

Ice Age 671

Chapter 671: Driven Back

By the time Zhang Yi reached the western front, Liao Honglei had already been killed by Shinguuji Seiichiro's trap.

But Zhang Yi sharply noticed two heavily wounded, dying members of the Moon of Corrosion on the battlefield.

There was no way he was letting a golden opportunity like that slip by—without hesitation, he pulled the trigger and finished them off!

Shinguuji Seiichiro's abilities couldn't stop Zhang Yi's bullets. All he could do was watch helplessly as his two teammates were killed.

After confirming the deaths of Akutsu Shinichiro and Kamiya Gedou, Shinguuji didn't hesitate in the slightest. He decisively let his Shikigami shield him as he retreated into the thick mist.

Not long after, Zhang Yi slowly stepped forward, fully armed and cloaked in the Absolute Barrier Between Two Realms.

He held a pair of White Owls in his hands, his sharp gaze scanning the battlefield.

Although it was covered in fog, as a spatial-type Superhuman, Zhang Yi was hypersensitive to fluctuations in the air.

At his current level, any living creature within 500 meters—just the sound of breathing—could be picked up by his senses.

Very quickly, he detected hidden figures within the mist, along with several other presences.

From the fog charged a massive golden ape and a three-headed hellhound wreathed in flames, attacking Zhang Yi from both sides.

Zhang Yi stayed calm, monitoring his surroundings as he extended both arms left and right.

The two enormous Shikigami didn't see him dodging and lunged at him head-on.

Kinmaru raised its casserole-sized fist and roared, slamming it down.

Akamaru exhaled molten lava, its three enormous heads letting out bone-chilling howls.

"Splat!!"

A torrent of lava blasted straight for Zhang Yi's head.

But before it could even get close, the lava vanished into thin air—sucked into Zhang Yi's Dimensional Space.

Kinmaru's fist, however, did get close.

Its power was monstrous. But the moment it struck down, its entire body was pulled into the Dimensional Space without leaving even a ripple.

Although Akamaru was slightly slower, just a beat behind, its massive body was also swept into Zhang Yi's Dimensional Space.

Or rather—technically—it ran right into it on its own.

Deep within the mist, cold sweat poured from Shinguuji Seiichiro's forehead.

Though he still didn't know exactly who Zhang Yi was or what his ability entailed, the fact that his two top-tier Shikigami had been effortlessly neutralized made one thing crystal clear—

This man's ability countered his!

After sealing away Kinmaru and Akamaru, Zhang Yi turned his gaze toward Shinguuji Seiichiro.

The distance between them was roughly 400 meters.

Perfect.

A twisted white light began to appear in Zhang Yi's right eye as a terrifying spatial force quickly gathered.

At that moment, Shinguuji Seiichiro felt a chilling sense of impending death.

As a stock trader by profession, he was naturally extremely cautious.

So, without a second thought—

He turned and ran.

Zhang Yi froze for a moment—he hadn't expected the guy to be so... cautious.

The release wind-up for Divine Power took about a full second. If the target was on guard, landing a hit wasn't easy.

Zhang Yi's eyes darted toward the direction Shinguuji fled. He sensed unusual fluctuations—someone had to be hiding in that direction.

But the fog was too thick, and his intel on the battlefield was too limited.

If he rushed in blindly, he could fall into a Moon of Corrosion ambush.

He had no interest in fighting several elite enemies at once.

After a bit of thought, Zhang Yi decided not to pursue into the mist. Instead, he turned to collect his spoils.

Once he confirmed no one else was nearby, he quickly went over and retrieved the corpses of the two Moon of Corrosion members.

Normally, once the head was destroyed, a Superhuman's origin would quickly dissipate—but if placed into Dimensional Space, that wouldn't happen.

Zhang Yi carefully stored the bodies, but his gaze remained puzzled as he looked in the direction Shinguuji had fled.

He couldn't understand—why had Shinguuji chosen to retreat the moment he made a move? Why didn't he keep fighting?

"No... maybe it was a tactical retreat. Because of something else going on?"

Zhang Yi frowned slightly.

"It can't be because he actually knows how strong I am, right?"

That seemed even less likely.

Even in the Jiangnan District, barely anyone truly understood the extent of Zhang Yi's strength.

Shinguuji Seiichiro had the power to solo a Celestial Squad Vice-Captain. Why would he fear Zhang Yi enough to run?

What Zhang Yi didn't know was—his opponent was just as cautious as he was. A full-blown pessimist, even.

The moment Shinguuji realized Zhang Yi's ability might counter his, he didn't hesitate at all—he left his comrades' corpses behind and bolted.

Meanwhile, the intel from this front was being reported back to Zhu Zheng at the Operations Command Center.

Zhu Zheng, Tu Yunlie, and the others were dumbfounded.

None of them had expected that in the end, it wasn't the Celestial Squad who earned the credit—but Zhang Yi, the Superhuman from the Outer City!

Only Baili Changqing sighed inwardly. This outcome didn't surprise him at all.

In fact, if Zhang Yi weren't so cautious—if he were even slightly more aggressive—this battle might have ended in even more spectacular fashion.

Zhu Zheng murmured,

“I didn't expect Zhang Yi to be this powerful. If I'd known earlier, I would've reassigned him!”

Lan Xincheng interjected,

“He just picked off the wounded Kamiya Gedou and Akutsu Shinichiro. That's hardly worth bragging about.”

Tu Yunlie gave him a cool glance.

“But he also scared off Shinguuji.”

“And he previously took out that Moon of Corrosion couple—entirely on his own.”

“To be honest, I think this guy might actually be able to go toe-to-toe with a Vice-Captain-level fighter.”

Lan Xincheng paused, then said coldly,

“If he’s so strong, then why did he keep hiding it? If he had gone to support the other fronts earlier, maybe the outcome would’ve been totally different!”

He looked toward Zhu Zheng.

“Commander Zhu, I still think this guy isn’t fully loyal to Blizzard City.”

That line drew a snort of laughter from Baili Changqing.

“Pfft!”

The sound cut through the Operations Command Center like a blade.

Lan Xincheng glared at him.

“Baili Changqing, what the h*ll are you laughing at?”

Baili Changqing spread his hands.

“Nothing. I just think... maybe we shouldn’t judge Outer City Superhumans by Blizzard City standards?”

“And among all the Outer City folks, Zhang Yi performed the best in this operation.”

Lan Xincheng had no real comeback to that.

All he could say was,

“Anyone with the ability to help his comrades but chooses to hold back? That’s something no true elite of Blizzard City would ever do!”

“Enough.”

Zhu Zheng shut Lan Xincheng down.

He had no interest in listening to their bickering right now.

There were more pressing matters to worry about.

Lan Xincheng immediately shut up and didn’t bring it up again.

But before long, he thought of another idea.

“Now that we know Zhang Yi has some real strength, why not send him to keep fighting the Moon of Corrosion? That way, he can also support the remaining Celestial Squad members on the field.”

Though that sounded good in theory, the actual battles on the ground weren’t going well.

And Deng Shentong had already stormed into the Moon of Corrosion’s Headquarters, where he was locked in combat with their leader—Phoenixin Ren.

That clash would decide the outcome of the entire operation!

Zhu Zheng looked at Zhang Yi on the monitor, pondered for a moment, then said:

“Zhang Yi, your mission is complete. Return now.”

Lan Xincheng was shocked.

“Commander Zhu—”

Zhu Zheng ignored him and ended the communication with Zhang Yi.

Too many had already died in this battle.

From here on, it would be the showdown between Deng Shentong and Phoenixin Ren that would determine victory or defeat.

Chapter 672: Four Kills to Close It Out

At Deng Shentong’s level of combat, ordinary Superhumans joining in would just be throwing their lives away.

Right now, Zhang Yi had already completed his task—and not just completed it, but far exceeded Zhu Zheng’s expectations.

Zhu Zheng wanted to keep this promising talent around.

If possible, he hoped to bring Zhang Yi into Blizzard City. In the future, he might even become a Captain-level force.

Zhang Yi was a bit surprised by Zhu Zheng's order.

He had assumed Zhu Zheng would have him continue assisting on the battlefield.

And if that were the case, Zhang Yi wouldn't have refused.

After all, with his strength, cleaning up the battlefield was a piece of cake—and he could easily collect kills and earn Points rewards.

Even if he ran into an enemy he couldn't handle, escaping wouldn't be a problem.

But since Zhu Zheng had issued such a direct recall, that meant he clearly had confidence in Deng Shentong and the others.

Zhang Yi wasn't someone who liked showing off, so he calmly surveyed the western battlefield one last time, then began withdrawing at a steady pace.

With a glorious record of killing Moon of Corrosion elites on the western front, Zhang Yi departed Jiangning Plaza.

Not long after stepping out, medics rushed over to meet him.

Zhang Yi simply gave them a faint smile.

"I'm fine."

The medics exchanged surprised glances—the respect in their eyes toward Zhang Yi was clear.

Because in this mission, over half of the Superhumans from the Outer City had been killed or injured. Almost none walked out unscathed.

But Zhang Yi was the last man standing from the battlefield.

Even though they didn't know exactly what had happened out there, that alone was enough to earn him awe.

Zhang Yi boarded the armed helicopter.

It had already been converted into a makeshift intensive care unit. Of the surviving Outer City Superhumans, only Liang Yue and Peng Li were relatively unharmed.

Yuan Hao lay pale and weak on a stretcher bed, looking like he was hanging on by a thread.

His girlfriend, Xia Lingling, stood at his side with lifeless eyes, silent as a corpse.

Only now did Zhang Yi notice the horrific wounds across Xia Lingling's body, the torn flesh looking inhuman.

And only now did he understand why she hadn't been included in the Outer City count earlier—she wasn't in fighting condition at all.

Mo Zhongning, Li Weihai, and the others weren't doing any better.

The battle had left deep scars, not just on their bodies, but on their morale.

In essence, the Outer City Superhumans and the Moon of Corrosion were very similar—rogue forces not affiliated with any formal organization.

But when it came to actual combat, the difference in power was like night and day!

If the Celestial Squad hadn't arrived in time, they'd all be dead.

So when Zhang Yi returned unscathed, many of them gave him strange and envious looks.

Zhang Yi ignored them and walked straight over to Liang Yue, sitting down beside her.

Chen Xiaoxiao, after Peng Li's treatment and some medication from the medical team, had mostly recovered.

While she wouldn't be able to fight again any time soon, her life was no longer in danger.

She looked at Zhang Yi, her eyes already carrying a trace of awe.

After all, she had personally witnessed Zhang Yi instantly kill two Moon of Corrosion members.

"Zhang Yi, did you finish your mission?"

Chen Xiaoxiao asked cautiously.

Zhang Yi thought about it. Zhu Zheng had ordered him to support the northern front.

But by the time he arrived, Liao Honglei had already been killed.

Still, he did kill Kamiya Gedou and Akutsu Shinichiro. So all things considered, he had fulfilled his orders.

He nodded.

"Something like that."

The moment he said that, everyone in the helicopter was stunned.

Even the medical staff couldn't help but glance over in disbelief.

Mo Zhongning stared at him in shock.

"You... don't tell me you actually took down Moon of Corrosion members?"

He lowered his head, murmuring,

"Those guys... they're like monsters..."

Li Weihai shook his head.

"That's impossible. Only the Celestial Squad can go toe-to-toe with them."

"As for us Outer City Superhumans... we're just cannon fodder."

Zhang Yi hadn't planned to say anything to them.

But hearing such defeatist talk, he couldn't help but let out a cold chuckle.

"Moon of Corrosion, huh? They're strong? I didn't get that impression."

"Maybe... you're just weak."

That line instantly infuriated the already-traumatized group.

Mo Zhongning fumed,

“Zhang Yi, did you really face them? Do you even know how strong they are?”

Li Weihai also chimed in,

“From what I heard, no Moon of Corrosion members showed up on your front. Maybe that gave you some false sense of confidence.”

“As for this so-called ‘supporting the northern front’... maybe you just hung back and fired a few lucky shots from cover!”

Zhang Yi sighed, leaning back in his seat inside the helicopter.

He spoke in a slow, casual tone.

“Maybe you’re right. Maybe it was just a misunderstanding.”

“I just happened to run into a few weak Moon of Corrosion members... and took them out.”

“That’s all.”

That sentence completely changed the mood inside the helicopter.

Even the frail Yuan Hao sat up from his stretcher, staring at Zhang Yi with disbelief.

“You... what did you just say? You really killed Moon of Corrosion members? And three of them?”

Chen Xiaoxiao and Peng Li were equally stunned, eyes locked on Zhang Yi.

He... killed two more?

That meant Zhang Yi alone had wiped out a third of the Moon of Corrosion forces on the field!

That kind of achievement could only be described as terrifying.

“You’ve got to be kidding...”

Mo Zhongning’s smile stiffened.

Even though he knew Zhang Yi had no reason to lie about something like this, the truth was just too much to swallow.

Killing one Moon of Corrosion member was already hard to believe.

They were all Outer City Superhumans, leaders of their respective factions, supposedly on similar footing.

So why was he that much stronger?

Zhang Yi didn’t bother to explain.

He leaned back in his chair, eyes gazing out the window toward the center of Jiangning Plaza.

Now, all he had to do was wait.

Wait for the outcome of the fight between Deng Shentong and the leader of the Moon of Corrosion.

At the Operations Command Center, all eyes were also locked on that location.

Deng Shentong was now their last hope!

Even though the situation on the field didn't look great, Zhu Zheng remained calmer than anyone.

Because he had full faith in Deng Shentong's strength.

Behind Deng Shentong stood not only the armed might of Blizzard City, but the technological foundation of the Deng Group, built over decades!

And right in the center of Jiangning Plaza, king met king—two Captain-level Superhumans finally collided.

At that moment, all of Moon of Corrosion, the Command Center, and the Outer City Superhumans felt it:

A terrifying force that seemed to freeze the very air itself erupted from the center of the plaza!

Chapter 673: Hymn of Light

While the other fronts were still locked in stalemates, the battle between Deng Shentong and Phoenixin Ren had already begun.

Everyone knew—this was the fight that would decide the outcome of the entire war.

Nishijumu Satoru quickly evacuated Takeuchi Mayumi from the battlefield.

A battle at this level wasn't something they had any right to get close to.

From here on, it was all up to Phoenixin Ren.

Once his two teammates had retreated, Phoenixin Ren fixed his gaze on Deng Shentong with a smile, vicious glints flashing under the brim of his newsboy cap.

“As long as I take you out here, I think the old men in the Jiangnan District will finally wake the h*ll up!”

Deng Shentong, on the other hand, simply grinned and beckoned at him.

“You’re welcome to try!”

Phoenixin Ren dropped his smile.

From the center of his forehead, a vivid red mark began to surface, spreading outward along both cheeks and gradually forming a striking pattern across his face.

It was a brilliant, multicolored red—deep, bright, and dazzling—sparkling with flecks of starlight like the scattered shine of a galactic river flowing beneath his skin.

The blood-red markings spread down to his neck, his hands, and eventually covered his entire body.

A suffocatingly powerful aura surged around him.

He may not have looked tall or muscular, but now just clenching his fists made it feel like he could punch a hole through the sky.

Leader of Moon of Corrosion, Phoenixin Ren.

An Enhancement Type ability user.

Code name: Phoenix.

Scarlet blood energy swirled around Phoenixin Ren's body, rapidly raising the temperature of the surrounding space. Large swaths of ice and snow began to melt instantly.

He didn't rush in. Instead, he locked eyes with his opponent across the field.

"Come on. Let me see what you've got!"

Deng Shentong smiled and nodded lightly.

"Sure."

As soon as the words left his mouth, he spread his arms wide like the wings of an angel.

In the next instant, a burst of magnificent, divine radiance exploded from him, surging outward in all directions!

Inside Phoenixin Ren's pupils, all color suddenly vanished.

Even the black of his irises turned white.

He felt as if he were in a completely blank world—everything gone.

Even his own body was nowhere to be seen.

Captain of Celestial Squad, Deng Shentong.

An Enhancement Type ability user.

Code name: Hymn of Light.

His ability... was Light.

He could grant light to others—or take it away.

Under this move, Null World, everyone except Deng Shentong would lose their sight.

All they'd see was a vast white void, nothing more.

Phoenixin Ren stood not far away—but he could no longer see him.

Deng Shentong's lips curled upward. He stepped forward—and in the blink of an eye, he was right in front of Phoenixin Ren.

He launched a punch straight at his head!

Although Phoenixin Ren had lost his sight, his combat instincts were still intact. His sharp sixth sense warned him of the incoming attack.

As the punch cut through the air, he raised his arms to block.

But he was still half a beat slower than Deng Shentong.

In a duel at this level, even a split-second delay could be fatal.

Still—despite being blind—Phoenixin Ren was able to block Deng Shentong's strikes with remarkable precision!

That surprised Deng Shentong a little.

With the Phoenix power coursing through him, Phoenixin Ren was trading blow for blow.

The glowing blood marks pulsing across his body had given his strength and speed an enormous boost.

“Interesting.”

The smile at Deng Shentong’s lips deepened.

But even so... so what?

White hexagrams gleamed in his eyes—platinum stars that shone like heavenly light.

A white holy glow enveloped his body, making him appear even more radiant and imposing, like a god walking the earth.

This was his ability—Sacred Form Enhancement!

It coated his entire body in divine radiance and made him an unstoppable force in close-quarters combat.

The Light power clashed with the Phoenix power at point-blank range. Deng Shentong’s speed kept accelerating, and his strength grew more terrifying.

At first, Phoenixin Ren could still react on instinct and defend against Deng’s strikes.

But soon, even when he could detect the attack—his body couldn’t keep up.

And even when his body reacted—he was completely overpowered.

The battlefield was flooded with holy white light.

Neither the Operations Command Center, nor the rest of Moon of Corrosion, could see what was happening.

That's why no one truly knew what Deng Shentong's ability was.

Except Zhu Zheng, who had absolute faith in Deng Shentong.

After all, Deng Shentong was the greatest masterpiece to come out of the collaboration between the Jiangnan District and the Deng Corporation.

From his powers, to his mind, to his equipment—everything was at the peak of excellence.

He was the idol Jiangnan had created, a god-like figure who gave its people hope.

Since the apocalypse began, Celestial Squad had never failed a single mission.

And in one-on-one combat—Deng Shentong had never lost.

No one could see how the fight was progressing.

Only the constant, deafening booms gave any clue—like the sound of a war drum struck by flesh and bone.

Thud!

Deng Shentong's punch broke through Phoenixin Ren's guard, blasted past his arms, and slammed into his chest!

His chest immediately caved in, a clear fist imprint left behind.

Deng's smile remained as he grabbed Phoenixin Ren's shoulder with his left hand and drove another devastating punch right into the wound with his right.

Phoenixin Ren struggled desperately, but the heavy injury to his chest robbed him of all strength.

Splat!

This time, Deng Shentong's punch tore through Phoenixin Ren's chest—bursting out his back!

His pristine white combat suit was still dazzling, even with blood staining it—it looked like plum blossoms blooming on snow.

But Deng Shentong's smile slowly faded.

The leader of Moon of Corrosion... was this weak?

He couldn't believe it.

But the sensations in his hand were real—he could feel the frantic rhythm of Phoenixin Ren's organs.

And just then, Phoenixin Ren slowly raised his head and gave him a blood-soaked smile.

In the next instant—his body erupted in flames!

He clamped tightly onto Deng Shentong's arm, refusing to let go.

The red flames blazed with searing heat—even Deng Shentong furrowed his brow.

His combat suit had been made with the finest tech in Blizzard City, far superior to those of the Six Investigation Teams.

But even so, the fire ignited by Phoenixin Ren’s self-immolation sent a chilling warning of danger through him.

Chapter 674: Undying

Deng Shentong sensed something unusual about the flames from Phoenixin Ren’s self-immolation.

Without a moment's hesitation, he broke free from Phoenixin’s grasp with all his might and retreated far back.

In the midst of the crimson blaze, Phoenixin was still smiling.

Even though his body was on the verge of collapse, not a trace of fear showed on his face.

“What the h*ll is going on?”

Deng Shentong stared warily at him.

He knew that as the leader of Moon of Corrosion, Phoenixin’s abilities couldn’t possibly be that simple.

But so what?

He’d fought plenty of tough opponents over the years.

As the flames raged, Phoenixin's body slowly slumped to the ground.

But rather than dying out, the fire only grew fiercer—and Deng heard a sharp, piercing cry.

The crimson flames transformed into a three-headed flaming phoenix!

Moments later, the charred remains began to move again, rising from the ground.

The blackened dust fell away, revealing a powerful new body underneath.

Though naked, it radiated strength.

Phoenixin Ren had been reborn from the flames—and there wasn't a single scar on his body.

It was perfect, as if he had just been born.

For the first time, Deng Shentong's expression turned serious.

He remembered clearly—his punch had pierced through Phoenixin Ren's chest, nearly shattering his heart.

There was no way a human could survive that.

So why... was this guy standing here again, good as new?

Was it because he hadn't landed a finishing blow?

Deng licked the blood at the corner of his lips—Phoenixin Ren's blood.

“Then I’ll just kill you again.”

The glow of Sacred Form Enhancement around Deng grew even more brilliant.

His speed increased sharply—he was practically the embodiment of light.

Just reborn from the flames, Phoenixin was immediately struck again—Deng had closed the distance and launched another punch!

Phoenixin smiled as he raised both arms to block.

Even with his vision stripped away, he had special ways of predicting Deng Shentong’s movements.

Outside the blinding haze, Takeuchi Mayumi knelt in the rubble.

She slowly slit her wrist, letting thick streams of blood pour onto the scroll before her—the Takeuchi Scroll.

The blood infused the scroll with a haunting energy.

Inside Phoenixin’s now-white eyes, the mark of reincarnation began to spin.

Even at the peak of their powers, the battle between two top-tier paranormals still came down to flesh versus flesh.

Deng Shentong’s ability to rob opponents of their sight gave him an overwhelming advantage.

Phoenixin was stuck in a defensive posture, relying on special techniques.

He tried to go on the offensive—but without sight, he was always a step behind.

Even with phoenix fire blazing around him, he still couldn't locate Deng, who moved within the brilliance of light.

Splat!

This time, Deng formed a blade with his hand and drove it precisely through Phoenixin's heart!

"Let's see if you can still come back from this!"

Deng stared him down, enunciating each word.

But once again—Phoenixin's body ignited, and he crawled out of the ashes completely intact!

At last, Deng Shentong understood Phoenixin's ability:

Undying.

Even a fatal blow could be reversed—he could be reborn through fire.

This ability... was seriously troublesome.

No matter how you killed him, unless you annihilated every single cell, he'd keep coming back.

Phoenixin stood once more in flawless condition.

With a teasing grin, he said:

"Sorry! My best trait is—I just don't die."

An immortal opponent could slowly grind down anyone with endless methods.

But Deng Shentong wasn't fazed at all.

He snorted.

"Can't kill you? Then I'll just kill you again. And again."

He didn't believe there was such a thing as true immortality.

Every carbon-based lifeform eventually dies.

Either he hadn't found Phoenixin's vital weakness...

Or he just hadn't killed him enough times.

But it didn't matter. He'd keep going until Phoenixin could no longer resurrect.

Deng gently touched his own cheek, his voice turning cold.

"My teammates are still waiting for news of my victory. I don't have all day to waste here with you."

"So... let's speed things up!"

"Great Sumeru, Illusory Realm!"

In a daze, Phoenixin's sight returned for the first time.

Inside the sea of white, he actually saw Deng Shentong's distant figure.

But before he could feel joy, Deng's shadow stretched endlessly—

And the world around him twisted into a kaleidoscope of illusions.

He saw bustling Kyoto, then suddenly the fields of Kagoshima.

He jumped through time and space—from villages to cities—

Even the clamor of human life buzzed in his ears.

“This is... an illusion?”

Phoenixin realized what was happening—but he couldn't stop it.

Everything he saw, everything he heard—was fake.

BOOM!

His head exploded like a watermelon.

Blinded and deafened, Phoenixin had no way of defending against Deng's assault.

Outside the mist, Takeuchi Mayumi's blood had faded from the scroll.

But without hesitation, she cut her wrist again.

It was too cold—the wound kept clotting quickly.

She had to reopen it repeatedly to keep her sorcery active.

Nishijumu Satoru looked on, heart aching.

Everyone knew this could cost her the entire use of her arm.

Even for a miko with supernatural powers, that rule was no exception.

But Takeuchi Mayumi didn't hesitate at all.

Back in the illusion, Phoenixin stood up again.

He looked completely unaffected.

No matter how many times he died—he was reborn in flames, perfectly whole.

No deterioration. No fatigue.

“Impossible. That’s completely impossible...”

Deng Shentong frowned, forming a theory in his mind.

“Even if resurrection is his power, it has to cost energy. He may look fine on the outside, but it must be draining his ability reserves.”

“If I kill him a few more times, he’ll eventually disappear!”

Deng remained completely calm.

He refused to believe that someone could be truly immortal.

Compared to other foes, Phoenixin's only strength was being harder to kill—

In every other aspect, he had no advantage.

"Come on. Let's see how many times you can die!"

Deng Shentong, glowing like the light itself, flashed behind Phoenixin.

His right leg whipped around like a long chain and slammed toward the back of Phoenixin's skull!

But this time—even with his sight and hearing stripped away—Phoenixin still managed to block the strike with perfect precision!

Chapter 675: Great Sumeru Illusory Realm

Using sight to affect hearing, smell, and taste—this kind of ability was called synesthesia.

Deng Shentong's skill, Great Sumeru Illusory Realm, was based on this principle.

It disrupted the enemy's senses, splitting their spirit and body into separate spaces—then severed their flesh.

Once caught in this illusion, even shutting your eyes wouldn't help.

So under normal circumstances, no one should be able to defend against his attacks after falling into it.

But Phoenixin Ren had done exactly that.

Even though Deng's raw power clearly outclassed his, Phoenixin's ability to hold him off left a real impression.

He couldn't figure out—how the h*ll was this guy managing it?

"Stubborn bastard!"

Deng hurled a punch at Phoenixin—

And it felt like a thousand fists landing all at once!

As the most cutting-edge creation of Deng Corporation's biotechnology division, Deng's physical strength rivaled the best of all Enhancement Type paranormals.

That's why Zhu Zheng believed Deng Shentong was the most perfect paranormal—someone with the potential to break past the limits of current ability tiers and reach the fabled Epsilon level.

From a paranormal's perspective, Deng Shentong was perfection itself.

Balanced in offense and defense, flawless whether in supernatural arts or hand-to-hand combat.

Phoenixin's eyes were lifeless, yet his body instinctively deflected Deng's punches.

Their blows collided with deafening BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! sounds.

It didn't sound like two humans fighting—more like two rhinos charging each other.

Phoenixin's combat capabilities were truly terrifying.

Even after losing almost all five senses, he could still keep up with Deng Shentong.

But he was clearly born at a disadvantage in this kind of situation.

In a blur, the two of them had already traded over a hundred blows!

Deng's punch once again broke through his guard—

And pierced clean through his chest!

Phoenixin, of course, was reborn instantly in a blaze of flames, reappearing before Deng Shentong in perfect form.

Deng sneered, battle intent blazing in his eyes.

He reached to his waist and drew a blue-ice handgun, then rushed forward before Phoenixin could finish reviving—

And fired straight at his head!

The pitch-black bullet was nothing like ordinary Origin Bullets.

It bore a white feathered wing—a custom round made exclusively for Deng Shentong.

This bullet didn't just pierce defenses—it contained a deadly gene toxin.

Once inside the body, it spread rapidly through the bloodstream, corroding the entire system.

Even a paranormal would disintegrate swiftly if hit by it.

After being shot, Phoenixin's body turned black almost instantly and collapsed once again.

Then, he revived again.

Deng Shentong was not the kind of man to lose patience.

He had faced many difficult opponents in the past.

But someone like Phoenixin—who couldn't be killed, and always revived perfectly—was a first.

In terms of strength, he could easily overpower Phoenixin.

But how was he supposed to finish him off?

"Could it be... he really can't be killed?"

"No. There has to be a way. But if I keep dragging this out... I might not get the result I want."

"Might as well try sealing him."

Deng came to a decision.

With his power, he could kill Phoenixin countless times—

So surely, he could also subdue him.

Then he could bring him back to the district's labs—

Let the Research Division dissect him slowly.

There would always be a way to neutralize him!

With that in mind, Deng changed tactics.

Taking advantage of the brief gap while Phoenixin was reviving, he reached into his pack and pulled out a silver rope, binding him quickly.

During the revival process, Phoenixin had no strength to resist.

By the time he was fully reborn, he was already tightly bound by Deng Shentong.

“You’re coming with me to Blizzard City, you freak.”

Deng yanked Phoenixin along coldly.

But at that moment, Phoenixin suddenly laughed.

At first it was soft—then it grew louder and louder, until it was wild and manic.

“What the h*ll are you laughing at?”

Deng Shentong frowned.

Phoenixin looked up at him, smiling brightly—

But his eyes remained icy cold.

“Well, killing the great Captain of Celestial Squad—why wouldn’t I laugh?”

This time, he wasn’t speaking in Neon language—but in choppy, awkward Mandarin.

But the mocking tone in those words was more than enough to send Deng Shentong into a rage.

He smashed a fist into Phoenixin’s forehead—splattering blood across his face.

But Phoenixin didn’t care.

He was still laughing.

And without any warning—he exploded!

Right in front of Deng Shentong, his body blew apart into a storm of blood.

A downpour of gore rained across the battlefield, soaking Deng Shentong from head to toe.

Deng was a neat freak.

You could tell from his dyed white hair and always-pristine silver-white outfit.

Now he was dripping with viscous blood—and livid.

Before he could even wipe himself off, he suddenly felt something—

Like hellfire igniting on his skin!

The burning sensation was intense—he looked down.

It wasn't an illusion.

His body was literally on fire!

Phoenixin's blood had flowed into his uniform, staining the silver combat suit beyond recognition.

The multicolored blood, instead of clotting or drying, began to glow even more brightly—

Then ignited!

Flames surged skyward, turning Deng into a living torch.

Screams of agony tore from his mouth.

He desperately activated Sacred Form Enhancement, trying to block the fire's damage.

But the flames were too hot—far beyond what he expected.

He'd been caught completely off guard.

From the shattered gore on the ground, Phoenixin emerged once more.

His eyes were cold as he stared at Deng burning in agony.

Then he grinned.

“Your turn for a rebirth through fire.”

“The Phoenix Power... isn’t something just anyone can endure.”

He had gone through countless cycles of death and resurrection to master this force.

Burned into ash again and again by the fire in his veins—

Only to be reborn by the power of Undying.

Through that endless torment, he finally learned how to control it.

The blood of the phoenix—was the world’s most terrifying fire poison.

“Now DIE!!”

Phoenixin roared and charged, his bare body lunging at the still-burning Deng Shentong.

Deng strained to resist the blaze—he couldn’t even open his eyes anymore.

But in that desperate moment, a thought suddenly struck him.

By all rights, he should be dominating Phoenixin.

Even if he couldn’t kill him, with the right preparation, sealing him should have been easy.

So why...

Why did it feel like this man knew everything about him?

As if—

This entire battle had been a setup all along.

Chapter 676: Realization

Deng Shentong began to feel a strange unease.

“There’s no way I could lose! How could I possibly lose?”

“With my power, what tricks could he possibly use to fight me?”

“It must be because...”

While Deng Shentong struggled, Phoenixin Ren had already charged in.

The Phoenix Power blazed around him, and its flames reacted violently with the fire already engulfing Deng’s body, intensifying his pain.

“Hahaha! Come on, Captain of Celestial Squad! Let’s see who lasts longer!”

“But I’ll give you a friendly reminder—I. Can’t. Die!”

This time, it was Phoenixin who was tormenting Deng Shentong.

Deng forced himself to channel Sacred Form Enhancement, trying to withstand the phoenix fire’s searing heat—

While simultaneously fending off Phoenixin's relentless attacks.

The battlefield was ablaze with fire, roaring and explosions echoing nonstop.

Even while burning, Deng Shentong was still Deng Shentong—

When he counterattacked with full force, Phoenixin still found it hard to endure.

But Phoenixin's strategy was clear—a deathmatch style.

Trading his life for yours.

And until Deng found a way to overcome Undying, this could only end one way:

Phoenixin would wear him down until he died.

But Deng was running out of time—and strength.

The phoenix blood covering his body burned at such high temperatures that it made him want to die then and there.

Yet he knew—he couldn't give up.

He fought on with everything he had, managing to kill Phoenixin three more times.

But no matter how many times he died, that bastard always crawled out of the flames—grinning savagely and charging back in.

Despair. Utter, inescapable despair consumed Deng Shentong.

Even his immense ability reserves couldn't sustain a never-ending battle.

"Am I... really going to fall here?"

The crimson flames surrounded him.

The silver radiance of his sacred body dimmed to almost nothing.

At that moment, he was forced to face a truth—

He could no longer continue fighting.

But teetering on the edge of life and death, a single thought finally crystallized in his mind.

The reason he had lost this fight—

Wasn't because he wasn't strong enough...

"Bam!"

Phoenixin drove a knee straight into Deng Shentong's chest.

Even with his combat suit absorbing the blow, Deng flew back dozens of meters, crashing hard into the rubble.

Blood gushed from his mouth, and he could barely lift his eyelids.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Phoenixin—naked, grinning like a devil—walking slowly toward him.

Ah... I see it now. I finally understand.

I was the target from the beginning.

Blood bubbled from Deng's lips. He didn't even have the strength to get up.

"But... at least I have to bring back the intel..."

He thought weakly.

Phoenixin stood over him, looming like a victor, looking down from above.

"Beep... beep..."

Deng Shentong closed his eyes.

From within his silver hair, a faint light began to pulse.

Just as Phoenixin reached out to tear off his head—BOOM!

Deng's head exploded violently!

A terrifying force blasted out, instantly clearing the surrounding mist for over a kilometer.

The fog recoiled in all directions, and the explosion at its core killed Phoenixin again.

A silver storm erupted from the center of Jiangning Plaza, spreading like a glowing orb that lit up the entire sky.

But this beautiful, radiant glow brought dead silence to the Operations Command Center in Blizzard City.

Everyone knew what it meant.

Each Captain-level paranormal had a high-powered micro-bomb embedded in their skull—

A joint project between Deng Corporation and Blizzard City's research division.

Its power was immense.

But it wasn't designed to kill enemies—

It was for self-destruction.

Captain-level paranormals were too powerful.

In death, they had to ensure their core couldn't be consumed by the enemy.

So the appearance of that giant silver light orb meant only one thing—

A Captain-level paranormal had fallen.

And the only Captain present at that battlefield was Deng Shentong.

In other words—

Deng Shentong was dead.

The command center was utterly silent.

Many staff members froze, forgetting their tasks.

Some of the women fainted on the spot, unable to accept the truth.

Deng Shentong's death signaled complete defeat for Blizzard City in their battle against Moon of Corrosion.

Lan Xincheng's eyes widened; his tall body trembled, expression frozen in shock.

Tu Yunlie, his face hidden beneath his collar, was stern and sharp-eyed—yet visibly seething.

As for Baili Changqing, his mouth hung open—speechless.

None of them could fathom that the Jiangnan District would suffer such a loss in this operation.

And as the weight of reality sank in, one by one, their eyes drifted toward the elderly man seated at the head of the command platform.

Zhu Zheng.

He gripped the table with both hands. His body trembled, his once-steady shoulders shaking violently.

Though he hung his head, everyone knew what kind of expression he wore now—

It must be terrifying.

His face was twisted with rage and grief.

Bloodshot eyes.

Blood trickled from the corners of his lips from grinding his teeth too hard.

His fingers, death-white from the pressure, scraped the table until the nails nearly peeled back.

Zhu Zheng was on the brink of a breakdown.

His most elite team had been slaughtered by a ragtag group.

Over half the team was dead.

And the enemy—still rampaged freely across their territory.

This would be the greatest stain on his military record—one that could never be erased.

“Zhu Shuai...”

Lan Xincheng looked on with concern.

He understood how devastating this loss was to Zhu Zheng.

Zhu Zheng kept his head lowered as he growled out one command, word by word:

“Issue the order... pull back all forces. Immediately. I said now! Withdraw everything—now!!”

His voice sounded like it was being squeezed out through gritted teeth, raspy and strained.

If it weren't for the crowd, he might have exploded already.

But he couldn't—not yet.

Because the battle wasn't over.

He had to preserve what forces they had left.

As painful as this failure was, he couldn't collapse now.

Tu Yunlie responded immediately.

“Understood!”

He issued orders for the two remaining VTOL aircraft to return at once.

After Tu Yunlie finished, Zhu Zheng could no longer contain his fury.

He threw back his head and smashed his fist down on the command table.

“Prepare Death Reaper of Love! Level Jiangning City to the f***ing ground! Bury those monsters once and for all!!”

Everyone was stunned.

Death Reaper of Love—their ultimate weapon—was really going to be deployed?

Back when Moon of Corrosion first appeared, there had been a proposal to use it for a full purge.

But Zhu Zheng had rejected it.

Now, driven beyond the limits of his rage, he had chosen it himself.

Because even he knew—

If Celestial Squad couldn't destroy Moon of Corrosion, then their only remaining option to minimize losses was the Death Reaper.

Otherwise, throwing more soldiers into the fray would only lead to catastrophic casualties.

Chapter 677: Tragic and Fierce

Over at the workbench, as soon as Zhu Zheng's order came through, someone immediately began unlocking the launch bay for the Death Reaper of Love.

Everyone in the command center was on edge, hearts pounding.

Although they had anticipated this day might come...

It was still the first time in the country's history that such a weapon had been deployed.

This officially marked the decline of pre-apocalyptic thermal weapons' influence on the world.

In their place was the dominance of top-tier superhumans!

And the term “Moon of Corrosion” cast a heavy shadow over everyone’s hearts.

...

At the center of Jiangning Plaza.

Phoenixin Ren emerged from the dense fog, completely naked.

He looked a little weak.

Although he could resurrect repeatedly, each resurrection came at a great cost.

Undying wasn’t truly undying—no one knew the limits of his power.

There was no trace of Deng Shentong’s body on the ground. That high-energy bomb had blown his corpse to pieces, leaving behind a massive crater.

To make sure the superhuman essence of a captain-level figure was destroyed completely, the bomb’s yield was terrifying.

Incidentally, it also served as a method of mutual destruction.

“In the end, I still won, you b*stard!”

His victory had come too hard-fought. If he hadn’t known Deng Shentong’s ability in advance and prepared accordingly, he might’ve really died at Deng’s hands.

“Blizzard City’s investigation captains really are all monsters!”

Phoenixin took a deep breath, his body emitting waves of burning red flames that shielded him from the extreme cold.

Off in the distance, Takeuchi Mayumi, who had been kneeling and performing a divination, suddenly clutched her mouth and began coughing violently.

“Miss Takeuchi!”

Nishijumu Satoru hurried to support her.

Streams of crimson blood seeped between her fingers. Takeuchi Mayumi’s face grew even paler.

At this point, even her skin had started turning translucent—like a patient who’d lost too much blood.

One entire arm had gone purplish and swollen, rendered useless due to constant bleeding and the invasion of cold poison.

Blood kept pouring from Takeuchi Mayumi’s mouth.

Nishijumu Satoru suddenly thought of something. “You must’ve overdrafted your blood to help the captain fight, right?”

Takeuchi Mayumi struggled to loosen her grip and said to Nishijumu Satoru, “Quick, tell everyone—we have to leave here now! Something extremely dangerous is coming!”

Seeing the urgency in her expression, Nishijumu Satoru immediately understood. He closed his eyes and began contacting all surviving Moon of Corrosion members.

He told them to regroup and get out immediately.

Phoenixin Ren was the first to arrive.

He quickly found some clothes in the rubble and put them on. They didn't provide much warmth but at least covered his naked body.

After hearing Nishijumu Satoru's report, he didn't hesitate. "Looks like the enemy's about to carpet-bomb this place with a powerful weapon! Evacuate now!"

Upon receiving Nishijumu Satoru's signal, the Moon of Corrosion members began returning.

Once everyone regrouped, they realized they had lost five people in this battle—a tragic and brutal loss.

No one had expected such an outcome.

Because in the past, as long as they followed Takeuchi Mayumi's prophecies, no one had ever died.

But this time, they had lost nearly half the team.

Everyone was full of doubt, but Takeuchi Mayumi had already passed out—they couldn't ask her anything.

All they could do was follow her prophecy and leave this cursed place.

Nishijumu Satoru found a vehicle. The entire team got in and immediately departed Jiangning Plaza without delay.

As they left, they heard the thrum of VTOL aircraft wings beating in the distance.

Phoenixin Ren couldn't help but look up at the sky.

He had a hunch that he'd cross paths with those people again very soon.

“That was a tragic battle! So many people died. We can’t keep fighting like this. Captain, what do we do now? Do we keep moving forward?”

Shinguuji Seiichiro looked at Phoenixin Ren and asked.

Phoenixin Ren rested an arm on the window, his gaze falling on Takeuchi Mayumi.

She had burned through too much of her strength in this battle—even her arm was ruined.

They had to find a healing-type superhuman to treat her injuries.

Takeuchi Mayumi was the core of Moon of Corrosion. She could not be lost.

“No, we need to take a break too.”

“But this time, the victory is ours!”

Though he looked a bit haggard, Phoenixin Ren’s eyes still burned with fanatic light.

“Blizzard City took enough of a hit this time. They have no forces left to throw at us.”

“And next time, I’m going to give them an even bigger surprise!”

Shinguuji Seiichiro couldn’t help glancing at him, his expression as disdainful as ever.

“Oh? And what do you plan to do now? We don’t have any reinforcements.”

“We will.”

He smiled mysteriously, his laughter echoing across the snowy plains, growing louder as the wind carried it away.

...

The armed VTOL aircraft rumbled as it took off, its rotors whipping up a flurry of snow.

Zhang Yi noticed they were pulling out and furrowed his brow.

Something was off.

Everyone had just seen that explosion—it had even made the distant VTOLs shake.

And now they were retreating.

This didn't feel like the aftermath of a victory.

Could it be—Deng Shentong lost?

Zhang Yi felt a chill crawl over his scalp. He couldn't imagine Jiangnan District losing to Moon of Corrosion twice.

Especially not when they'd dispatched their ace unit this time.

He could already picture the fury and madness that would seize Zhu Zheng.

But what about Deng Shentong?

Was he dead?

Zhang Yi frowned. These were only his guesses, but everything happening before him filled him with unease.

A man like Deng Shentong—if he really died that easily, it just didn't feel real.

Zhang Yi glanced at the medics inside the VTOL, then gave up on asking them.

They were just low-level personnel. They probably didn't know what was going on at HQ.

The others sensed the strange atmosphere too.

If they had won, there'd be no need for such a hasty retreat.

But losing? That was something none of them dared consider.

No one could bear that kind of cost.

Seeing Zhang Yi's troubled expression, Liang Yue leaned in and whispered, "What's wrong?"

Zhang Yi shook his head. "Nothing. Let's just quietly wait to return to the city."

With things unclear, it was best not to speculate or talk.

Seeing this, Liang Yue said no more.

She cradled the mini-sized Hua Hua on her lap, gently stroking it.

But Hua Hua didn't seem to like her much. After squirming under her hand a few times, it lifted its tail, jumped to the ground, and climbed up Zhang Yi's pant leg.

Cats are creatures that love warmth, so it preferred a man's body heat.

Once on Zhang Yi's lap, it found a comfy spot, kneaded his pants a bit, then curled up and dozed off again.

Chapter 678: Death God of Love

Once the two armed helicopters left the boundaries of Jiangning City, Zhu Zheng locked his eyes on the screen, his gaze sharp and merciless as he pressed the launch button for the Death God of Love.

From a hidden underground silo, a massive missile slowly emerged, followed by a surge of blue-violet flames, propelling it toward the sky.

This move immediately caught the attention of major powers around the world.

"Someone has launched the Death God of Love! Oh my god, has the moment finally come?"

"Confirmed, this Death God of Love was launched from Huaxu Nation, Jiangnan District."

(Note: Huaxu — the mother of Fuxi and Nuwa, referred to as the Ancestress. For reasons everyone understands, we'll use 'Huaxu Nation' to refer to the homeland from now on.)

"Investigate immediately what happened there!"

...

The moment the Death God of Love launched into the sky, the entire world got the news, and it meant this incident could no longer be concealed.

Two minutes later, a massive mushroom cloud rose over the center of Jiangning City.

The terrifying heat obliterated everything there, and the enormous electromagnetic shockwave caused several surrounding cities to temporarily lose communication and electricity.

Zhu Zheng collapsed heavily into his chair, his heart weighed down with indescribable heaviness.

In the end, he had to deploy the Death God of Love — just because of a single Superhuman team.

Even if they won, it was far from anything glorious.

But before he could even breathe a sigh of relief, a staff member immediately reported:

"Commander, satellite surveillance has detected traces of the Moon of Corrosion. They... they escaped!"

Zhu Zheng's pupils shrank sharply. He shot to his feet in disbelief and barked, "Escaped? That's impossible! No matter how fast they are, there's no way they could outrun the Death God of Love's explosion!"

The staff member's face darkened as he displayed the satellite feed to Zhu Zheng.

"Based on satellite intel, they actually left the blast center about ten minutes ago."

Although the jamming device prevented the satellite from visually tracking Moon of Corrosion, it was still possible to infer their location.

It was like a blank hole appearing on the map — extremely obvious.

Everyone, including Zhu Zheng, felt a chill crawl up their spine.

Even the Death God of Love couldn't touch them?

What a ridiculous coincidence!

They had been in the city center just a few minutes ago — how could they have fled so quickly?

It was almost as if... they had known in advance that the Death God of Love would be used!

Zhu Zheng slumped back into his chair, looking like half his soul had been sucked out of him.

This time, he was utterly disgraced.

And this operation would cause Jiangnan District's prestige — and his own — to plummet to rock bottom.

Calling it an embarrassment would be putting it lightly.

Sun Luxuan glanced at Zhu Zheng.

He had wanted to say something, but seeing Zhu Zheng's deadened expression, he stayed silent.

As he turned his head, he made eye contact with Tu Yunlie, the Chief of Operations.

The two exchanged a look, a silent understanding passing between them.

Both their expressions turned grave.

Because they finally realized the true foundation behind the Moon of Corrosion.

They could foresee the future.

That was the ability their enemy possessed.

And suddenly, everything made sense.

Why Jiangnan District's forces, despite having the home field advantage, kept being outmaneuvered.

No matter what tactics they planned, they were always seen through — their personnel movements constantly suppressed.

It wasn't that the Celestial Squad couldn't beat the Moon of Corrosion.

It was that the Moon of Corrosion could always come up with perfect countermeasures, making every fight incredibly comfortable for their side.

Even the deployment of the Death God of Love had been predicted, allowing them to escape unscathed.

That kind of ability... filled one with a deep, crushing despair.

Who could defeat an enemy who could see the future?

However, Tu Yunlie soon spotted a flaw.

The Moon of Corrosion's seer couldn't predict the future perfectly.

Because they had lost five members too.

One of them was the female ninja, Naruse Hanachiyo, who was instantly killed by Deng Shentong.

And the other four...

Tu Yunlie's head snapped up, a strange light gleaming in his eyes.

It seemed he had found the best way to deal with the Moon of Corrosion.

That's right — Zhang Yi!

From the very beginning, no one paid attention to this Superhuman from the Outer City.

But later, he had single-handedly taken down four members of the Moon of Corrosion!

Even if two of them were somewhat flukes...

At that time, the Moon of Corrosion's No. 2, Shinguuji Seiichiro, had been nearby.

Yet Zhang Yi had scared Shinguuji into backing off head-on — that proved that his strength wasn't nearly as simple as it seemed!

At the very least, he was Vice-Captain level — maybe even Captain level!

Tu Yunlie's gaze sharpened.

He believed the headquarters needed to have a serious conversation with Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi might be the key to destroying the Moon of Corrosion!

Meanwhile, Lan Xincheng wasn't idle either.

Zhu Zheng, crushed by defeat, was in no state to manage affairs.

As Zhu Zheng's secretary, Lan Xincheng had to clean up the mess.

He pushed up his gold-rimmed glasses with the palm of his hand, clasped both hands behind his back, and stood proudly in the center of the Operations Command Center.

Then he spoke loudly:

"Regarding this battle, everyone present today is strictly forbidden from leaking any information to the outside!"

"If I discover anyone leaking information, they will be stripped of their Blizzard City residency and expelled!"

The staff members froze at his words.

Many secretly thought: They're trying to seal everyone's mouths? But with such a massive defeat, can they really keep it hidden?

Tu Yunlie gave Lan Xincheng a glance but said nothing.

Internal affairs weren't his responsibility — Lan Xincheng could do whatever he wanted.

A staff member cautiously asked, "But this defeat is too big. Even if we don't say anything, plenty of people know — like the frontline troops."

Lan Xincheng said coldly, "They'll be informed as well — no leaks allowed!"

"From today onward, no one in Blizzard City is allowed to privately discuss this incident."

"We destroyed half of the Moon of Corrosion's members during this operation and achieved a glorious victory! Have the news station broadcast this immediately to the entire city."

Everyone understood — Lan Xincheng was creating an information cocoon, preventing most of the city from learning the truth about their defeat.

Because in the apocalypse, the last thing they could afford was unrest and internal collapse.

Baili Changqing interjected, "We can control other areas, but what about the Deng Family?"

Deng Shentong's death was a massive blow to the Deng Family.

After all, Deng Shentong had been their most promising successor, and the family didn't have many descendants — even Deng Yuanbo himself had no children.

Would they really be able to silence the Deng Family?

Lan Xincheng fell silent too. His brows twisted into a knot, and after a long moment, he said heavily:

"We'll have to go talk to the Deng Family... and hope they'll put the bigger picture first."

Unless Zhu Zheng personally intervened, Lan Xincheng, as a mere secretary, probably wouldn't have the pull to convince them.

Chapter 679: Maintaining the Situation

The second failure to encircle and annihilate the Moon of Corrosion threw the entire upper echelon of Blizzard City into chaos.

Zhu Zheng was on the verge of a mental breakdown, so the others had no choice but to step up and patch things together. As for sealing off the information, Lan Xincheng, the secretary, took it upon himself without hesitation.

These matters were, of course, carried out by the subordinates following orders.

That same morning, Jiangnan Television's early news broadcast proudly reported a great victory by the District against the Ronin from the Neon Nation.

"At dawn today, the Superhuman forces of Jiangnan District launched a special military operation against the ronin group from Neon known as the Moon of Corrosion."

"This operation was personally commanded by District Supreme Commander Zhu Zheng, with Chief of Operations Tu Yunlie and Captain of the Black Robe Investigation Team Baili Changqing involved in the strategic planning, along with the Celestial Squad and several Outer City Superhumans participating."

"After a night of fierce fighting, half of the Moon of Corrosion's members were annihilated, achieving a brilliant victory."

...

In Blizzard City, entertainment was scarce, and every morning, citizens would tune in to watch the daily news.

Upon seeing the District had won yet another big victory, the people of Blizzard City couldn't help but cheer with joy, their faces lighting up with happiness.

Even though they still had to work more than twelve hours today, everyone felt re-energized and full of motivation.

Over at the Deng Family, Deng Yuanbo received news of Deng Shentong's death almost immediately.

Everyone was gripped by fear, terrified that this towering figure in Blizzard City would erupt in rage.

Even Lan Xincheng personally made a phone call to Deng Yuanbo, afraid that he might blow the whole thing up.

It wasn't Deng Yuanbo who answered the call, but his steward, Liancheng.

"Mr. Deng is currently unavailable to take calls. He instructed me to convey his message if headquarters reaches out."

"The Deng Family will prioritize the bigger picture and support the leadership's decisions."

When Lan Xincheng received this response, the stone weighing down his heart finally lifted.

On the surface, Deng Yuanbo seemed like just a businessman.

But in reality, the Deng Family's influence and network were enormous.

Even now in Blizzard City, many figures in the upper ranks had connections to the Deng Family.

Not to mention, Blizzard City's development heavily relied on the Deng Group's technical support.

"Mr. Deng is truly noble-minded. On behalf of Blizzard City, I express our deepest gratitude."

"I will relay your message to him."

The call ended quickly. Liancheng set down the vintage golden telephone and turned toward the inner room.

Deng Yuanbo's room was furnished in a classical style, dominated by rosewood and huanghuali furniture — styles from the previous century.

Such decor was rare in the mid-21st century.

At this moment, he was draped in a fox-fur cloak, standing before a massive floor-to-ceiling window, quietly watching the snow falling outside.

Liancheng knocked and entered, respectfully standing with his hands at his sides.

"Mr. Deng, I have responded to headquarters according to your instructions."

Deng Yuanbo simply nodded slowly.

Seeing this, Liancheng hesitated for a moment, then asked cautiously:

"There's something very strange about this operation. The failure was too absolute, and with Young Master's strength, even if he was outmatched, he shouldn't have been killed."

"Have you perhaps... been too lenient with them?"

The results of the battle were simply unacceptable to both Deng Yuanbo and Liancheng.

The Celestial Squad had never lost before — its members were all top-notch fighters. How could they have died at the hands of a bunch of ronin?

In his heart, Liancheng couldn't help but suspect a conspiracy.

Could someone have deliberately set up Deng Shentong's death?

After all, Blizzard City was a place teeming with undercurrents.

Deng Shentong, as the designated successor of the Deng Family, had both immense ability and public support.

Everyone knew that Deng Shentong was the family's hope — and a strong contender for the next Supreme Commander of Blizzard City.

Deng Yuanbo narrowed his eyes, his expression hidden in the murky morning light.

From his throat came a voice weathered with age.

"No matter what, Jiangnan District must not fall into chaos."

"Our fate rises and falls with the District. If Blizzard City collapses, the Deng Family won't survive either."

"I will thoroughly investigate what happened to Shentong. But for now, we must help stabilize the District."

Upon hearing this, Liancheng bowed his head low.

"I was short-sighted. I will obey your instructions, sir."

No matter how deep their grief, as the head of the Deng Family, Deng Yuanbo had a responsibility to the entire clan.

Tearing things apart with headquarters now would be nothing short of foolish.

However — this matter would not be left unresolved!

"If I find out who did this..."

"Even if it's Zhu Zheng — he won't be able to withstand the consequences!"

A chilling light flashed in Deng Yuanbo's shadowed eyes.

Zhu Zheng's rise to the position of Jiangnan District Commander was partly thanks to his military background, but he had also relied heavily on the support of other factions.

After all, Blizzard City was home to many powerful families from Jiangnan.

Their people were everywhere in the city's structure.

If one day Zhu Zheng proved unworthy of his position, these families would have no problem pulling him down.

In the apocalypse, putting an incapable person in a high position was a recipe for disaster!

...

The explosion of the Death God of Love made those aboard the armed helicopters, including Zhang Yi, clearly realize — Deng Shentong and his forces had failed!

If they hadn't been pushed to the brink, Blizzard City would never have deployed such an ultimate weapon.

"Never thought they'd be that strong..."

Mo Zhongning's eyes looked a little dazed.

"Everyone's a Superhuman — how can the gap be so wide?"

He had once dominated an entire city as a Superhuman, yet here he had been cut down like grass by the Moon of Corrosion.

The blow to his confidence was devastating.

Li Weihai sighed.

"These aren't your average Superhumans. Word is they rampaged across Kanto in the Neon Nation, slaughtering and looting at will — one of the most savage bands of raiders in Kanto."

"Anyone who could survive that kind of environment... there's no way they're ordinary."

As he spoke, Li Weihai took a deep breath and looked out at the persistent glow of radiation outside the window.

"But now, it's all over. No matter how strong a Superhuman is, no one could survive that weapon."

Almost everyone agreed with this view.

Only Zhang Yi frowned deeply, not saying anything.

Liang Yue noticed and asked, "Why do you still look so worried? Even headquarters used the Death God of Love. Forget about the Moon of Corrosion — even someone like Yuan Kongye at Epsilon-level wouldn't survive, right?"

Zhang Yi said, "I have a really bad feeling. It just... doesn't sit right."

"I keep feeling... they wouldn't die that easily."

This feeling stemmed from all the intel Zhang Yi had gathered on the Moon of Corrosion.

They seemed to have an almost prophetic ability — always predicting battlefield developments with eerie accuracy.

Could it be that... they even foresaw the appearance of the Death God of Love?

Chapter 680: Points Card

The two armed helicopters returned to Blizzard City.

As they flew over the city, Zhang Yi cautiously watched through the window.

Sure enough, the city was under lockdown, with soldiers armed to the teeth stationed everywhere.

That pretty much confirmed the failure of the Celestial Squad's operation.

Zhang Yi couldn't help but feel a bit of regret.

Although he hadn't interacted much with Deng Shentong, he quite admired the guy's personality.

Zhang Yi still owed him a crate of Origin Bullets, after all!

The helicopter landed inside the indoor airport — the massive dome above opened to allow them in, then slowly closed again.

As the helicopter's hatch opened, Zhang Yi, Liang Yue, and Hua Hua prepared to disembark first.

After all, the others were either injured or medical personnel — someone would surely come to transfer them to the infirmary later.

Zhang Yi figured he might as well go find Baili Changqing first to get a grasp of the situation.

But just as the hatch opened, Zhang Yi saw a group of over a dozen Yan Yun Guards waiting outside.

The three men leading them, judging by the badges on their shoulders, were officers from the Yan Yun Guards.

When they saw Zhang Yi, the officer with a major's rank stepped forward and gave him a crisp, formal salute!

"Welcome back, Mr. Zhang Yi!"

"Thank you for the outstanding contributions you made in this battle. You single-handedly took down several members of the Moon of Corrosion and restored the honor of not just Jiangnan District, but all of Huaxu Nation!"

The major's tone was full of respect and excitement.

As someone high-ranking in the Yan Yun Guards, he was well aware of what had happened at Jiangning Plaza.

The Celestial Squad had been nearly wiped out — only Deng Shentong managed to kill one member of Moon of Corrosion.

Meanwhile, Zhang Yi had taken down several!

If not for Zhang Yi, this battle would have been a total humiliation for Jiangnan District.

And Huaxu Nation would have become a laughingstock among the other regions and countries.

At the very least, Zhang Yi's actions had saved them from total disgrace.

As a soldier, the Yan Yun Major fully understood how difficult that achievement was.

It was akin to driving a tank alone into enemy territory, facing twelve opponents — and pulling off a one-versus-eight kill!

It was only natural for them to revere him.

Hearing this, everyone else still aboard the helicopter was dumbfounded.

Especially Mo Zhongning, Li Weihai, Yuan Hao, and the others who had previously doubted Zhang Yi — their jaws dropped wide open.

"D-did I just hallucinate?"

Mo Zhongning stared blankly at the bedridden Yuan Hao.

"They — hahaha — they said Zhang Yi took down several members of Moon of Corrosion by himself? No way, my ears must be broken!"

Yuan Hao's expression was also frozen. "I think... I must have heard wrong too."

Nearby, Chen Xiaoxiao couldn't help but mock them, "Is it that hard to admit someone else is stronger? Zhang Yi truly killed multiple members of Moon of Corrosion — we saw two of them die right before our eyes."

"How... how could this happen?!"

Mo Zhongning's face was full of disbelief.

He stared at Zhang Yi standing at the hatch, his mind swirling with confusion.

We're all Superhumans from the Outer City. Why were we slaughtered like vegetables, and he turned out to be so fearless?

Is this... the gap between worlds?

The Yan Yun Major gave a quick signal, and a soldier carrying a tray covered in red silk approached.

On the tray were several black cards — they looked like they were made of a mix between metal and composite materials.

The Yan Yun Major picked up one black card and handed it to Zhang Yi.

"This is the Points Card you earned for your contributions. With this card, you can spend freely in Blizzard City and exchange it for supplies from headquarters."

The major then smiled and added, "You accumulated a total of 420 million points during this operation!"

Zhang Yi whistled. "Sounds like a lot! But I'm not really familiar with how this thing works — how's the value calculated?"

The Yan Yun Major thought for a moment, then explained:

"Points are conceptually similar to pre-apocalypse currency. However, given how much higher prices are now, the purchasing power of points is actually stronger than money was before."

Zhang Yi's eyes immediately lit up. He took the Points Card and casually slung his arm around the major's shoulders like old pals.

"With this thing... can I buy anything I want?"

The Yan Yun Major lowered his voice and said, "Some items — especially cutting-edge tech weapons — require special authorization to purchase."

"But given your achievements, most resources will be available to you."

Zhang Yi nodded in satisfaction.

There weren't many things he really needed — but if Blizzard City had anything that tempted him, it was their advanced tech weaponry.

Like the Black Combat Suit he was wearing now.

With it, even without using his Superhuman Energy, his physical strength and reflexes had noticeably improved.

"Where do I go to exchange for gear? The same place where I picked up weapons before?" Zhang Yi asked.

The Yan Yun Major nodded. "Exactly. Your Points Card grants you access to higher-level storage rooms."

"Good, thanks!"

Zhang Yi smiled happily.

The Yan Yun Major said seriously, "No — I should be the one thanking you!"

And he meant it.

In principle, it should've been the District soldiers who defended against foreign threats.

Zhang Yi, as a civilian, wasn't obligated to charge into battle.

Yet he had done it — and salvaged the District's dignity. It was genuinely shameful for them to rely on a civilian.

At that moment, the others aboard the helicopter couldn't sit still any longer.

They had also risked their lives in this operation — they wanted to know what they had earned.

Mo Zhongning called out, "Sir, what about our Points Cards?"

The Yan Yun Major glanced at him and signaled his subordinates to start distributing cards.

One by one, the others received their Points Cards.

Although their achievements weren't as big as Zhang Yi's, they had still fought for Jiangnan District — so the Yan Yun Guards treated them fairly.

Of course, the soldiers clearly showed even more respect toward Zhang Yi.

After getting his Points Card, Mo Zhongning couldn't help but ask, "How much do we have on ours?"

The Yan Yun soldier answered calmly:

"Except for Mr. Zhang Yi, everyone else received 20 million points."

"Fallen Superhumans will receive an additional 50 million points compensation, to be given to their families or their organizations."

When Mo Zhongning and the others heard that they had only gotten 20 million points, while Zhang Yi had 420 million, they all sighed heavily.

Comparing yourself to others is the road to heartbreak.

They had nearly died — and earned only a fraction of the points.

It wasn't a small amount — but compared to Zhang Yi, who was completely unscathed and had earned the most by far — it was almost laughable.

Still, they could only feel envy.

After confirming that Zhang Yi really had slain multiple high-ranking members of Moon of Corrosion, their hearts were filled not with jealousy, but deep respect.

Only fools would resent those vastly stronger than themselves.