

New Era 151

Chapter 151: Night

Having gone through so many events, Chen Shouyi was no longer a rookie who would be startled into a panic by a slight anomaly.

He quickly felt for an arrow, scanning the surroundings.

Before long, he spotted his target inside the glass wall on the fourth floor.

Its body was a beautiful silver, with a hint of metallic sheen, and compared to the somewhat bloated physique of an ordinary giant spider, it appeared more petite, with a sleek and streamlined form.

If an ordinary giant spider could be described as a burly laborer, this silver giant spider was like an aristocrat among spiders, magnificent and stunning.

At the first sight of it, Chen Shouyi's pupils constricted, sensing a hint of danger.

The two locked eyes from a distance.

The next moment, Chen Shouyi suddenly drew his bow and shot an arrow.

The arrow flew like light, disappearing in a flash, too quick for the naked eye to catch.

With a "boom!"

The glass wall shattered, and the arrow, after penetrating through, embedded more than half its length into the ceiling, its tail violently quivering, emitting a buzzing sound.

However, the silver figure had already vanished without a trace.

He hadn't hit it at all.

Chen Shouyi immediately drew another arrow, nocking it onto the bowstring.

His face was solemn as he turned around, searching.

Where?

Where did it hide?

Suddenly, he glimpsed a flash of silver light from the corner of his eye, his gaze turning cold as he swiftly sidestepped and shot another arrow.

Unfortunately, aside from breaking a lot of glass, he achieved nothing.

This feeling was quite terrible; in a daze, it seemed as though he had become the prey.

He took a deep breath, glancing back at the mall entrance, just over thirty meters away, easing his heart slightly.

This silver giant spider gave him a strong sense of unease; its movement speed was too fast, challenging even for him to track.

Just as he turned back, an anomaly occurred.

A side of the fourth-floor glass suddenly shattered, and Chen Shouyi swiftly sidestepped to see a silver figure leap from the fourth floor, spreading silver wings, and shooting towards him.

The wings flapped at high frequencies, creating a grand buzzing noise in the surrounding air.

It could even fly.

Seeing the swiftly approaching silver figure, a flicker of surprise crossed his heart, yet his hands moved without hesitation.

Chen Shouyi instantly loosed an arrow, which grazed the silver figure, embedding right into the ceiling. His brows furrowed, but he was too occupied to mind, quickly drawing another arrow and shooting once more.

Yet, surprisingly, the silver creature was incredibly agile even in the air, continuously dodging the arrows.

Cold sweat seeped across Chen Shouyi's back as he frequently shot arrows while beginning to retreat rapidly.

Facing the rapidly approaching silver giant spider, he finally felt the pressure of death, provoking an impulse to turn and flee.

But he knew well that turning would be certain death.

One can imagine, that once he turned, perhaps the next moment would be his end.

He gritted his teeth, relentlessly shooting arrows. Though they were futile, they successfully hindered the creature's approach.

A few steps later, he retreated to the street.

After shooting another arrow to momentarily force back the terrifying silver creature, he swiftly dashed to the left and stepped away from the entrance, leaping five or six meters high, and then caught a broken window on the second floor mid-air, swinging his body into the second floor of the mall.

He hastily took a few steps, crouching in a corner, pretending to be a corpse, holding his breath without moving.

Where he stood, ironically, a young female corpse lay beside, her chest and abdomen hollowed out, her face contorted, eyes bloodshot and staring at Chen Shouyi in death like an unyielding challenge.

As if mocking his cowardice, he instinctively avoided her gaze.

...

The grand buzzing sound persisted.

Like a passenger plane flying low, causing the surrounding glass to tremble slightly.

At this moment, the trembling sound grew louder and louder.

Soon, a massive shadow cast over the window like the shadow of Death, hovering motionlessly, the silver giant spider seemingly peering inside through the glass.

Chen Shouyi shrank into the corner, holding utterly still.

After several seconds, the shadow vanished swiftly, allowing him to finally breathe a sigh of relief.

Chen Shouyi patiently waited another half minute, only standing up when there was no more commotion around.

He went to the window for a look; the silver figure had vanished completely, having evidently moved elsewhere.

He leaped down from the window.

The street was deserted, a strange scent of blood and smoke lingering in the air, the rumble of cannons occasionally resounding from afar.

The sun had already turned westward; unbeknownst to him, it was nearing evening.

Thinking of the vanished silver giant spider, a pall of gloom descended upon his heart, prompting him to quickly make his way home, not daring to linger outside.

A few minutes later, seeing his peaceful residential area, he finally exhaled in relief, his whole body relaxing.

...

The shoes he left behind in the morning were still there, neither picked up by anyone nor tossed into the trash.

He grabbed the shoes and went up to the fifth floor.

"Thank heaven, thank Buddha, you finally came back; I was worried sick. Why is there so much blood on you? Let me see if you're hurt," Mrs. Chen, who had just relaxed seeing Chen Shouyi return, immediately expressed concern.

"Mom, I'm fine, the blood is someone else's, not a scratch on me," Chen Shouyi quickly replied, his voice somewhat weary, setting down the shoes.

"Really nothing wrong?" Mrs. Chen asked, worriedly.

"Look at me, do I have a problem?" Chen Shouyi patted his chest, then changed the subject, "Mom, can we have dinner now, I'm starving."

Besides having breakfast, he hadn't eaten all day. Coupled with intense exercise, his stomach was burning with hunger.

"Dinner's long been ready; I'll take it out now," Chen Dawei snapped back to reality, hurriedly heading to the kitchen, with Chen Xingyue and Song Tingting following suit to help.

Chen Shouyi fetched a full set of clothes from the bedroom and went into the bathroom.

Hedong City's tap water and natural gas had not been cut off, as essential public infrastructures; once electricity was out, they immediately switched to steam power, though how long they could sustain it was unknown.

He stripped off his clothes and turned on the tap, pouring near-freezing water over himself.

He scrubbed vigorously, washing away all the stench and blood.

...

At dinner, Song Tingting grew restless, her face anxious.

The time was already 5:30, yet neither of her parents had returned.

"Don't overthink, they should be at work; it's too dangerous to go home now," Mrs. Chen reassured her, "Tonight, you can squeeze in with Xing Yue."

"Yes, your dad's place is an important protection unit, surely with military defenses, and your mom's at the prosecutor's office right next to the city government, it shouldn't get dangerous, don't worry," Chen Shouyi also comforted.

"I know!" Song Tingting displayed a resilient smile, lowering her head and eating heartily.

...

At night, Chen Shouyi quietly listened to the outside artillery fire; though his body was utterly exhausted, he still turned over restlessly, unable to sleep.

"Kind giant, what's happening outside, is it thundering?" The Shell Lady beside him asked curiously, her eyes glimmering in the darkness, turning to face Chen Shouyi.

"Child, don't ask so many questions, just sleep," Chen Shouyi said.

"Hmph, I'm not a child!" Shell Lady retorted, disapproving, "I've seen countless sunrises and sunsets."

Is that the point of what I'm saying?

"So tell me, how many sunrises and sunsets have you seen?" Chen Shouyi asked.

Shell Lady blanched, angry, "You silly giant, it's so many, I'd be exhausted counting them."

"Then stop bragging and sleep."

"Hmph, I'm not bragging," Shell Lady huffed, turning away and ignoring him.

The bedroom fell silent.

Chen Shouyi turned his head, staring dazed out the window, the blood-red moonlight seemingly heralding a bloody night.

Chapter 152: Steam Tank

After midnight at one o'clock, Chen Shouyi finally dozed off, but his sleep was still shallow, and he was startled awake several times.

When he was startled awake by a loud noise for the last time, he got up and sat up.

He glanced at his watch and found it was only four thirty in the morning.

He walked to the window, the night outside still hazy, with more than two hours until dawn.

The sound of guns and cannons in the distance had been resounding for most of the night, yet it hadn't stopped, instead, it seemed to grow more intense. From here, he could occasionally see flashes of firelight not far away, flickering in the darkness.

Chen Shouyi watched for a while and was preparing to lie back on the bed to nap for a bit.

At this time, a dull noise, resembling that of an old train, gradually grew louder from afar, and the ground began to tremble slightly.

Before long, a giant steel beast passed through the street near the neighborhood. By the moonlight, Chen Shouyi carefully discerned it.

It was a giant steam tank, towering one or two meters above the surrounding walls, with a long cannon barrel pointing forward, surrounded by six gigantic machine guns resembling small cannons.

The ugly tail spewing white gas like a locomotive looked quite conspicuous.

Chen Shouyi had seen many tanks in the stationed military district, but none were as grand and bulky as this one. Those once seemingly massive heavy tanks appeared tiny, like infants in comparison.

Its completion was very high. Although it appeared bulky, it was compactly structured without the slightest flaw on its surface, which was painted with jungle camouflage in mottled green.

Obviously, this tank was not recently developed.

In peacetime, it takes five to ten years for an important military equipment to go from requirement proposal to preliminary research to full army equipment, while in wartime, it might be shortened to a year or even less.

However, from the first mutation to the second mutation, it was only a little over three months. In such a short time, even if the entire Great Xia Country was fully mobilized and entered a wartime state, it was impossible for such quick equipment to reach the second-line troops stationed in Hedong City.

Indeed, that's the case.

This type of tank was finalized over ten years ago, initially intended to form a force for frontal assault on the otherworld, specifically developed for this purpose. It is purely steam-powered, and even the shells are ejected using ultra-high pressure steam.

However, due to the complex environment of the otherworld and various strategic factors, they were eventually only equipped in small batches to a few first and second-line troops.

Since being equipped, these tanks have had no opportunity for use, stored away in armories.

Until now!

Watching this behemoth rumble by from a distance, Chen Shouyi snapped back to reality, letting out a sigh.

At this point, he was no longer sleepy, so he decided not to go back to sleep.

As he dressed, he opened the attribute panel and took a glance, discovering his will had increased by 0.1, reaching 12.9 points, while perception also increased by 0.1, reaching 12.1.

The Shell Lady was still sound asleep. He gently picked up this little one from the bed and placed her into his briefcase.

The Shell Lady mumbled a few times, smacked her lips, and went back to snoring softly.

Sometimes, he really envied the simple and carefree mindset of the Shell Lady. Like today, tossing and turning all night, anxious, while she slept like a pig.

Seeing that it was still early, Chen Shouyi picked up his sword for a warm-up.

The increase in perception made him feel like he had gained an extra sense. Within a meter and a half radius, whether in front or behind, eyes open or closed, he could vaguely perceive and judge what was there.

It wasn't any kind of image, nor color, but a very intense intuition.

This ability was quite useful, as any slightest movement within the perception range couldn't escape his notice.

...

After training for about half an hour, a sudden scream came from outside, abruptly stopping, sending chills down his spine.

The sound was very close. Chen Shouyi felt a deep weight in his heart as he quickly halted, hurried to the window, and with just a glance, his pupils couldn't help but tighten as he quickly leaned against the wall.

A familiar silver figure, moving gracefully, entered the complex from the entrance.

Bathed in the dim moonlight, it seemed to be covered in a beautiful silver glow.

Chen Shouyi gripped the sword hilt tightly, eyes slightly narrowed, cautiously observing.

He wasn't sure if this was the same one encountered during the day, but its size seemed about the same. At this moment, another terrified scream resounded in the community.

Tonight, everyone's nerves were on edge; unless born with nerves of steel, who could sleep? Not only worried about these monsters invading the city eating people, but also afraid of being caught in the crossfire. Who knows how many people had stayed by the window all night, watching the situation outside.

The silver figure was instantly attracted by the scream, paused, then suddenly spread its wings and swiftly flew up.

As an insect capable of flying under triple gravity, its speed on Earth was unimaginable.

Its wings flapped at high frequency, like a silver light racing towards the residential building near Chen Shouyi's home.

With a bang, the glass on the eighth floor shattered, followed by a few shrill screams, which quickly died down within seconds, evidently having met with disaster.

Before long, there were some minor movements at home, soon someone walked into the living room. Chen Shouyi glanced at the shattered window on the eighth floor across the street, took a step to the entrance, and opened the door, swiftly saying, "Dad, gather everyone into the living room, don't sleep, move quieter."

Chen Dawei was startled, looking at his always composed son reacting this way, knew something major had happened, and didn't ask much:

Chapter 153: Steam Tank_2

"Okay! I'll call them out right away."

...

Chen Shouyi returned to the window to continue observing.

The silver giant spider remained hidden for a long time.

Chen Shouyi's face was somber; he looked for a lengthy period before retracting his gaze, sighing lightly as he drew the curtains.

He wasn't a superhero nor a god, merely a slightly stronger ordinary person. It was no problem dealing with those black giant spiders, but faced with such a terrifying silver giant spider, he was powerless.

As he left the bedroom, everyone had already come out.

It was still early dawn; the living room was shrouded in darkness without any candles lit, creating a quiet yet oppressive atmosphere.

"Shou Yi, what's happening outside?" Mrs. Chen asked worriedly.

"It's very dangerous, a terrible monster has appeared in the neighborhood." Chen Shouyi hesitated slightly, then decided to speak truthfully.

"Brother, can't you handle it?" Chen Xingyue asked.

"No." Chen Shouyi nodded.

The atmosphere fell silent, leaving only the sound of heavy breathing.

Minute by minute, the neighborhood remained quiet.

That was undoubtedly good news; evidently, this silver giant spider, after finishing its meal, hadn't engaged in further meaningless killing.

Yet, the presence of this dreadful creature still weighed on Chen Shouyi's mind like a massive stone.

...

The sky gradually brightened.

Unable to hold back, Song Tingting went to the toilet, returning with unsettling news.

Tap water had stopped.

Mrs. Chen and Chen Dawei were immediately unsettled, hurriedly went to check the natural gas in the kitchen.

Fortunately, they found it was still usable.

Chen Shouyi couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief.

Thankfully, the natural gas was still running.

As for tap water, the household had quite a stockpile, enough to last ten to fifteen days, if used sparingly, just for cooking and drinking, they could stretch it to a month.

More so, the neighborhood had a small lake—not clear or clean, but in those times, having water was already fortunate; what more could be hoped for?

If the natural gas encountered issues, the entire city's residents would be plunged into disaster.

Not only was the city densely populated with concrete and steel, but there were also few alternative fuels other than natural gas.

Furthermore, post-mutation, chemical reactions had become relatively slow; flammable gases like natural gas could still ignite relatively easily, but others like wood and coal posed challenges.

...

After a simple breakfast, everyone remained in the living room.

Before long, close to noon, the massive noise of the steam tank reverberated again, seemingly approaching from a distance.

Initially, Chen Shouyi didn't pay much attention but soon felt unease creep in.

Such a commotion will likely alert the silver giant spider!

"I'll go check!" he said as he stood up, hurriedly heading to the bedroom, and quietly pulled a curtain slightly open to observe carefully.

No movement from the eighth floor opposite; the silver giant spider, either resting or doing something else.

But as the noise from the steam tank grew louder.

Finally, the terrifying silver figure reappeared in the window; it gazed into the distance, its crystalline compound eyes revealing no expression.

Suddenly, it leaped forcefully, spread its wings, and flew rapidly away.

Needless to say, it was heading towards the steam tank.

Chen Shouyi's face showed a struggle; suddenly, he gritted his teeth, picked up the War Bow and sword, and jumped from the window.

His body fell straight down, air whistling around him.

A few seconds later, Chen Shouyi landed with a thud, rolled forward to release the impact, and was already on his feet, immediately sprinting towards the noise.

With each second, he could take twenty or thirty strides, each stretch three meters long, with the Wind Talent Ability minimizing air resistance; in an instant, he had surpassed a hundred meters.

Just as he reached the boundary wall, the worst happened.

With a series of explosive steam jet noises, countless black projectiles roared into the sky, quickly embedding into a distant building, leaving a dense pattern of bullet marks, with shattered glass raining down.

Chen Shouyi's expression turned grave; he sped up instantly, leaping over the wall.

A half-kilometer away, that giant steam tank had already stopped, its nearly ten-meter long massive cannon still unmoving, only the six giant steam machine guns spewed projectiles at a silver figure furiously.

The tank's hefty armor bore over a dozen deep gashes, some shallow at two or three centimeters, others reaching five or six centimeters deep; it was thanks to its thick armor that it had not been torn apart.

It emitted a sharp, ear-piercing scream, its body staggering in mid-air, striving to get closer, but constantly hit by the barrage of steam machine gun bullets like rain.

This silver giant spider clearly chose the wrong adversary; against such a tough beast, it was utterly powerless, initially relying on speed and agility to attack, but once the machine gunners arrived, it had little chance.

A few seconds later, its form suddenly shifted, darting like a silver ray towards a nearby fifty-to-sixty-story skyscraper.

In an instant, it stood atop the high rooftop, its compound eyes coldly looking down.

In his sprint, Chen Shouyi immediately dashed into the building's shadow.

The silver giant spider was already injured; its surface carapace was marked by dozens of tiny web-like cracks, slightly inset, with green blood slowly seeping out.

Chapter 154: Steam Tank 3

However, such an injury is clearly not serious.

The steam tank's six steam machine guns continued firing for a while and then stopped, with steam hissing around.

Both sides remained motionless for a long time.

For some reason, Chen Shouyi, hiding on the side, had a bad feeling.

This giant spider is clearly not an ordinary insect; it possesses considerable intelligence.

Sure enough, a few seconds later, the silver giant spider shot forth like a flash of lightning.

Its speed was too fast, even before the machine guns could spray bullets, Chen Shouyi heard a series of dense metallic thuds like iron being struck; sparks flew from the tank top, and in the blink of an eye, the six giant steam machine guns were twisted and scrapped, with countless parts flying around.

Perhaps the high-pressure steam pipeline was damaged, and the next moment, ultra-high-temperature steam of several hundred degrees Celsius fiercely sprayed into the sky, forming steam columns tens of meters high, engulfing the entire tank in steam.

The silver giant spider obviously did not expect such an accident; scalded by the high temperature, it let out a sharp cry, swiftly flapped its wings, flew in the direction of Chen Shouyi, and landed on the street over a hundred meters away, its body trembling and screeching continuously.

The green blood on its body had already changed color, evidently scalded by the high-temperature steam.

Good opportunity!

Feeling stirred, Chen Shouyi took out an arrow, emerged from behind the building, his steps light and swift, quickly approaching, and in five or six seconds, he was within a hundred meters.

Apparently sensing the commotion, the silver spider's screeching suddenly stopped, slowly turning around.

Chen Shouyi then noticed that its injuries were much more severe than expected; its originally transparent, crystalline compound eyes had become slightly cloudy.

Its vision had clearly deteriorated significantly, and it was even blind.

His tense mind relaxed a bit, and his steps became even more gentle, as he approached, while slowly nocking the arrow onto the bowstring.

Hundred meters, ninety meters, eighty meters...

The silver giant spider appeared increasingly agitated; it suddenly spread its wings, already full of holes, causing the air to explode with a buzz, quickly lifting off, preparing to leave this place.

At this moment, Chen Shouyi's hand drew the bowstring like a phantom, shooting an arrow.

The supersonic arrow flew swiftly toward its target, this time it couldn't evade.

In fact, the high-temperature steam burn was more severe than Chen Shouyi saw; not only was its vision badly impaired, but most of the fine hairs on its body were also damaged by the heat.

These fine hairs were full of countless receptors that could sense air and water flow and vibrations, serve as ears to hear sounds, and also sense temperature and smell. It was because of these receptors that it could agilely dodge bullets and arrows; without them, its threat was reduced by nearly half.

With a loud bang, the arrow struck its chest heavily.

The hard silver shell on its chest was instantly pierced, and the arrow sunk in up to its root, leaving only a small portion of the trembling arrow feather visible, as the body received a powerful impact, sending it flying backward three or four meters before crashing heavily to the ground.

The silver giant spider let out a sharp screech, its wings desperately flapping, trying to escape.

The next moment, another arrow heavily struck its abdomen, causing it to roll across the ground again.

Chen Shouyi did not dare to relax, shooting arrow after arrow until he had fired seven arrows in rapid succession, and only when the terrifying silver giant spider could no longer move did he finally breathe a sigh of relief, the shadow in his heart quickly dissipating.

Meanwhile, the steam tank in the distance also finally sealed the leaking steam pipeline.

Chen Shouyi glanced over, took a few steps, and quickly disappeared into the distance.

Chapter 155: Farewell

The shoes had already been crushed in the intense motion just now, making walking on the road quite uncomfortable, so Chen Shouyi simply kicked off his shoes and walked barefoot.

At this time, it was close to noon. The winter sunshine poured over him, yet he did not feel any warmth. The ground was covered with a thin layer of patterned ice, and a gust of cold wind made goosebumps rise on his skin.

Before entering the neighborhood, Chen Shouyi noticed a camphor tree by the roadside that, in this biting cold winter, had sprouted new buds, green and tender, exuding vibrant life. If not for the penetrating cold beneath his feet, he might have hallucinated that spring had already arrived.

He looked at the other camphor trees along the road, only to find that this one was not an exception.

After the mutation, the Mysterious Power began to pervade the Earth. While this power slowed down the electrochemical reactions of matter, it apparently had little impact on living organisms. Unlike the other four fundamental forces of the universe, it was a spiritual power akin to sunlight for plants, allowing life to absorb and convert it easily, bringing about more vigorous vitality.

...

By dusk, the warfare gradually wound down; only an occasional burst of artillery fire indicated that stray giant spiders still roamed the city.

Having put his shoes back on, Chen Shouyi stood on the balcony, looking into the distance. Thick, choking smoke filled the city sky, as if shrouded in a dense fog.

At this moment, Chen Shouyi saw a fat man in a down jacket cautiously walking toward the black giant spider he had killed in the neighborhood the day before.

This giant spider was killed by his sword, with many of its legs chopped off by him.

The fat man boldly approached a piece of a blackened severed leg. He seemed hesitant for a moment, suddenly squatted down, and struggled to pick up the leg before heading back.

Chen Shouyi's face immediately showed surprise.

What is he doing with that thing?

Could it be he's going to eat it!

Some people, having noticed this scene, soon rushed out in dribs and drabs, and more and more came running. However, with only three severed legs, there was hardly enough to go around, so the others began to set their sights on the entire spider carcass.

The black giant spider was huge, and as a creature that lived under triple gravity, it weighed nearly a ton with a quite hard carapace.

Some people brought axes, others cleavers, and some had hammers, trying to dismember the giant spider, though the effect was not good until a middle-aged Martial Artist Apprentice carrying a sword came over. The process then barely proceeded smoothly. This middle-aged Martial Artist Apprentice seemed not to intend to claim it all for himself; instead, he helpfully assisted others in cutting up the corpse.

"Brother, what are you looking at?" Chen Xingyue asked, walking over with Song Tingting.

Chen Shouyi gestured with his finger.

Chen Xingyue glanced and felt uncomfortable: "Brother, this is what you killed, so much meat, why are they taking it?"

Chen Shouyi was surprised: "This is spider meat, can it be eaten?"

The books say that girls are most afraid of this stuff, right?

"Brother, what spider? This thing looks more like a mantis; you can't just call everything with eight legs a spider." Chen Xingyue rolled her eyes and said: "Besides, this is meat from otherworldly creatures; it's highly nutritious. After eating the meat you brought back last time, I felt my strength improving very quickly."

Is it that obvious? How come he didn't feel it; to him, the meat was only quite filling.

But come to think of it, he did notice that, during that time, his parents seemed to be in much better spirits.

"If you want to eat, that's easy; this stuff is everywhere outside." Remembering the silver giant spider outside the neighborhood, Chen Shouyi couldn't sit still. "I'm going out to look for it!"

He fetched his sword from the bedroom and stepped out the door.

Before long, he had walked out of the neighborhood, and the body of the silver giant spider was still there.

No pedestrians were on the road, only three stray dogs with hungry, green eyes, frantically biting at the wound of the silver giant spider, their mouths full of green blood.

Seeing this, Chen Shouyi felt a sense of relief.

It seems it should be non-toxic.

The dogs, seeing Chen Shouyi approaching, initially bared their teeth, but with just a glare from him, they whimpered and quickly ran away with their tails between their legs.

Dogs are far more sensitive to dangerous auras than humans.

A Martial Artist like Chen Shouyi has a biological field dozens of times that of ordinary humans. Once he shows malice, it may not affect creatures with a dull sensory response to aura, but to those sensitive, it's a strong danger signal.

He quickly approached the silver giant spider. This was the first time he had observed such a terrifying creature up close.

Its six legs were curled together tightly, the green blood at its wound frozen by the cold. Perhaps due to its death, its originally pale silver sheen had dimmed significantly, seemingly losing some sort of mysterious color.

He wasted no time, drawing his sword and striking hard at its strongest front limb. It was like cutting into metal, the flesh tough and unyielding. Fortunately, Chen Shouyi had been mentally prepared and used all his strength with this blow!

With a crisp cracking sound, the limb, about ten centimeters thick and nearly two meters long when extended, snapped and fell to the ground with a dull thud.

Chen Shouyi looked at the sword blade and, seeing no nicks, was relieved. He chopped down another and then carried both into the neighborhood.

Chapter 156 Farewell (Part 2)

The weight of each of these two front legs is nearly a hundred pounds. Even without the outer shell, the meat inside is likely substantial.

When Chen Shouyi entered the community carrying two large and striking silver-white front limbs.

Many residents, who were still around the large black spider trying to get some leftover scraps, all looked over.

Soon, someone recognized Chen Shouyi and whispered something, causing everyone to give him looks of gratitude or awe.

Without knowing who started it, everyone suddenly began to applaud.

"Buddy, well done."

"That's really impressive!"

...

Chen Shouyi paused slightly, nodded stiffly to the crowd, and then quickly walked into his residential building.

Once inside, a hint of a smile appeared uncontrollably at the corner of his mouth.

The feeling of being thanked and respected was truly fantastic, making him feel genuinely happy inside.

He walked up the stairs briskly and soon opened the door.

Mrs. Chen, who was coming out of the kitchen, was startled at the sight of Chen Shouyi holding two enormous front legs: "What are you carrying?"

This thing indeed looked quite terrifying, with the entire front leg covered in serrated edges, the tip sharp as a spear, covered in ochre fur, and its massive size enough to intimidate anyone.

"Insect legs!" Chen Shouyi said casually, gently placing them on the floor with a light thud.

Chen Xingyue quickly ran over upon hearing the sound, surprised: "Why is it this color? Isn't it supposed to be black?"

Although Song Tingting was a bit scared, she still curiously walked over, looking around like a newly awakened kitten.

"Black ones are the weakest, silver ones are much stronger than blacks," Chen Shouyi explained. Even if ten black giant spiders surrounded him from every direction, they wouldn't pose as much of a threat as a single silver giant spider.

Mrs. Chen finally understood what it was and glared at Chen Shouyi, saying indignantly, "Why bring this thing inside? These monsters should have eaten people!"

Why are you looking at me, it's not like I'm going to eat it, Chen Shouyi looked innocently at Chen Xingyue.

Chen Xingyue's expression also turned somewhat unpleasant, only now realizing this monster might have eaten people. But seeing people in the community scrambling for it earlier, she hadn't thought much about it in her impulsiveness. She hesitated for a while and hesitantly said, "Then why not throw it away."

Chen Shouyi looked speechlessly at his sister; when it comes to eating, it's you, when it comes to not eating, it's also you.

Women are just troublesome.

At this point, Chen Dawei spoke up, "Throwing it away is too wasteful. Others are preparing to eat it, why shouldn't we? There's nothing bad about it, especially considering these are just two legs!"

As a chef, he wouldn't pass up such a new ingredient.

"If you want to eat, you guys eat, I'm not eating!" Mrs. Chen said.

"This is good stuff, all protein," Chen Dawei laughed heartily, his mood relaxing as the war gradually subsided. "I reckon the meat is similar to a cicada's, deep-frying it would make it smell wonderful."

This thing isn't easy to handle, only Chen Shouyi could manage it. Chen Shouyi placed the two front legs on the balcony, then forcefully slashed them apart with a sword, splitting open the middle.

Everyone watched Chen Shouyi on the balcony, eyes tightly fixed, but not one person could clearly see the shadows of the sword that Chen Shouyi swung, even his arm looked quite blurred.

Mrs. Chen and Chen Dawei watched curiously, at most thinking their son was impressive, and that was it.

Only Chen Xingyue watched while biting her lips.

Are martial artists really that powerful? She felt she was far behind, perhaps three to four years wouldn't be enough to catch up to her brother.

After a dozen seconds, Chen Shouyi had cut through and split open each segment of the front legs.

The muscles inside were dense and tough, crisscrossing each other. He placed the sword aside, then forcefully scraped out the muscle attached to the shell one by one, placing them in a basin nearby.

He managed to scrape out three large basins full.

Once washed clean, the meat looked snowy white and tender, with a slight glistening sheen, like flawless jade.

Although he had seen stray dogs tear at it, the meat shouldn't contain any toxins; however, the parts could be different.

For safety's sake, Chen Shouyi grabbed a piece of meat, reminded his parents, and headed out the door.

Soon, he found a few stray dogs still futilely gnawing on the silver giant spider in the street.

Before they could run away, Chen Shouyi tossed the meat far away.

Among them, a relatively bold dog glanced at Chen Shouyi, hesitated, and quickly ran over, biting off the piece of meat, devouring it eagerly.

Chen Shouyi squatted by the roadside, observing for a full half hour. Seeing it not only unharmed but appearing more vigorous, he finally felt relieved.

Looks like it's non-toxic. If it were poisonous, it would've shown symptoms by now, yet it's still bouncing around energetically.

...

Dinner tonight was quite sumptuous.

The spider meat was deep-fried by Chen Dawei into one whole large basin.

The initially tough meat became crispy and tender after being deep-fried in hot oil, exuding an extremely enticing aroma that couldn't help but stimulate one's taste buds and open up the appetite.

Initially, only Chen Shouyi and Chen Dawei were eating, but soon Chen Xingyue upon seeing how delicious it seemed to them, couldn't resist grabbing a piece as well, and soon couldn't stop herself. Only Mrs. Chen and Song Tingting looked away, remaining untouched.

...

Early the next morning.

Zhang Jingyi rushed over from her workplace to see Song Tingting.

The two hugged and cried in excitement upon seeing each other, with Zhang Jingyi profusely thanking seeing the safe and sound Song Tingting, pulling out a wad of cash insisting for Mrs. Chen to accept.

Mrs. Chen quickly refused, and only when Zhang Jingyi saw Mrs. Chen's firm attitude did she put the money away.

Subsequently, Zhang Jingyi mentioned that her family planned to move, intending to relocate to the employee apartments near Song Qiran's steam turbine group.

After the mutation, the status of Hedong Steam Turbine Group in Hedong City has risen sharply, reaching a strategic level, becoming a primary protection unit of Jiangnan Province. Living there would undoubtedly be safer.

Upon hearing this, Song Tingting was completely baffled:

"Mom, why live over there?"

"Your dad has been busy working recently, day in and day out, and if I don't take care of him, he might just collapse. We can't leave you alone here." Zhang Jingyi patiently explained.

But I'm fine being alone here, Song Tingting thought to herself.

Of course, this was just in her mind and couldn't be said aloud.

"But Mom, what about my studies?" Song Tingting turned her thoughts and suddenly found an excuse.

"You can transfer to the Second High School, which is right next to the group, making it convenient for going to school and back home."

...

Ultimately, Song Tingting couldn't oppose Mrs. Zhang.

At departure, Song Tingting hugged Chen Xingyue with moist eyes: "Xing Yue, I'll miss you."

"I'll miss you too!" Chen Xingyue patted her back and said.

Song Tingting let go of Chen Xingyue and walked to where Chen Shouyi stood. Tears finally fell, sliding down her cheeks, making her look pitiful. She opened her arms and tightly hugged the somewhat bewildered Chen Shouyi, whispering in his ear: "Senior, don't forget me, I'll be back soon."

...

Soon after, Song Tingting and Zhang Jingyi packed their simple luggage and left, shedding tears as they walked, leaving a trail of tears on the ground.

Chen Shouyi watched them walk down the stairs, feeling like a piece of his heart was missing.

"Brother, Song Tingting seems to like you." Chen Xingyue said.

Feeling the traces of tears on his shoulder from the girl, Chen Shouyi sighed, knowing all too well: "Let's leave it to fate!"

...

Order in Hedong City began to gradually restore as soldiers returned to the streets.

Simultaneously, a large number of recruitment notices, mostly for construction workers, were plastered all over the entrance walls of the community.

At the intersection near the community, a two-story octagonal building had already been constructed overnight. Workers mentioned an outpost would be established here.

The giant spider invasion had drawn nerves tight in Hedong City. Previously flawless defenses had turned into vulnerabilities post-mutation. Establishing a new urban defense system was evidently imperative.

...

At noon, twelve steam tanks and eighty steam trucks, either loaded with soldiers or carrying artillery, lined up and paraded through various streets in the downtown area, drawing cheers and crowds of onlookers.

Chen Shouyi's family also went to watch; such scenes were indeed thrilling, and even Chen Shouyi couldn't help but cheer in the midst of the contagious atmosphere.

However, this likely represented the most mobilizable forces Hedong City had at present. For humanity, the next few months would undoubtedly be the most vulnerable period.

Chapter 157 New Mission

Nighttime.

Chen Shouyi and the Shell Lady sat facing each other, with a flying chess set placed between them.

These days, the Shell Lady was really feeling restless. Her temper, corrected not long ago, was starting to relapse, and she was becoming increasingly agitated, so he had to take time to accompany her.

The chess set was picked up from the neighborhood; he didn't know who had thrown it away.

This stirred up long-lost memories for him.

This flying chess, with simple rules that require no thinking, depending entirely on luck, was his favorite among all games. He played it from kindergarten through elementary school. If he still had someone to play with, since even Chen Xingyue lost interest, he could have played until middle school.

...

He picked up the die, shook it, and gently cast it.

His expression turned ugly instantly.

Damn it, still no six!

His four planes were still at the airport, while the Shell Lady had already launched two, one of which was nearing the finish line.

"It's my turn!" the Shell Lady exclaimed happily. The flying chess rules were simple, and after Chen Shouyi explained them once, she understood.

She grabbed the die and forcefully pushed it, the die rolled several times, landing on another six. The Shell Lady hurriedly picked up a plane and moved it to the ready-to-fly area.

She grinned broadly and triumphantly said, "Silly Giant, I've already flown one out, and you haven't flown any."

"Don't celebrate too soon; it's not over yet." Chen Shouyi smirked coldly.

She rolled again, this time landing on four. She chose the plane that had flown the farthest, walked four steps, and it was almost at the finish line.

Chen Shouyi picked up the die immediately, squinted his eyes slightly, and sneered internally: relying on luck is a low-level way of playing this game, purely kindergarten-grade—now I'll show you real skill.

He glanced at the six-point position, adjusted the die's position, and lightly tossed it.

Three points.

Well, that was slightly too much strength.

The Shell Lady gave him a disdainful look, and Chen Shouyi felt a surge of resentment.

You're celebrating too early!

With his meticulous control over force, he only needed to experiment two or three times to completely master the technique of casting force. Eventually, he could throw whatever number he wanted.

Once my four planes are stacked together, they will be unstoppable. Let's see if you cry by then.

At that moment, the Shell Lady grabbed the die, confidently saying, "This time I'm sure—six again!"

She then forcefully pushed it, the die rolled a few times and then landed.

It was really six again!

The Shell Lady immediately cheered proudly, picked up a plane, and completed stacking another plane. Her airport was completely empty.

"You're cheating!" Chen Shouyi quickly exclaimed.

She definitely cheated; how could she easily roll so many sixes.

"Silly Giant, I did not cheat!" the Shell Lady protested loudly. "You're just dumb."

"Alright, you'll see!" Chen Shouyi stewed with anger, but at this point, I can't help it.

...

A few minutes later, Chen Shouyi employed superior cheating techniques and finally accomplished the ultimate killer move with four stacked planes.

He then pursued vigorously, continuously rolling six and using precise control over the numbers to knock out several of Shell Lady's planes.

The Shell Lady's joyful smile gradually faded, her expression became tense, and tears welled up in her eyes, threatening to spill over. Her reddened eyes fixed on the repeatedly rolling die.

Half a minute later, Chen Shouyi's four planes smoothly reached the finish line, and Chen Shouyi raised his eyebrows triumphantly: "I win again!"

The Shell Lady pursed her lips and finally burst into tears with a "wah," tears streaming down like rain. As she cried, she pointed at Chen Shouyi, and choked out:

"You... you're a bad Giant, you... cheated."

Chen Shouyi chuckled awkwardly and quickly went over to comfort her: "Alright, alright, I won't cheat this time, let's keep playing!"

...

The next day, Hedong had regained its calm, and people were back on the streets.

Early in the morning, Bai Xiaoling rode her bicycle to Chen Shouyi's house.

Mrs. Chen warmly poured her a cup of hot tea and took Chen Dawei with her, leaving the living room to the two of them.

Chen Shouyi sat on the sofa and looked at Bai Xiaoling, holding the teacup in both hands, her body wrapped tightly, yet still frozen like a shivering quail. He couldn't help but ask, "Is it really that cold outside?"

"It's fifteen degrees below zero outside today, so you tell me," Bai Xiaoling said, almost rolling her eyes.

She glanced enviously at Chen Shouyi, lightly dressed as if it were still autumn.

Martial Artists sure are warm-blooded.

Chen Shouyi wisely chose not to dwell on the topic further and asked, "What brings you here?"

Since the mutation, Hedong City's soldiers have enforced stricter measures to assist in law enforcement, easing the pressure on the police department. Additionally, with transportation issues, Bai Xiaoling had not visited for quite a while.

After all, even if the invasion of creatures from another world occurred, by the time the Martial Artists were contacted, it would already be too late.

"There's something important!" Bai Xiaoling said. "To completely resolve Hedong City's security issue, the City Government and the military have decided to jointly explore the Spatial Passage where those Giant Scythe Insects originated, to obtain first-hand information for a targeted strike..."

"Wait, what are Giant Scythe Insects?" Chen Shouyi interrupted.

"They're the monsters ravaging the lower city districts these days," Bai Xiaoling explained. "The military has named these creatures Giant Scythe Insects."

Not Giant Spiders? What a ridiculous name!

Chen Shouyi thought critically, then asked seriously, "Is this a mandatory mission?"

"It's not mandatory; it's up to individual Martial Artists' willingness. The City Government will deploy five Martial Artists, led by Chief Martial Artist General Qin, totaling six. The military will send the same number," Bai Xiaoling finished, paused, then continued:

"The mission is quite dangerous, and although the rewards are high, and your strength is considerable, I still advise against going."

Chen Shouyi thought about it and understood. The individual power of Martial Artists is immensely strong, especially under current circumstances, where the state apparatus's power has dramatically declined, making it impossible to force Martial Artists, only able to entice them with grand ideals and benefits.

But Bai Xiaoling was obviously not a good political guide.

"You just mentioned high rewards, what are the rewards?" Chen Shouyi asked.

"This time, the City Government and the military will collaborate to establish a Safe Zone in the suburbs. A large residential area has already been purchased. The reward is a villa in this Safe Zone," Bai Xiaoling explained.

Chen Shouyi leaned back on the sofa, lost in thought.

Since the mutation, the city has become less habitable, with a dense population and high prices. If not for the relatively safer environment and relief centers that allow the unemployed to barely get by, many would have already moved to surrounding rural areas.

However, this incident clearly showed that cities aren't absolutely safe either.

It doesn't matter to him; even if taken to another world, he can mostly ensure survival. But his family members are ordinary people. This Safe Zone being established is obviously meant for the nobility or some high-level talents, guaranteeing absolute safety.

Raising his head, Chen Shouyi asked, "When is it happening?"

Chapter 158 The Origin of the Giant Scythe Insect

Two days later at noon, the weather was gloomy.

Chen Shouyi stood in the neighborhood with a backpack on his back and a sword in his hand, waiting.

The residents passing in and out of the neighborhood occasionally glanced at him.

A middle-aged man with stubble pulled out a pack of cigarettes and walked over enthusiastically:
"Brother, want a cigarette?"

Brother?

Chen Shouyi glanced at him, estimating that he was about as old as his father, and quickly declined,
"Thanks, I don't smoke."

"You look familiar, are you the martial artist from the neighborhood?" The middle-aged man withdrew the cigarettes and asked.

Chen Shouyi nodded: "Is there something you need?"

"No, no, I just came to say thanks. If not for you, our neighborhood might have lost many lives." The middle-aged man said with a sigh, "In the entire lower city district, our area had the fewest deaths, but other places were seriously tragic, with blood everywhere."

Chen Shouyi silently pondered; the number of casualties in the lower city district was already beyond calculation, with hundreds of bodies visible to him alone.

"You're a martial artist, I want to ask if it's too late for my son, who is nineteen, to start learning martial arts now?" The middle-aged man asked hopefully.

"As long as he works hard, it shouldn't be too late!" Chen Shouyi assured him.

The middle-aged man did not disturb him further and, after saying a few words of thanks, left.

Chen Shouyi sighed inwardly, after this incident, the number of people practicing martial arts in Hedong City will likely multiply several times.

Martial Arts has been popularized for nearly twenty years, but in reality, very few people genuinely invest significant energy and persistence daily; most give up after practicing for a while due to various reasons.

Perseverance and persistence have always been extremely scarce qualities!

Not long after, a steam-truck stopped by the roadside, letting out a hiss with steam billowing from the train-like cab, and a young lady dressed smartly in office attire jumped off from the rear of the carriage, confirming: "Excuse me, are you Mr. Chen, Chen Shouyi?"

"Yes!"

"This is your ride, please get on board!"

Once Chen Shouyi got on the vehicle, he found two people already sitting inside: a stern-faced middle-aged man sitting regally on a leather bench with eyes closed, and another slightly younger person opposite him, boredly studying the vehicle's interior details.

Upon seeing Chen Shouyi come up, he glanced over quickly before shifting his gaze away.

The atmosphere might be somewhat awkward, so the young lady in office attire stepped onto the vehicle, lowered her voice, and said: "Let me introduce you, this is Mr. Qin Liuyuan, the lead martial artist from the city government, and this is Senior Martial Artist Mr. Yu Hongyong."

Qin Liuyuan opened his eyes to glance and then closed them again.

The other martial artist, named Yu Hongyong, nodded slightly at him without speaking.

Chen Shouyi didn't try to impose himself and merely thanked the young lady before choosing a seat to sit.

The vehicle soon started.

Compared to a regular car, the steam truck was definitely uncomfortable, but it ran smoothly and was quite fast.

Chen Shouyi estimated that the speed could be fifty to sixty km/h, and with streets now empty and free from traffic jams or traffic lights, it was faster than driving in the city during pre-disaster times.

The vehicle stopped again after driving for about ten minutes, and a female martial artist named Xu Jie, dressed in black, got on, with fair skin, tall stature, and alluring beauty.

She glanced at everyone, smiled when she saw Qin Liuyuan: "Brother Qin, you've arrived early, please look after this little sister this time!"

Qin Liuyuan opened his eyes, and a slight smile on his stiff face dissipated the cold atmosphere: "Since a beauty asks, I naturally have to look after you!"

"Are you joining too? Aren't you afraid of the danger? This time we're venturing deep into the nest of Giant Scythe Insects!" Yu Hongyong asked.

"With Brother Qin's hefty presence, what do I have to fear?" Xu Jie said with a radiant smile.

"When things get dire, I may not be able to look out for you." Qin Liuyuan, no longer resting his eyes, jokingly replied.

"Brother Qin, please don't be modest. With your great martial artist strength, what danger could you encounter?" Xu Jie replied, chuckling.

"Indeed, President Qin is just being modest. Even I've shot five Giant Scythe Insects, and President Qin could surely handle even more!" Yu Hongyong flattered.

Could it be that no one has encountered those silver Giant Scythe Insects?

Listening to their conversation made Chen Shouyi curious.

With Xu Jie joining, the formerly quiet atmosphere became lively, leaving Chen Shouyi isolated and observing coldly; he didn't know anyone, so didn't join in the merriment, and had little desire to.

Bored, he opened the status panel and pleasantly found an increase in his agility attribute; it had grown by 0.1 to reach 14.4, equal to his strength.

A hint of joy flashed in his heart.

"If I encounter the silver Giant Scythe Insect again, it shouldn't be as embarrassing as last time," he thought to himself.

...

The vehicle occasionally stopped to pick up another martial artist.

After about an hour, everyone had gathered—a total of four men and two women; besides one whom Chen Shouyi hinted was somewhat familiar and perhaps seen briefly at a martial artist matchmaking event, he didn't know any of the others.

"Young brother, why so quiet?"

The one striking up conversation was the other female martial artist in the group, named Jin Feiyan, appearing somewhat masculine-looking, robust and loud, with a hearty disposition; if not for her prominently raised chest, Chen Shouyi would've mistaken her for a man.

Female martial artists were already few, with even fewer beauties.

"I'm usually not very talkative, plus I don't know anyone here!" Chen Shouyi deflected; he was of a different age from these people, having no common topics, hence nothing much to discuss.

"Your introversion won't do; exploring other worlds is a highly dangerous task, getting familiar with unfamiliar companions swiftly becomes crucial—it might save your life during critical moments." Jin Feiyan advised patronizingly.

"Thank you, I'll heed that advice!" Chen Shouyi thanked her, involuntarily glancing at her.

"Sister Jin, seems you've taken a liking to the little handsome guy, be careful your husband doesn't get jealous." A middle-aged martial artist teased.

Jin Feiyan didn't mind and laughed boisterously: "Jealous over nothing, Zhou Dapao, keep spouting nonsense and I'll crush your balls."

Listening to this made Chen Shouyi a little taken aback—could this woman really find a husband? Perhaps she coerced a man?

...

The vehicle soon stopped, and led by Qin Liuyuan, the group got off in single file; Chen Shouyi glanced around and found they were at the Haunted House area.

Now this place had completely transformed into a military zone.

Around the ruins at the front, there were cannons aplenty, even idle tanks had been dragged out and lined up by the roadside; with little time elapsed, no defense structures had been set up, leaving all military equipment exposed to the elements. Numerous soldiers in military coats waited in the chilling wind, constantly prepared to open fire.

It seemed the spatial passage emerged right beneath the Haunted House.

The more Chen Shouyi thought, the more plausible it seemed.

The existence of the Haunted House itself was strange, spanning over a decade—a time when Earth was entirely ordinary; if a spatial passage lay beneath, it made sense. Furthermore, the recent burning evidently not only eradicated the rampant spirit but also thoroughly alerted the Giant Scythe Insects behind the passage.

Chapter 159 Proof

Soon, the group arrived at a nearby office building, which had clearly been requisitioned by the military; almost all those coming and going were soldiers.

Before they reached the entrance, an officer with a captain's rank had already come out to greet them.

The accompanying female government employee hurried forward to introduce them. The officer managed a slight smile on his stern face: "Welcome, welcome!"

After exchanging a few pleasantries with the group, he led them into a conference room.

Soldiers promptly delivered tea.

"Have the military martial artists not arrived yet?" asked Qin Liuyuan as he sat down at the head of the table.

"Sorry, they haven't. Please wait a while. There's still half an hour until the agreed time," the officer said after checking the time. "Well then, I won't disturb you. If you need anything, feel free to have a soldier call me."

He gave a quick greeting and then hurriedly left the conference room, closing the door behind him.

"This is too neglectful!" Zhou Dapao remarked with some dissatisfaction.

"It's normal. After all, this is their home ground. Maybe they're trying to seize the dominant position?" A middle-aged man named Zhao Zhishan took a slow sip of tea, smiling as he spoke, appearing quite unperturbed.

"I suppose so. I heard that the military's martial artists are quite competitive; they might even give us a hard time later," Zhou Dapao said.

The military is a closed and self-contained system, and the same is true for the military's martial artists. As the most efficient part of organized society, discipline and purity of the team are prioritized above all else.

Compared to absorbing societal martial artists into the military, the military prefers to recruit young martial artist apprentices and train them into full-fledged martial artists. As a result, although there aren't many military martial artists, their discipline and cohesion far exceed those of societal martial artists.

Qin Liuyuan's expression turned somewhat grim. He was the leader on the city government's side for this mission, so any intimidation would most likely be directed at him. It wouldn't be a private fight, but at most, a loss of face.

Time ticked away second by second.

It was soon approaching two o'clock.

A series of orderly footsteps could be heard outside, and soon the door to the conference room opened.

A group of six officers in jungle camouflage uniforms walked quickly into the room, exuding an imposing presence.

Chen Shouyi glanced up; at the forefront was a colonel in his thirties, of average height, thin lips, and a slightly downturned mouth, giving off an aura of authority without anger, clearly a person of serious nature.

His sharp gaze swept over the group. Except for Qin Liuyuan, who remained unfazed, the rest instinctively avoided eye contact, not daring to meet his gaze. As for Chen Shouyi, he looked up briefly before lowering his head to study the patterns on the conference table.

"Who is Qin Liuyuan?"

"I am!" Qin Liuyuan replied in a deep voice, not getting up.

The two of them exchanged a glance, somewhat confrontational.

At this point, the colonel took the initiative to ease the atmosphere, showing a slight smile: "I've heard of your name. I'm Xiao Changming, the leader on the military side for this operation. The intelligence briefing before our departure will be conducted by me, as the military has more information. You don't have a problem with that, do you, Captain Qin?"

There was indeed nothing worth contesting, nor could he contend over it, and even if he were truly asked to lead the meeting, he wouldn't know how. However, he still snorted coldly: "This is your turf, after all. I naturally have no objections."

"Alright then, everyone, take your seats," Xiao Changming instructed the military martial artists standing behind him.

"Yes, Captain!" they responded in unison.

The military martial artists sat down in their chairs with crisp, neat movements.

Compared to the disciplined military martial artists, Chen Shouyi himself felt that the martial artists on his side were quite undisciplined, like a group of scattered soldiers.

"The departure time is set for two-thirty. Time is tight, so I won't delay further. Liu Yongqi, distribute the documents!" Xiao Changming instructed a martial artist sitting beside him.

"Yes, Captain!" The military martial artist, referred to as Liu Yongqi, immediately stood up, took out some documents, and began distributing them one by one.

Xiao Changming continued, "These are some intelligence reports we have on the Giant Scythe Insects. Please have a look."

The documents were only a few thin pages and still had the fresh scent of ink. Chen Shouyi skimmed through them quickly and found them not much different from what he already knew, only more detailed.

Before long, the martial artists on the city government's side turned pale.

"Are there Silver Giant Scythe Insects as well?" Qin Liuyuan asked gravely.

"That's right. These Silver Giant Scythe Insects are relatively small but more powerful than the black ones. Fortunately, there aren't many; the military has only found two in total," Xiao Changming explained.

"How powerful are they? The documents don't seem to describe them much!" Qin Liuyuan asked with a slight frown.

"I'm not exactly sure. Of the two Silver Giant Scythe Insects, one died in shellfire, and the other was supposedly killed by a great martial artist on your side," Xiao Changming replied.

Seeing Qin Liuyuan's frowning expression slightly relax and a hint of relief appear, Chen Shouyi hesitated inwardly, wondering whether to warn them not to underestimate the danger.

The reason he had succeeded in the past was mainly due to the steam tank; without the advantage of it being scalded by high temperature, whether he could have killed it was uncertain. He might have died instead.

He had no particular good feelings toward Qin Liuyuan and wouldn't care if he died in another situation!

However, given the perilous nature of this mission, he wasn't very confident. Having one more strong team member could provide more security.

Yet considering that his strength would inevitably be exposed after this mission, Chen Shouyi no longer hesitated. He suddenly spoke:

"The Silver Giant Scythe Insect is likely hard to deal with even for a single great martial artist."

His current discretion was due to the absence of any upheavals, with the Great Xia Country still in order and with clear communication. As a seventeen-year-old great martial artist, he would undoubtedly draw attention, with various situations scrutinized closely.

To avoid unnecessary trouble, he naturally had to hide his strength.

But now, things were entirely different.

With the cessation of electricity and the interruption of communication, the Great Xia Country transitioned overnight from a highly digitalized big-data era to a loosely structured steam civilizational era.

Previously, specific information about a person could be easily found through an information database with a keystroke. Now, that had become utterly impossible.

The efficiency of information transmission, which once took less than a second, now required at least several days. Similarly, the speed of processing information had also slowed. This remained the case despite the reconnecting of regions by steam-powered trains, rendering the central government's control over localities weaker than ever before.

Moreover, given the unprecedented crisis facing humanity, who would waste substantial societal resources to investigate him?

...

As soon as Chen Shouyi spoke, all eyes turned to him.

The gazes were mixed with emotions ranging from surprise, amusement, and disdain.

Qin Liuyuan's face showed a flicker of displeasure; what nonsense.

"And you are?" Xiao Changming's expression turned somber, his brow slightly furrowed as he asked.

"Chen Shouyi!" Undeterred by these looks, Chen Shouyi continued as though already expecting this reaction, "The Silver Giant Scythe Insect you mentioned was likely the one I shot."

The atmosphere immediately fell silent.

Qin Liuyuan gave Chen Shouyi a look upon hearing this.

Xiao Changming's expression also changed slightly, though he remained skeptical, asking seriously, "This is not something to joke about. How can you prove it?"

"Prove it?" Chen Shouyi smiled slightly, and with a sudden draw of his sword—it gleamed with a flash, like a fleeting gleam of light—the sword was already sheathed again.

Except for the two great martial artists who could barely see clearly, the others were all confused.

In the next moment, the long conference table suddenly split in two and collapsed to the sides with a loud crash.

Everyone scrambled to their feet in a hurry, retreating in disarray.

"I think this should serve as proof!"

Chapter 160 Insect Nest

Everyone was dumbfounded.

Jin Feiyan felt like her world had turned upside down as she looked at the seemingly unfamiliar Chen Shouyi. She recalled her previous arrogance in wanting to guide him, and her face flushed. Thinking back now, he probably couldn't care less about them.

In fact, not to mention the other Martial Artists, even Qin Liuyuan and Xiao Changming, both high-level Martial Artists, looked astonished and couldn't react for quite a while.

Chen Shouyi noticed the somewhat quiet atmosphere and swore in his heart that he didn't mean to chop that conference table; it was entirely a subconscious act.

This innate destructive desire.

Perhaps hearing the commotion here, the door suddenly opened, and a group of soldiers entered: "Sir, is everything alright?"

"Everything is fine. You can leave!" Xiao Changming quickly came to his senses and replied.

"Yes, sir." The soldiers quickly retreated and closed the door.

Xiao Changming felt a bit of a headache as he looked at Chen Shouyi. With such terrifying power, you could have proved your abilities in a different way. Why cut the table as soon as there's a disagreement, making it hard for me to continue?

We still need this table for the meeting!

But he had to eat humble pie and say, "This certainly proves your capabilities. Everyone, please be seated. Brother Chen, continue!"

The standing of a Martial Artist lies in oneself. Strength is their confidence. Among them, the strong are always respected regardless of status. If you're more powerful, I'll respect you. If you're weak, I won't even bother with you.

Everyone gradually sat down, looking at the folded meeting table in the middle. The atmosphere was slightly awkward, though no one showed any expression on their faces.

However, Chen Shouyi appeared calm, his demeanor stable as well. He sat down and continued:

"I have fought the Silver Giant Scythe Insect twice. The first time was in Longmei Mall when I used an 800-pound bow. It flies extremely fast and reacts very keenly. I shot twelve arrows in a row, all of which it dodged nimbly. In the end, I had to escape. As for the second time..."

As Chen Shouyi detailed the course of the battle, everyone felt a heavy atmosphere.

Some Martial Artists, who previously had a vague concept of Chen Shouyi's strength, could not ascertain it. However, upon hearing about the 800-pound war bow, they immediately understood that this was entirely the power of a high-level Martial Artist.

They couldn't help grumbling inwardly, thinking, "Boss, you're so low-key it's terrifying."

Xu Jie looked at Chen Shouyi, a sparkle flashing in her eyes. Initially thinking he was just a naive pup, she didn't expect him to be a submerged alligator, and a handsome one at that.

"If you risk everything, what are your odds of winning?" asked Xiao Changming.

"Probably only forty to fifty percent," Chen Shouyi quickly simulated in his mind and said. This was even considering his recent strength growth; if it were five or six days ago, it might not have been even thirty percent.

"That's enough! Flying fast on Earth doesn't mean it flies fast in another world. Under triple gravity, its speed and agility will be greatly reduced, probably to less than fifty percent of the original, but the speed of the arrows won't be much affected." Qin Liuyuan absent-mindedly wanted to drink some water and just as he reached out, realized the meeting table had fallen over and the teacups shattered, making him feel somewhat disgusted.

Xiao Changming's eyes lit up: "That's right, high gravity is actually advantageous for us."

...

The meeting ended quickly, and Xiao Changming soon led everyone to the logistics department to replenish arrows and some exploration gear, changing into camouflage uniforms without any delay. The team immediately set out.

"It's now 2:35. On the other side of the otherworld, it's still dawn, with about an hour until full daylight. This is relatively the safest time. Hopefully, we can complete this exploration mission before dawn," explained Xiao Changming while checking the time as they walked.

"What does your military intend to do?" Qin Liuyuan curiously asked.

"Naturally, to thoroughly resolve this hidden danger!" Xiao Changming lowered his voice and said: "The situation is a bit dire right now, and it's impossible to deploy a significant force here."

Chen Shouyi remained silent, not participating in the conversation. However, contrary to earlier when he was almost invisible, now even if he stayed quiet, people frequently watched him with curiosity and respect.

The group soon reached the original site of the Haunted House.

The Haunted House had naturally disappeared, replaced by a massive ground hole, ten meters deep, with a spatial passage about forty meters in diameter visible at the bottom.

Chen Shouyi noticed five thick ropes connected to nearby wooden stakes, crossing the spatial passage into the other side, stretched straight under the three times gravity.

Evidently, one must climb down the ropes to enter.

"How far is the spatial passage from the ground on that side?" Chen Shouyi asked, taking a glance.

"We've measured it, around three to four meters," Xiao Changming replied.

Three to four meters. Even if one jumps down, it won't be dangerous, Chen Shouyi thought to himself.

"I suggest the three of us go down first, followed by the other Martial Artists," Xiao Changming said.

"Alright!" Qin Liuyuan agreed straightforwardly.

Chen Shouyi had no objections either.

The group quickly took action, grabbing a rope each and swiftly sliding down.

With a shift in space, the light completely darkened. Half a second later, his feet found ground amid a pile of rubble.

The surroundings were pitch black, so much so that one couldn't see their fingers, and even his limited night vision was weak.

He quickly retrieved a glow stick, twisted it, and tossed it to the ground.

The light immediately illuminated the area.

It was a spacious cave, filled with rugged rocks, eerie and sinister, as if countless specters hid in the shadows, stealthily watching.

At this point, the other two had also landed.

"I didn't expect this to be a cave?" Qin Liuyuan carefully unslung his war bow, cautiously surveying around while speaking softly.

Just as he finished speaking, he suddenly heard a loud thud in his ear, with the bowstrings humming tangibly.

He hurriedly turned to see a black Giant Scythe Insect lurking in the shadow about dozens of meters away, shot and killed by an arrow, still writhing on the ground.

"Be careful, this is probably the nesting ground of the Giant Scythe Insects," Chen Shouyi said while quickly drawing another arrow and shooting it.

He shot five arrows in succession.

Each arrow inevitably killed a black Giant Scythe Insect.

Xiao Changming and Qin Liuyuan both pulled their bowstrings into full moon shape for a whole second, yet not shooting even one arrow before ultimately having to release the bowstrings.

The two exchanged glances, stunned and helplessness reflecting in each other's eyes.

Such fast reflexes!

Such sharp vision!

One person suppressed both of them. When did Hedong City see such a formidable high-level Martial Artist emerge?

And hidden so deeply.

At this moment, the remaining Martial Artists also began entering one after another.

"Which way should we go?" Qin Liuyuan asked. Here, several paths branched off, leaving too many choices.

"First, let's find an exit!" Xiao Changming said and then walked around each entrance: "There's wind blowing from here; it must be connected to the outside. Let's go this way!"

Qin Liuyuan and Chen Shouyi had no objections.

Especially Chen Shouyi, who had no interest in taking any lead, as long as they didn't encounter a foolish team member, he'd rather not intervene.

But this clearly wasn't a concern, as each one here was probably more experienced.

The group quickly moved out.

A military Martial Artist marked rocks along the way with a small knife.

This terrain was complex, like a labyrinth; getting lost would be troublesome.

After walking for about a minute, Chen Shouyi heard numerous footsteps rapidly approaching and frowned as he immediately warned, "Not good, there's a group of Giant Scythe Insects coming!"

The huge noise from the arrow shots earlier evidently had alerted the sleeping Giant Scythe Insects.

The team immediately stopped moving, each drawing their arrows, with even their breaths slightly more rapid. Qin Liuyuan and Xiao Changming concentrated as they listened intently, indeed picking up on the subtle and chaotic noise.

"Everyone stay alert!" Xiao Changming shouted.