different from a katana.

Xia Lingling's body was cleanly bisected at the waist!

Her eyes filled with shock as her upper and lower halves flew apart from the momentum.

Thud! Thud!

Both halves slammed into the ground.

Yuan Hao's face turned ghostly pale.

He clenched his fists and shouted:

"You b*stard! How dare you hurt my Lingling!"

“Hurt her?”

Akutsu rested the bat on his shoulder and looked at him like he was insane.

She was literally cut in half,

And you call that just “hurt”?!

But then he understood what Yuan Hao meant.

Because Xia Lingling’s severed body—

suddenly began to reconnect.

Hundreds of thin blood-red tendrils emerged from each half, extending and weaving together.

Within moments, the two halves were stitched back together, muscles and tissues perfectly aligned.

Though the wound was sealed, the flesh was eerily pale—

Like a piece of zombie meat frozen for years.

Xia Lingling got back up.

Her expression turned dark and cold, eyes locked on Akutsu like a predator.

“Tch.”

Akutsu said flatly, “So you’re a zombie, huh?”

Yuan Hao, leader of the Superhumans in Xiying City,

was a Control-type Superhuman.

Codename: Zombie Controller.

Xia Lingling leapt back to his side.

Yuan Hao hurried over, gently touching her body with care.

“Are you okay, babe?

Thank goodness you’re already dead—otherwise, that last hit would’ve killed you.”

He hugged her arm, face full of affection.

Only, with Xia Lingling being a corpse, the scene was... deeply disturbing.

“So it was the right call to kill you back then,”

He said softly, with a loving smile.

Even the staff watching from the Operations Command Center couldn’t help but gag.

One female operator covered her mouth, nearly vomiting on the spot.

He’d been dating a corpse this whole time?!

And if Xia Lingling was dead, just a body—

Then who the hell was doing the talking?

Just thinking about it made the mind recoil in horror and disgust.

Akutsu's face twisted in revulsion.

"You're a f***ing freak.

A necro-loving, split-personality freak."

Chapter 656: Hundred Steps Divine Fist

Even with the undead brute strength boost from being a zombie, Yuan Hao's superhuman energy was still limited.

And as he kept fighting Akutsu Shinichiro, whose strength only grew during battle, the outcome was never in doubt.

Xia Lingling's body had been smashed to bits, and even after she barely managed to piece herself back together, she was destroyed again.

Zhuo Feiyu was also devoured by the serpent.

At this point, Deng Shentong, who had been observing from the rear, couldn't take it anymore.

"That's enough! They're not even in the same league as the Moon of Corrosion. Any more fighting is just pointless sacrifice."

"It's our turn now!"

Zhu Zheng received Deng Shentong's battle request, but he still looked hesitant.

"But only five of the Moon of Corrosion members have shown up. There are still eight lurking in the shadows. It's like they know our plan and have prepared a backup move."

Deng Shentong gave a slight smile.

"But we can't expect to have 100% intel for every mission. That kind of job would be way too boring!"

Zhu Zheng's eyes turned to the large screen, where he saw that the western and northern fronts were on the verge of collapse.

If the Celestial Squad didn't step in now, everyone on the field would be dead!

So he nodded.

“Alright, you’re cleared to engage!”

Deng Shentong’s lips curled into a confident smile as he glanced at his squad.

“It’s our turn to take the stage! Let’s finish this one in style.”

...

Akutsu walked up to Yuan Hao, his blood-stained baseball bat aimed at the man’s head.

“Hey, let me kill you too! Then you can go join your girl in the afterlife.”

Elsewhere, Yu Zhengyang and Zhuo Feiyu were no match for the serpent, Kamiya Gedou, even in a two-on-one fight. They were both slain and swallowed whole.

Akutsu raised his metal bat high and brought it down hard!

But suddenly, his arms went limp, and it felt like all the strength had been drained from his body.

Clang!

The metal bat dropped to the scorched earth.

He looked down at his chest.

Out of nowhere, a deep dent had appeared there.

“Urgh!”

He vomited a mouthful of blood, and a sharp pain surged through his chest.

It was as if a massive hand had reached in and crushed his lungs to pieces!

Kamiya Gedou reverted to his human form, his pupils shrinking in shock at what happened to Akutsu.

He knew—the real special forces of the Jiangnan District had arrived!

Those people... were their biggest threat!

Kamiya Gedou whipped his head around toward the thick fog in the distance. But before he could brace for defense, an unbearable pain struck his abdomen.

It felt like his organs had been tossed into a blender filled with steel nails!

“Gah!”

All the strength drained from him. He dropped to his knees, vomiting blood in huge gulps.

From the depths of the thick mist, a tall, muscular figure slowly emerged.

It was a man with a scruffy beard.

“Not a bad power you’ve got there! But too bad for you, going up against me just means getting slaughtered.”

He said it calmly, almost indifferently.

One of the two vice-captains of the Celestial Squad—Divine Fist Liao Honglei—had entered the field!

With just one strike, he had taken down both Kamiya Gedou and Akutsu Shinichiro.

Even though the two had already been through a fierce battle, Liao Honglei's terrifying strength was plain to see.

Unlike the western front, only Liao Honglei had come to the northern battlefield.

Since not all of the Moon of Corrosion members had shown up, the entire Celestial Squad wouldn't be deployed either.

According to the Operations Command Center's calculations, Liao Honglei was the best counter for Kamiya Gedou and Akutsu Shinichiro.

That's because his ability was an extremely rare spatial type, which he had fused with his powerful Bajiquan martial arts to create a devastating combat technique—Hundred Steps Divine Fist!

Within a hundred steps, his strikes could bypass all physical defenses, even pierce through heavy armor and flesh, and directly target internal organs!

In short, he was the bane of all close-combat superhumans.

Liao Honglei didn't waste words. He didn't even spare a glance at the still-breathing Yuan Hao. He steadied his stance and punched straight at the fallen Kamiya Gedou!

Meanwhile, deep in the fog where Wei Ming was, a pair of icy brown eyes slowly opened.

"As expected... the Celestial Squad has arrived!"

Just as Liao Honglei's punch flew forward, the fog churned violently, and suddenly a massive, flame-engulfed three-headed hound leapt out, roaring as it pounced on him!

This beast stood three meters tall and stretched five or six meters long. Its body blazed with crimson flames that made the air itself dry.

But strangely enough, those flames had no effect on the fog conjured by yin-yang techniques.

Liao Honglei's pupils narrowed.

He hadn't expected there'd be another hidden enemy.

Looks like no one was dumb—everyone had backup plans.

Now, it was just a matter of whose trump card was stronger!

Liao Honglei threw a punch aimed straight at the three-headed demon hound's torso.

The creature's body twisted unnaturally, its color dimming slightly, but it charged forward again with undiminished momentum.

Seeing this, Zhu Zheng's expression grew grim.

"That's an emission-type ability user!"

Tu Yunlie frowned. "Now this is turning into a real mess!"

No one expected the enemy to have this up their sleeve.

And judging from the demon hound's power, the hidden enemy was incredibly strong.

They'd thought sending Liao Honglei to the northern line was the best option.

But now it seemed like the enemy had predicted their strategy and had laid their own trap!

Kamiya Gedou and Akutsu Shinichiro, lying on the ground clutching their chests and bellies, were seriously injured, coughing up blood nonstop.

Yet they showed no fear—instead, they laughed maniacally.

Akutsu said, "No wonder my fortune today was just small luck!"

Kamiya Gedou sneered. "But that doesn't change the outcome."

Liao Honglei swiftly dodged the demon hound's attack.

Then, through the swirling fog, he saw several tall figures slowly step out.

Leading them was a middle-aged man in a tailored suit, slicked-back hair, and gold-rimmed glasses.

At his side were several clearly conjured superhuman beasts:

A five-meter-tall golden giant ape.

A six-tailed silver-white fox.

A blurry bluebird cloaked in swirling wind.

And a gray crow hovering over his shoulder.

This was none other than Shinguuji Seiichiro, the heir of the Ōsuganonji Temple, a true onmyōji, and a senior cadre of the Moon of Corrosion.

Shinguuji had his hands stuffed in his pockets, staring at Liao Honglei with a look of boredom.

“Your ability seems designed to counter close combat, huh?”

“So how about fighting me?”

Chapter 657: Bait

While the battles in the western and northern fronts raged on, it was eerily calm on Zhang Yi's side—so quiet it felt unsettling.

It was as if everyone had forgotten about them. Even the Operations Command Center didn't know what orders to give him.

After seeing the overwhelming defeat of the Outer City superhumans at the other two fronts, Zhu Zheng was convinced that the Moon of Corrosion members were no weaker than the Celestial Squad.

If they sent Zhang Yi in any deeper, it'd be sending him to his death.

So, for now, Zhu Zheng abandoned the idea of letting Zhang Yi continue his mission.

After all, they needed to preserve at least some of the Outer City's superhuman forces.

But this unnatural silence only made Zhang Yi more puzzled.

He couldn't help but wonder—what was behind this strange peace?

Could it be that the Moon of Corrosion feared him?

That didn't seem likely.

Although his strength was formidable, he was still just an investigation captain-level superhuman.

Judging by the enemy's overall power, they had to have someone at least on par with him.

“Could it be... they haven’t detected me at all?”

Zhang Yi actually began to consider that possibility.

It sounded odd, but once all other possibilities were ruled out, the only explanation left was likely the correct one.

Occasionally, his comms device buzzed with battlefield updates from the other fronts.

When he learned that the Outer City teams on both sides had been annihilated, with over half of their forces lost, he realized he couldn’t afford to stay hidden any longer.

“The situation is worse than I imagined.”

“I didn’t want to reveal my full power... but if my hesitation ends up dooming this operation, that would be a loss no one could accept.”

“No one wants that outcome.”

“With my abilities, even if I do run into someone powerful, I can at least get Liang Yue and Hua Hua out safely.”

After sorting out his thoughts, Zhang Yi made a decision—no more waiting. Time to strike first!

But he wasn’t going in blind.

Thinking back to when Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li left earlier, Zhang Yi couldn’t help but chuckle.

Those two women had already entered the fog—just perfect for him to use them as scouts.

Zhang Yi stored his thunder-sparking rifle, Thunderstrike, into his Dimensional Space.

He turned to the demon cat, Hua Hua, and gently patted its head.

“Hua Hua, do you remember the scent of those two women from earlier? Can you find them?”

Hua Hua let out a crisp meow!

They hadn't gone far, and she could definitely trace their scent trail.

Zhang Yi nodded with a smile. "Good. Let's follow them."

Liang Yue looked at Zhang Yi curiously and asked, "You changed your mind?"

Zhang Yi replied flatly, "The battlefield changes in the blink of an eye. The enemy shifts, and so must I."

Liang Yue shrugged. "But why not just contact them directly?"

Zhang Yi laughed. "Simple. Because they don't trust me."

...

Elsewhere, a group of three led by Tsukamoto Nobunaga was also heading southeast.

Because Takeuchi Mayumi's divination book hadn't mentioned any enemies in that direction, Wagatsuma Nanako looked visibly uneasy.

"This is the first time we've run into something like this... I hope it's just a false alarm."

But Tsukamoto Nobunaga spoke slowly, "I don't think so."

"Hm?"

Wagatsuma Nanako and Takizawa Takashi both turned to look at him.

Nobunaga's eyelids drooped like he was always half-asleep.

But in his eyes flickered a sharp gleam, just like the blade of his famous katana, Great Prajna Light.

He said calmly, "I've studied the ancient siege tactics of China. They often used a strategy called 'surround three, leave one.'"

"They'd deliberately leave a gap to lure the enemy into a trap—make them think there's a path to escape."

“In other words, the enemy’s main force is likely in this direction.”

That hit hard—Nanako’s face turned serious.

“So... we’re in the most danger, aren’t we?”

Nobunaga nodded. “According to the Art of War, that would be correct.”

But instead of being worried, Takizawa Takashi burst out laughing.

“That just means we’ll get to kill more people, right?”

He didn’t seem concerned at all about dying.

Tilting his head up proudly, Takizawa said, “Takeuchi’s reading said I’ve got great fortune today!”

Nobunaga gave him a sidelong glance but said nothing.

Nanako, on the other hand, shot him a glare of exasperation.

“You—can you ever grow up a bit? Stop relying on Mayumi’s readings all the time, will you?”

Takizawa scratched his head. “But that’s how we’ve always done it, right? And she’s never been wrong.”

Nanako sighed helplessly.

“You’re not wrong about that...”

At that moment, the gray crow above them suddenly opened its eyes.

In their minds, they heard the voice of Nishijumu Satoru.

“Nobunaga, Takizawa, Wagatsuma—enemies just showed up in your direction!”

“There are two of them. Be careful!”

“They appeared out of nowhere. I suspect they’re special operatives from the Jiangnan District. Stay sharp!”

Hearing that, all three immediately tensed up.

Nobunaga's right hand slowly rested on the slender hilt of his Great Prajna Light.

Meanwhile, the two people still unaware they'd been discovered continued cautiously deeper into the mist.

Who else could it be? Of course, it was Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li, the two sisters.

Frustrated by Zhang Yi's passive attitude, they had decided to go it alone—hoping to earn as many points as possible from this mission!

If they succeeded, they wouldn't just claim Blizzard City's rewards; they could also seize territory in Linhai City.

For two ambitious women like Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li, eager to become powerhouses, that was a dream come true!

Even so, they moved forward very cautiously.

They had a plan—recon and probe only.

If they ran into a top-tier enemy, they'd retreat without hesitation.

The two had excellent coordination and abilities, making them top-tier at escaping.

Even without that coward Zhang Yi, they were confident they could pull off the mission.

This... was the Barbie Duo.

And in the midst of this total misunderstanding, the two sides finally crossed paths in the not-so-large Jiangning Plaza.

The moment they laid eyes on each other, tension filled the air.

Even Tsukamoto Nobunaga, a sword master and certified Two Heavens One Style instructor, instinctively reached for his blade.

“So... these are the special ops from Jiangnan District?”

Chapter 658: Severed in Two

Over on Takeuchi Mayumi's end, she was in a bit of a bad mood today.

Part of it was because today's battle gave her a genuine sense of danger.

But that wasn't the main reason.

What truly unsettled her was that someone had actually evaded her Takeuchi Picture Scroll ability and suddenly appeared near Jiangning Plaza.

She hadn't detected them until they were within a three-kilometer radius.

This was the first time she'd ever failed to predict an enemy's approach since awakening her power.

And precisely because of this failure to foresee the enemy's arrival from the southeast, today's operation had been thrown off by some unpredictable variables.

The encounter between Tsukamoto Nobunaga's trio and Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li had a touch of irony to it.

The Moon of Corrosion trio mistook the two women for members of the Celestial Squad and didn't dare to be careless.

Meanwhile, Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li, upon seeing that three Moon of Corrosion members were present, were freaking the h*ll out.

“F***! Of all times to show up, why now?!”

If they had revealed themselves earlier, at least Zhang Yi, Liang Yue, and Hua Hua would have still been nearby.

Five against three—they might’ve had a chance to hold out until the Celestial Squad arrived.

But now it was just the two of them. How were they supposed to fight back?

Peng Li’s heart pounded wildly. She used her comms to ask Chen Xiaoxiao, “What do we do? We can’t beat them. Should we run?”

“No. Stay calm!”

Chen Xiaoxiao rejected the idea immediately.

Her gaze swept toward Wagatsuma Nanako and Tsukamoto Nobunaga.

Takizawa Takashi was a long-range superhuman who used railgun attacks—if it were just him, escape might be possible.

But Wagatsuma's Kamaitachi ability specialized in speed.

And Nobunaga barely showed up in past footage... because he'd wiped out entire superhuman squads too fast to be caught on video.

With those two in play, turning and running would only confirm their weakness to the enemy.

And then... there'd be no escaping.

"Calm down. We've already located the enemy's trail—that's part of the mission accomplished."

Chen Xiaoxiao immediately opened her comms channel. After a brief moment of thought, she also connected with Zhang Yi's line.

"This is Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li. We've located Moon of Corrosion operatives to the southeast—three of them in total!"

At Headquarters, the monitoring system had already flagged the encounter.

Zhu Zheng's eyes immediately shifted to the screen.

“So they’re finally showing themselves again? That means only four haven’t made a move yet.”

He knew very well—there was no way Peng Li and Chen Xiaoxiao could beat those three.

So he wasted no time opening a line to Zhang Yi.

“Zhang Yi, Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li have made contact with the enemy. They won’t last long. You need to get there and back them up—now!”

But Zhang Yi had already received Chen Xiaoxiao’s message.

His lips curled slightly in a smirk. “Copy that. I’m already on my way.”

There were only three enemies—and Zhang Yi had already estimated their strength. He, Liang Yue, and Hua Hua were more than enough.

So this battle would be 3 versus 3.

Oh right—why not 5 versus 3?

Because Zhang Yi didn't believe Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li would be of any help.

Even if they could, he didn't want to share the credit.

Each Moon of Corrosion member had a massive bounty in points attached to them!

"Let's go. No need to rush though," Zhang Yi said casually.

He wanted Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li to fully realize how arrogant and overconfident they had been—and let them pay the price.

As for whether they lived or died? What did that have to do with him?

They weren't even close.

And even if they died, Zhang Yi could still complete the southeast mission.

Possibly exceed Headquarters' expectations, even.

Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li stood alert in place, not daring to strike first or flee.

They were beyond nervous, silently praying for Zhang Yi or someone from the Celestial Squad to arrive.

But the Moon of Corrosion trio had started to sense something was off.

Nobunaga's ears twitched—he could hear the rapid heartbeats of the two women.

That kind of heartbeat came from intense anxiety.

If the two really were Jiangnan District special forces, there was no way they'd be this flustered.

“Don’t tell me... just grunts?”

Seeing how cautious they were only confirmed Nobunaga’s suspicion.

“Let’s find out,” he thought—and then he and his sword vanished in a flash of movement.

As his body soared into the air, there was a sharp shiiing! as the blade of Great Prajna Light sliced through the sky like a streak of white silk.

Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li realized they'd been exposed and shouted in unison, "Watch out!"

They had prepared for combat, so their superpowers activated instantly.

Peng Li's hands lit up with two white beams that connected to Chen Xiaoxiao's body.

Her ability, Priest, enhanced Chen Xiaoxiao's strength, speed, and defense—and could also rapidly heal any non-lethal wounds.

Chen Xiaoxiao moved to shield her, her Enhancement-type ability reinforcing her physique.

With a powerful stomp from her well-trained legs, a ring of blizzard-like frost spread out from beneath her feet, rapidly expanding across the area in a circular formation.

At the same time, a sharp metallic shnk! came from the white boots on her feet—long blades sprang out from the soles.

Faced with Nobunaga's simple yet blindingly fast sword strike, she launched into a Capoeira move, blocking with the blade on her right foot.

Clang!

The blades clashed, and the massive force knocked Chen Xiaoxiao clean into the air.

But she landed gracefully and began gliding nimbly across the snowy ground.

Nobunaga glanced at the ground beneath him.

It had already been turned into a giant ice rink.

Wearing ice skates, she began circling him rapidly, searching for the perfect moment to strike.

“Oh?”

That was all Nobunaga said.

He didn’t bother tracking her movements. In fact, he slowly closed his eyes in front of the two women.

A fifty-meter-radius field formed around him.

This was one of his powers—Ten Yuan.

With himself as the center, he stood at the heart of the battlefield—every inch within fifty meters was within reach of his sword!

Chen Xiaoxiao danced across the ice, searching for a weakness.

But to her astonishment, Nobunaga—poised in a sword-drawing stance—had zero openings.

And with Wagatsuma Nanako and Takizawa Takashi nearby, she couldn't even focus properly.

That split-second of distraction was all Nobunaga needed.

No one saw his right hand draw the sword.

Only a flash of white light split the air.

And Chen Xiaoxiao's body, mid-motion—was severed in two.

Her waist had been cut cleanly, the muscle and intestines sliced so smoothly they gleamed like glass.

The strike was so fast... she didn't even feel the pain.

Chapter 659: The Disappearing Hexagram

Nobunaga's sword was too fast. As a master of Iaido, his draw speed was fast enough to slice bullets in midair.

As a licensed master of Niten Ichi-ryū, Nobunaga's sword-drawing speed had reached terrifying levels.

After becoming a superhuman, just how fast his blade could be—no one knew for sure.

But one thing was recorded in the files of Izumo, one of the two major organizations in the Neon Nation:

Among the Thirteen of the Moon of Corrosion, in terms of combat strength, Nobunaga ranked No. 2.

Chen Xiaoxiao's body, split cleanly in two, was flung through the air.

The result made her pupils shrink violently.

For the first time in her life, she felt such utter despair and helplessness.

Peng Li was pale with fright. Fortunately, the twin beams of holy light from her hands still connected to Chen Xiaoxiao's body.

She shouted and immediately pulled Chen Xiaoxiao's two halves back.

Midair, using her Priest ability, Peng Li reconnected the pieces.

Luckily, Nobunaga's sword had been too fast—the cut was so clean, like a mirror's surface, that fusing it back was relatively quick.

Chen Xiaoxiao stood on the ground, face deathly pale, swaying unsteadily.

That one strike had completely drained the blood from her body.

Across her lower abdomen, a neat cut still ran across her snowy white skin.

A thin red line of blood slowly trickled downward.

It looked like she'd been barely stitched back together—as if any sudden movement might make the upper half of her body fall off again.

Peng Li said anxiously, “Don’t move anymore! The injury is too serious. Healing this will take time!”

But they both knew... there was no time left.

This was it—the end of the line.

“So they’re just grunts after all?”

Nobunaga sheathed his blade with a dull, bored look.

He was disappointed.

He had expected to face elite opponents.

But who would’ve thought... they were this weak?

Not even worth a sword swing.

“Let’s just finish them off already,” said Wagatsuma Nanako.

“No need to rush,” Nobunaga said, lifting his head to look into the distance.

“Maybe... the real opponents are just now showing up.”

The mist rolled and churned as several figures slowly emerged.

“Well well, pretty sharp instincts.”

The man at the front wore a wicked smile. He tilted his head, eyes landing on Nobunaga—and especially on the katana in his hand.

“Seriously? What century are you from, still playing with samurai toys?”

Seeing them, Peng Li and Chen Xiaoxiao looked like they’d just seen their saviors.

They cried out in relief, “You’re finally here!”

The newcomers were none other than members of the Celestial Squad.

The man in the lead also held a blade, but his was massive—like a giant black door panel in weight and shape.

His face was tattooed with strange mystical runes, giving him an eerie and unfathomable aura.

Right then, Zhang Yi's group arrived as well.

Originally, Zhang Yi had planned to let Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li draw out the Moon of Corrosion, then step in to clean up.

But unexpectedly, the Celestial Squad had arrived first.

Shao Tianyi, a member of the Celestial Squad, gave Zhang Yi a quick glance and said coldly,

“You guys were too slow. Headquarters ordered us to take over this battlefield.”

“Perfect timing—take these two useless women and get out.”

“The next part of the fight is way beyond your level of superhuman. Stay out of it.”

Liang Yue didn't say anything, just looked at Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi's lips curled into a faint smirk.

He shrugged. "Since the pros are here, there's no point in sticking around. We're out."

Then he turned to Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li, his gaze naturally falling on the horrific wound around Chen Xiaoxiao's waist.

"You still able to walk?"

Chen Xiaoxiao had been forcing herself to stand. After all, she'd been cut in half—full recovery would take time.

She bit her lip and avoided Zhang Yi's eyes, clearly embarrassed.

Right now, she was deeply regretting her reckless decision.

Zhang Yi's cautiousness had been justified.

They had seriously underestimated the strength of the Moon of Corrosion.

Zhang Yi gave Hua Hua a look. The cat stepped up to Chen Xiaoxiao and lowered itself.

Peng Li quickly helped her onto Hua Hua's back, her hands still glowing as she continued healing her.

Zhang Yi didn't waste another second. He turned to leave.

After a while, he heard Chen Xiaoxiao's weak voice behind him.

"Zhang Yi... thank you."

Zhang Yi glanced at her. "No need to thank me. Just happened to be passing by."

Chen Xiaoxiao's face flushed—not just from internal injuries, but from shame.

Peng Li sighed, eyes full of regret.

"We came here hoping to make a name for ourselves... and ended up becoming a joke."

The massive power gap had forced them to face reality.

Still, it wasn't entirely their fault—this was their first time facing the Moon of Corrosion.

Back in their city, they'd been practically invincible—and that illusion made them overconfident.

Liang Yue leaned in close and whispered in Zhang Yi's ear,

"Why didn't you step in earlier? With your strength, those three shouldn't be a problem."

Zhang Yi looked at her and replied with a question, "Do you even know what level they are?"

Liang Yue paused, then said, "No matter how strong, they can't be stronger than you. You even took down Yuan Kongye."

Zhang Yi said, "That was because I planned it for a long time. I gathered tons of intel, moved countless pieces, and barely pulled it off."

"Remember this—never underestimate your opponent. Don't trust your gut to size up an enemy. Never be blindly confident."

“We came here because of a sliver of duty in our hearts. Not to show off. Not to chase points.”

“Now that the Celestial Squad has stepped in, let them fight to the death if they want.”

Liang Yue stared at Zhang Yi’s face—stoic yet lazy—and couldn’t help but chuckle softly.

“I’m starting to understand you less and less.”

Zhang Yi said, “No need to understand. Just follow my lead.”

As they left, Nobunaga’s trio didn’t even spare them a glance.

To them, those few weren’t even worth acknowledging.

Their true opponents were the Celestial Squad members standing before them.

But just then, all three heard Nishijumu Satoru’s voice in their heads.

“Nobunaga, Takizawa, Wagatsuma—are you three alright? Respond immediately!”

The three exchanged confused looks.

Satoru's tone was frantic, like something terrible had happened.

Nobunaga answered, "We're fine. What happened?"

Satoru finally let out a breath of relief.

He looked toward Takeuchi Mayumi, who was sitting nearby clutching her head, her face filled with panic and confusion.

Then he spoke slowly to the trio:

"Just now... the three of you vanished from Mayumi's divination hexagram."

Chapter 660: Pursuit

The Moon of Corrosion's shrine maiden, the 37th-generation heir of the Takeuchi family—Takeuchi Mayumi—was currently caught in a spiral of deep self-doubt.

Because her most prized ability, Takeuchi Picture Scroll, had just failed.

It was as if some existence had forcibly erased her divination from functioning.

And so, Phoenixin Ren immediately asked Nishijumu Satoru to contact Nobunaga and the other two.

Satoru relayed their status back to Phoenixin.

“No,” Takeuchi Mayumi said, “there was definitely something there that blinded my vision!”

“It clouded everything—I truly couldn’t see anything!”

The smile disappeared from Phoenixin Ren’s face.

The greatest trump card of the Moon of Corrosion wasn’t him, nor was it Daiku Kai Enzu, Shinguuji Seiichiro, or Tsukamoto Nobunaga.

It was the shrine maiden with the gift of prophecy—Takeuchi Mayumi—who could steer the group away from misfortune and toward success.

If her ability stopped working, then the Moon of Corrosion would be fighting blind in Huaxia.

Phoenixin's eyes gleamed sharply.

He turned to Nishijumu and said, "Ask them—what exactly happened over there just now?"

Nishijumu passed on the question faithfully.

At that moment, Nobunaga, Takizawa, and Wagatsuma were facing off against the Celestial Squad trio.

But Nobunaga remained composed, explaining everything through Gokishin, from their first encounter with Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li to everything that had unfolded since.

Phoenixin's gaze darkened.

"You disappeared from Mayumi's view right at the moment when those other people appeared, even if just for a moment."

"That means... the issue lies with those people! Especially the two who came later and that strange beast with them."

"They must be found—and killed!"

Phoenixin understood—those individuals were the blind spot in Takeuchi Mayumi's ability.

If the enemy realized this, they could exploit it—and then the Moon of Corrosion would be in serious danger.

Nobunaga grunted softly.

His dull, lifeless eyes never left the trio before him as he calmly said to Takizawa Takashi and Wagatsuma Nanako:

“I'll handle these three. You two go chase down the others. Bring their heads back—for the boss.”

Takizawa and Wagatsuma both understood the gravity of the task.

“Alright, this one's yours. Just don't die, alright?”

With that, Takizawa called out to Wagatsuma, and the two left together.

Wagatsuma stirred up a swirling gust around herself—her Kamaitachi ability activating.

Grabbing Takizawa's arm, she leapt into the air, heading in the direction Zhang Yi and the others had fled.

This sight instantly enraged the Celestial Squad trio.

They were trying to chase down Outer City superhumans right in front of them—a blatant insult!

But just as they were about to intercept, a cold, deadly arc of sword light slashed across the space between them and the fleeing enemies.

The sheer edge of the sword strike made the air feel like ice—it gouged a trench tens of meters long into the earth!

Nobunaga stared them down.

“Where are you looking?” he said slowly. “Your opponent is right here.”

Shao Tianyi's gaze locked onto Nobunaga, cold as steel.

One of his teammates asked, “What now? Do we go after them?”

“With the strength of those people earlier, if we don’t help, they’ll definitely die.”

But Shao Tianyi smirked.

“Doesn’t matter. If their deaths can tie up two Moon of Corrosion members, it’s a good trade.”

He raised his massive greatsword, pointing the blade straight at Nobunaga’s head.

“Our mission... is to kill Moon of Corrosion members. Three versus one—he’s dead meat.”

...

On the battlefield, now that the Celestial Squad had stepped in, the Outer City superhumans had officially exited the stage.

Zhang Yi, Liang Yue, and the battered duo of Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li were on their way out of Jiangning Plaza, heading to the armed transport helicopter for some rest—and to wait for the final results.

But just then, Hua Hua’s eyes gleamed warily.

The cat turned its head and let out a cautious meow.

Moments later, Zhang Yi and the others also felt something approaching behind them.

The sharp whistle of something cutting through the air at high speed.

“We’ve got company,” Zhang Yi said calmly.

Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li both tensed up.

By now, they had fully realized just how terrifying the Moon of Corrosion members were.

They were in no condition to fight—if more enemies came, they could only rely on Zhang Yi, Liang Yue, and Hua Hua.

But given their relationship with Zhang Yi, it was entirely possible he would just leave them to die.

That thought filled the two women with dread.

Sure enough, moments later, Wagatsuma Nanako came gliding over, dragging Takizawa Takashi with her.

Takizawa's lips curled into a cruel grin at the sight of the group on the ground.

"Well, well... these trash didn't get far!"

They didn't see Zhang Yi's group as any kind of threat.

They had already seen Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li's abilities firsthand.

And judging by their previous behavior, Zhang Yi, Liang Yue, and Hua Hua were also just Outer City superhumans, not elite members of the Celestial Squad.

Especially when the Celestial Squad had shown up and Zhang Yi's team immediately turned tail—that only solidified their assumption.

To Takizawa and Wagatsuma, these were just low-level grunts.

Killing them would be a breeze.

The two zipped across the air and cut off Zhang Yi's escape route.

"Aren't you guys the ones who tried to kill us?" Takizawa sneered. "Why are you running now?"

As he spoke, six coins appeared between his fingers.

Peng Li's face went pale. She was still using her Priest ability to keep Chen Xiaoxiao alive.

Chen may have looked stable on the surface, but the moment the healing stopped, she'd be dead in ten minutes—her internal organs were all severely ruptured.

Which meant the two of them were completely unable to fight.

Could Zhang Yi and the others handle this?

Peng Li was nearly in despair.

"Dmmit, why did they follow us here? Where the hell is the Celestial Squad—why didn't they stop them?"

Chen Xiaoxiao gritted her teeth and whispered to Peng Li,

"If it really comes down to it, I'll throw my life away to hold them off. Peng Li, your ability is useful—go help Zhang Yi. Escape with them if you can."

Peng Li's eyes welled up, but she nodded through her tears.

She wanted to refuse, but there was no room for sentimentality now.

Faced with the sudden appearance of two Moon of Corrosion operatives, Liang Yue silently gripped the hilt of the Loong Roar Sword.

But Zhang Yi placed a hand over hers.

Liang Yue looked at him, confused.

Zhang Yi's voice was calm.

"Your ability isn't suited for fighting them. Let me do it."

"Besides... I'm really not in the mood to waste time on grunts."