

New Era 171

Chapter 171: Threat

It was already noon, and the school gate was bustling with students coming and going. Chen Shouyi blended into the campus on his bicycle.

Looking at this campus, which was about the size of a small town, Chen Shouyi suddenly thought of a question: "Do you know where your cousin's office is?"

Bai Xiaoling shook her head blankly, perhaps remembering that Chen Shouyi couldn't see her behind him, she added, "I don't know, I've never been here. Maybe we can ask around later."

That was the only option.

Next, the two of them asked several students before finally figuring out the location of her office.

...

A sophisticated young lady in her thirties, wearing gold-rimmed glasses, stood up immediately upon seeing Bai Xiaoling and quickly walked over with a look of surprise: "Xiao Ling, why are you here? Did something happen?"

For most people, the first reaction to a relative coming to their office is that something must have happened.

"Cousin, nothing's wrong. We just need your help with something; let's talk outside."

She greeted her colleague and walked out of the office: "Alright, have you had lunch yet? By the way, who's this?"

"Not yet. Let me introduce you, this is Chief Advisor Chen, Chen Shouyi, and this is my cousin, Guan Miao!" Bai Xiaoling quickly said.

"Oh, hello!" Guan Miao said, feeling puzzled. She and her husband worked and lived on campus, paying little attention to outside matters, but she knew that the title of Chief Advisor was not an ordinary one.

But this person seemed too young, just like a college student.

"Hello, Professor Guan!" Chen Shouyi smiled.

"You all must be hungry. Let's eat first and talk while we eat."

Before long, the group reached a small dining hall; it was past meal time, and the hall was almost deserted.

Guan Miao ordered two dishes and a soup, then prepared to pay.

Remembering Chen Shouyi's big appetite, Bai Xiaoling quickly said, "Cousin, order a few more dishes, this won't be enough."

Guan Miao blushed a little and hurriedly ordered two more dishes, estimating the cost in her mind and feeling a twinge of pain.

That little brat, just trying to be generous!

The bank still couldn't dispense money; no one had any spare cash, and the restaurant prices were at market level. A dish of braised ribs that used to be fifteen yuan was now eighty, and even a plate of spicy cabbage was thirty-five yuan.

If the university's public dining halls weren't now free, all the students might have starved, and even she and her husband were eating at the public dining hall most of the time.

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While eating, Bai Xiaoling asked, "Cousin, why aren't you eating?"

"I already ate earlier," Guan Miao said, thinking to herself: That's why I only ordered two dishes and a soup, it's not because I'm stingy.

Chen Shouyi didn't speak; the serving bowls in the school dining hall seemed small to him, and after a few bites, his bowl was empty.

"I'll go get you more rice!" Bai Xiaoling quickly stood up and eagerly ran to the window to get more.

Under Guan Miao's stunned gaze, Chen Shouyi got rice three times, and when Bai Xiaoling stood up again, he finally felt a bit embarrassed:

"No need, I'm full now!" Chen Shouyi put down his chopsticks and got to the point: "Xiao Ling mentioned you work in biological research?"

"It's environmental microbiology," Guan Miao corrected him.

"All the same!" Chen Shouyi remarked, then said seriously, "I want to ask for your help with something. The reward can be discussed after it's done."

At first, Guan Miao didn't feel anything special about this man, but as soon as his demeanor turned serious, she felt a wave of pressure.

She instinctively glanced at Bai Xiaoling.

But saw Bai Xiaoling winking repeatedly, urging her to agree.

That little brat.

Guan Miao calmed herself and said, "Since you're a friend of Xiao Ling's, of course, it's no problem. What is it?"

Chen Shouyi looked around; the dining room was empty except for them.

"Can you access the laboratory now?"

"I have an experiment scheduled later. What do you want to do? I won't do anything illegal." Guan Miao said.

"Cousin, what are you thinking? I'm a cop, and Chief Advisor Chen is the City Government's Chief Safety Advisor. How could we be doing something illegal?" Bai Xiaoling said, looking exasperated.

Guan Miao was surprised for a moment. Chief Safety Advisor? What kind of title is that? But the City Government's Chief Safety Advisor sounded quite impressive.

As an associate professor at Jiangnan University, she was usually highly regarded in society and felt detached from the affairs of those within the system, unlike ordinary people who held a reverence for institutional figures.

"This isn't the place for a discussion; let's talk outside," Chen Shouyi said.

...

Walking to a small grove outside, Chen Shouyi asked Bai Xiaoling to leave for a bit. When the two of them reached a pavilion, he stopped and said, "Do you know about Divine Blood?"

"You mean the kind of Divine Blood that the Capital City Supernatural Biology Research Institute is working on?" Guan Miao asked. Divine Blood, while kept secret from the general public, was just another project among frontline researchers, lacking any real mystery. Even Jiangnan University had some divine remains.

"No, I mean real Divine Blood," Chen Shouyi emphasized.

"Why are you asking about this? It's an incredibly dangerous substance, highly active and invasive. For living organisms, it's a deadly genetic poison; it can alter genetic codes, and anyone or anything that directly ingests it will have their body collapse and die," Guan Miao thought for a moment and said, "But now, there are no true Divine Blood or divine remains anymore. After nearly twenty years, they've all degraded."

"That's exactly why I'm asking for your help. I want to make it non-lethal. This shouldn't be too hard for you," Chen Shouyi said.

Smart people often immediately understand; upon hearing this, Guan Miao's face changed, her breathing became agitated, and her chest heaved: "You... you have real Divine Blood."

Researching deities has always been the forefront and hottest area in biology, but it's been hampered by the degradation of divine remains, making direct study impossible.

Hearing that real Divine Blood had resurfaced was like Alibaba discovering a treasure trove for a biological researcher; no one could stay calm.

"That's right, it just flowed from a god a few days ago." Chen Shouyi turned and looked at her with a stern gaze.

Guan Miao couldn't help but gasp and step back, her excitement ebbing away, replaced by a chilling sensation.

This man gave her an extremely dangerous vibe, like a ferocious beast ready to devour at any moment.

"Don't get any ideas. I'd prefer not to resort to unpleasant means," Chen Shouyi said coldly. He flicked his finger, and the compressed air shot out like a bullet, shattering a few hanging leaves in front of him.

Guan Miao's eyes widened; her face turned pale, clearly frightened. She was unused to such things.

Chen Shouyi had no choice. The allure of Divine Blood to researchers was enormous, as her earlier reaction indicated. If he didn't intimidate her, who knew what tricks she might try? Losing some lab materials was minor, but if she caused more trouble, it would be a hassle.

Under these circumstances, it was better to be forceful first, gentle later, and handle it with severity.

"When can the experiment start?"

"A... a... half past one!" she stammered.

Chen Shouyi checked the time; there was half an hour left: "When will it be over?"

"I... I don't know!"

Seeing Chen Shouyi's brow furrow, Guan Miao quickly explained: "Regarding the safe processing of Divine Blood, there are generally two methods. One is plasma separation, and the other is cell fluid extraction. The latter makes full use but is more difficult. Currently, many instruments lack power, making large-scale processing challenging. If we don't count the live experiment safety tests for the former, two to three hours should be sufficient."

"Then we'll go with the former," Chen Shouyi thought for a moment and said. In any case, what remains after separation would still be in his hands, and he could fully utilize it when conditions allow.

"Also, I need to be in the laboratory during the experiment!"

...

In just a few minutes, Bai Xiaoling saw her cousin and Chen Shouyi return from the grove, but for some reason, she noticed that her cousin's expression seemed a bit off.

Chapter 172: Powerful Effects

When the group arrived at the laboratory.

"Cousin, the lab isn't very big, is it? It's different from what I imagined," Bai Xiaoling remarked as she surveyed the modest laboratory.

"This is a public lab. What more do you expect? Besides, there's no electricity now, so even if the equipment were better, we couldn't use it," Guan Miao replied with a bit of annoyance, thinking about how much trouble her cousin had caused her. The people Bai Xiaoling brought along seemed like thugs.

A lecturer is regarded as valuable at an ordinary university, but at a top-tier university like this, it's a different story. In her department alone, there are two academicians, over thirty professors, and more than fifty associate professors. Unless you join a well-known professor's research project, you'll have to humbly apply to use a public lab if you want to conduct experiments.

"Where's the Divine Blood?" Guan Miao asked coldly.

Bai Xiaoling looked bewildered, still unsure what Chen Shouyi wanted from her cousin, and hadn't thought much about this "Divine Blood" thing.

Unconcerned with her attitude, Chen Shouyi reached into his pocket and took out a plastic-wrapped mineral water bottle.

"You keep it in there?" Guan Miao looked at the mineral water bottle in disbelief.

"Where else should it be kept?" Chen Shouyi retorted.

Faced with such ignorance, Guan Miao opened her mouth but was momentarily speechless.

Chen Shouyi removed the plastic wrap, and a layer of lightly shimmering Divine Blood appeared before everyone's eyes.

The two women's eyes were completely drawn to it until Chen Shouyi coughed, and they snapped back to reality. Guan Miao asked, "Do you need to separate it all?"

"That's right!" Chen Shouyi nodded.

For safety, Guan Miao donned three layers of rubber gloves and a mask, then cautiously unscrewed the bottle cap, allowing an indescribable aura to gradually permeate the air.

Nerve-wracking, oppressive.

This was the pressure exerted by a top-tier super lifeform on ordinary creatures.

Guan Miao swallowed hard, struggling to suppress the urge to flee, and continued. She used an eyedropper to extract a drop of Divine Blood, spread it evenly on a glass slide, added a staining agent, prepared a smear, and observed it under a microscope.

The more she examined it, the more her heart raced. The red and white cells inside were astonishingly active, emanating a pure golden glow as if every cell was an independent entity, harboring immense energy, an unbelievable life form.

After a while, she stopped observing.

Having initially satisfied her curiosity, she began the actual procedure.

Obviously, now was not the time for research, especially with that brute standing nearby!

She had her own motives; once the Divine Blood was rendered harmless, she hoped to keep the smear and leftover Divine Blood in the dropper. Surely they couldn't be so indecent as to take it all back.

It was a rare experimental material, hard to come by, something even national treasure-level academicians couldn't easily attain.

Since the Divine Blood wouldn't coagulate on its own, there was no need for anticoagulants; it could be poured into a centrifuge tube and separated using a centrifuge.

"Help pull the centrifuge," Guan Miao pointed to the centrifuge, explaining, "There's no power, so this is a mechanically modified manual rope-pulled centrifuge from the mechanical engineering department. If you pull fast enough, it can reach ten thousand RPM, comparable to a commercial centrifuge, although it's heavy and requires effort. Usually, I'd have two male students help me when I need the centrifuge."

Then she felt her words were unnecessary; someone who could crush leaves from half a meter away with a flick of a finger surely had no lack of brute strength.

"Just pull this rope?" Chen Shouyi, unaware of her intentions, pointed to the exposed rope of the centrifuge.

"Yes, that one!"

Then, Chen Shouyi gave it a light tug, and the centrifuge started spinning silently:

"How fast should I pull it?"

"As fast as possible; I estimate the Divine Blood is harder to separate than regular blood," Guan Miao said.

Upon hearing this, Chen Shouyi began to gradually increase the speed, from once per second to twice, then three times a second...

Guan Miao stared blankly as Chen Shouyi's hand almost became a blur; it wasn't until the centrifuge emitted a piercing roar that she snapped back and frantically shouted:

"Enough, enough, not any faster!"

The speed was already likely exceeding forty thousand RPM, and any faster, she feared the centrifuge's parts would fly out.

Chen Shouyi steadied the speed immediately upon hearing this.

After about three minutes of pulling, Guan Miao called for a stop, carefully opening the centrifuge and extracting the centrifuge tube.

The high-speed rotation had yielded a successful separation, and the Divine Blood in the centrifuge tube had split into four distinct layers.

"The top layer, a pale yellow translucent fluid that occupies more than half, is plasma. This layer is harmless," Guan Miao kindly explained, assuming Chen Shouyi didn't understand.

Chen Shouyi nodded impassively.

You think I'm all brawn? I almost graduated high school, okay?

Guan Miao couldn't guess at Chen Shouyi's silent rebuttal. After using a pipette to suck out the supernatant plasma, she repeated the centrifuge process several times until microscope examination showed no impurities, declaring the process complete.

The safety testing with mice went smoothly as well.

Except for the first mouse, which received an overdose and died from ruptured organs and hemorrhage, the rest survived and became stronger and more energetic.

Chapter 173 Powerful Effects_2

Of course, these are just preliminary test results. According to the normal experimental process, long-term observation and complex testing are still needed for subsequent performance.

However, Chen Shouyi didn't have time to waste, who knows how long it would take to wait.

Besides, the most dangerous aspect of Divine Blood is gene collapse. Since the lab rats show no issues, it's proven that there are basically no problems.

Moreover, with the talent of Natural Healing, even if slight issues arise, he believes he can withstand it.

...

Chen Shouyi carefully placed the plasma that Guan Miao divided into seven test tubes, along with the remaining separated blood, into an insulated box one by one.

"Actually, there's no need to rush. Many tests haven't been done yet," Guan Miao said, somewhat reluctant, "Taking it still carries certain risks."

Bai Xiaoling stood nearby without speaking. She had already noticed that these things were not ordinary, and her cousin's intentions were not pure.

"No bother is needed for that; as for compensation..." Chen Shouyi said.

Guan Miao quickly replied, "No need, no need. It was just a small help, and besides, you are Xiao Ling's boss. If you feel you must give something, you can give me a bit of the remaining separated blood component."

Chen Shouyi was slightly taken aback, Do I feel guilty?

He hesitated slightly in his heart, but considering that there was still plenty of Divine Blood Soil at home and he might need her help to separate and extract it in the future, he asked, "How much do you want?"

"Just a little, just a little will do," Guan Miao's eyes lit up, and she quickly said excitedly.

...

Chen Shouyi left Jiangnan University, first sending Bai Xiaoling home, and by the time he returned to the residential area, it was already evening.

After dinner, Chen Shouyi couldn't wait to return to his room.

He opened the insulated box, inside was a row of seven tubes of plasma, and a tube of leftover separated blood.

He already had a distribution plan in mind for these seven tubes of reagent.

His parents were already elderly, so naturally, he left one for each of them, especially now that the situation was not very stable. While he didn't expect them to have combat abilities, at the very least they should be able to run faster than ordinary people when facing danger. Additionally, his sister certainly couldn't be left out and she should also get one.

However, this was not urgent.

Before that, he needed to try the effects first to see if there were any aftereffects or adverse reactions.

If his parents and sister experienced any problems after taking it, Chen Shouyi would never forgive himself.

He took out a tube of reagent, removed the stopper, then sat on the bed, starting by trying a sip. His heart couldn't help but feel a bit apprehensive, although the lab rat tests showed no problems, he was after all not a lab rat; their genes were different.

Exactly when he was fantasizing wildly, an extremely strong feeling of pleasure, like being electrified, spread throughout his entire body.

His heart pounded violently, his body's blood vessels bulged, and his body was burning intensely, his whole body turned red. This heat continued for a full ten seconds before gradually fading.

Feeling his body filled with strength, Chen Shouyi couldn't help but let out a long sigh of relief; it seemed there was no issue.

Immediately, he tilted his head back and drank the remaining plasma.

"Boom!"

Soon, his mind was overwhelmed by an even stronger satisfaction and pleasure. His body felt like it was floating in the clouds, wafting around, as if uncertain of his location. It wasn't until a long time later that he woke up, realizing he was already lying on the bed.

...

He immediately opened the attribute panel.

The power increased by 0.2, reaching 14.6; agility increased by 0.1, reaching 14.5; physique also increased by 0.2 points, reaching 14.8; even intelligence increased by 0.1 points, reaching 14.0.

The effect wasn't particularly strong, but this was just a single reagent, totaling only about 0.5 milliliters. Moreover, compared to the Divine Marrow previously discussed on the Martial Artist's internal network, which had almost no effect on him, this effect was undoubtedly quite remarkable.

After all, he wasn't an ordinary person; all aspects of his physical fitness were more than six times that of a normal person. Now, with just the Body Refining Thirty-Six Styles, it took increasingly longer to increase 0.1 attribute points, making it increasingly difficult. Each increment of 0.1 was exceedingly precious.

Observing his body seeming without any anomalies, but instead giving rise to a stronger craving, Chen Shouyi did not hesitate, taking out another tube and gulping it down.

Once he regained consciousness again, he opened the attribute panel; this time the effect diminished a bit, but both strength and physique still increased by 0.2 points, and intelligence still increased by 0.1, yet agility didn't increase.

Chen Shouyi simply took out the third tube and gulped it down again.

This time, the effect decreased again, with strength and physique only increasing by 0.1. Intelligence showed no change this time, but agility increased by 0.1.

"The higher the attributes, the harder the increase; the same amount, its effects weaken with each use. Ultimately, there was too little Divine Blood, totaling only 3.5 milliliters. If there were a few liters, I believe raising one or two points in each of these attributes wouldn't be an issue," he thought thoughtfully.

Since he had already consecutively drunk three tubes, he wouldn't leave the last one overnight.

He uncorked the stopper, just as he was ready to tilt his head back to drink it.

His ears, which had become extremely keen, suddenly caught a subtle sound. Chen Shouyi resealed the stopper, opened the wardrobe, and discovered the sound was coming from a black briefcase.

Damn, such a keen sense; knew I couldn't hide it from her.

He reached for the briefcase, and as soon as he opened the zipper, the Shell Lady jumped out, with a face full of flattery: "Good Giant, what are you eating?"

"In such a hurry, there's a share for you!" Chen Shouyi, looking at her obsequious expression, said unfriendly, "Get your own spoon!"

The Shell Lady instantly beamed with joy, rushing to the cup, picking up the spoon similar to her body length, and ran back with a turned-up nose, placing it respectfully in front of Chen Shouyi.

Chen Shouyi took out an empty test tube, poured hard, and soon a drop of residual liquid dripped onto the spoon.

The Shell Lady eagerly stuck out her pink tongue, thoroughly licking it clean.

After a short while, she became dizzy, seemingly drunk, wobbling around, then plopped to the ground with a confused look.

This drop's amount, for the small Shell Lady, was already equivalent to Chen Shouyi taking a dose of reagent.

However, her recovery speed was much quicker than Chen Shouyi's. Within seconds, the Shell Lady was sober, licking her lips with her bean-sized eyes shining, full of hopeful expressions: "Good Giant, is there more?"

Little glutton!

"Yes!" Chen Shouyi said with amusement in his heart, dripped the remaining residue from two tubes onto the spoon.

Looking at the Shell Lady still unsatisfied after drinking, Chen Shouyi hesitated, gritted his teeth, and took a bottle of Divine Blood, pouring about one-fifth onto the spoon, reminding: "This is the last of it; once you drink it, there will be no more."

Then Chen Shouyi stopped worrying about her and drank the remaining Divine Blood himself.

Chapter 174 Shell Lady's New Ability

The last vial only increased strength by 0.1 and intelligence by 0.1.

Chen Shouyi's attributes have now become:

Strength: 15.0

Agility: 14.6

Constitution: 15.1

Intelligence: 14.2

Perception: 12.2

Willpower: 13.0

Among them, strength increased the most, reaching 0.6 points, while agility increased the least, only 0.2 points.

Both strength and constitution have broken through the fifteen-point threshold.

Especially strength, when measured purely by data, his strength now reaches an astonishing 750 kilograms.

Feeling the powerful force coursing through his body, Chen Shouyi couldn't help but want to crush something!

He looked around nervously for a while before forcefully suppressing this urge.

At this time, he suddenly noticed that the Shell Lady seemed to have been silent for a long time.

Turning his head to look, he was immediately stunned, seeing the Shell Lady lying limp and motionless on the computer desk, her body looking as if it had been cooked, bright red all over. The spoon beside her had been licked clean, not a drop left.

"Could something have happened?"

Chen Shouyi panicked, recalling the tragic state of the lab rat that had taken a large dose, he felt a wave of regret, wishing he could slap himself.

If only he had known the Shell Lady was such a small person, and yet gave her so much to drink. The amount poured just now was equivalent to an ordinary person drinking a whole cup of Divine Blood in one go.

This high-energy blood isn't something so easily absorbed!

Watching the Shell Lady occasionally frown, her face showing pain, Chen Shouyi felt a bit anxious.

Even raising a pet for so long would stir feelings, let alone the Shell Lady being such an adorable and beautiful intelligent creature, whom he had long been treating like a daughter.

What to do?

Just then, an idea suddenly flashed through his mind, what if he let her bleed a bit?

Chen Shouyi remembered that lab rat died due to a ruptured blood vessel and internal bleeding, likely because after consuming the Divine Blood, the blood flow rate increased dramatically and the blood vessel couldn't handle the pressure, causing it to rupture.

Thinking of this, he walked unsteadily to the wall and then took down the sword hanging there.

His attributes had just skyrocketed, and his body hadn't yet fully adjusted to the strength he possessed.

He drew the sword, then walked over to the computer desk.

He fiddled with the blade over the Shell Lady's body for a while, unable to make up his mind.

Cut the wrist?

Definitely not!

What if he severed an artery, that would be disastrous.

However, other areas weren't suitable either, the Shell Lady was really too small, plus now he couldn't control his strength. If he used too much force, he might end up bleeding her but she would die for sure.

At this time he heard the Shell Lady mumble: "Good Giant, is there more?"

Even in such a state, still thinking of drinking more!

Chen Shouyi felt both pained and amused, but this also let him relax a bit.

Being able to talk in her sleep was undoubtedly a good sign, at least she wasn't unconscious.

He quickly returned the sword to its scabbard, abandoning the unreliable method of bleeding, and touched her forehead with his finger to check how high her fever was.

But before he fully contacted her forehead, strands of fragmented multicolored light were suddenly triggered, flashing on her body.

His fingers felt a weak yet slippery force of resistance.

Chen Shouyi was a bit surprised and didn't dare apply force, quickly withdrawing his hand.

This ability didn't exist in the Shell Lady before, otherwise, with all this time, he surely would have noticed.

This was evidently the effect after consuming the Divine Blood.

Fortunately, as time ticked by, the red flush on the Shell Lady gradually faded, and her skin slowly returned to its normal fair and rosy state. Half a minute later, she moaned softly and opened her eyes, then swiftly sat up, looking as if nothing had happened.

Seeing Chen Shouyi staring closely at her, the Shell Lady asked confusedly, "Good Giant, why are you staring at me?"

"Who told you to be so good-looking and cute!" Chen Shouyi retorted in exasperation.

The Shell Lady blushed with a tinge of joy and bashfulness on her face: "You're a good Giant too!"

Did you even catch my tone? Was that what I meant?

Seeing her narcissistic and silly appearance, Chen Shouyi was speechless.

Afterward, he put the thermal container holding the Divine Blood into the suitcase and locked it, then picked up the sword, saying to the Shell Lady, "I'm going outside. Do you want to come along?"

The enhanced swordsmanship he had only practiced for one night, far from mastering it completely, along with today's increase in attributes, also required a great deal of time to adapt. He must seize the time to become familiar with his new body and become stronger.

Only then could he better survive in this world about to be stirred up.

"I want to go! I want to go!" The Shell Lady said excitedly upon hearing this.

"Then follow me down!"

With that, Chen Shouyi opened the window, pushed himself on the windowsill, and leaped down. Seeing this, the Shell Lady quickly jumped from the desk to the window, just about to leap down, only to hear a muffled thud from below. Curious, she poked her head out to see, only to find the Giant sprawled solidly on the ground.

Her eyes widened, her little mouth slightly agape, full of surprise. Realizing what happened, she quickly and swiftly jumped down as well.

Chen Shouyi got up nonchalantly, patting the dust off his body.

He had been somewhat careless, not expecting just a twenty to thirty percent increase in attributes to cause such a severe error in his brain's judgments. Just upon landing and trying to reduce the force, he ended up using too much strength and fell flat on his face.

Luckily, aside from a bit of embarrassment and dull pain all over, he wasn't seriously hurt.

At this point, the Shell Lady floated down from the air, directly landing on Chen Shouyi's shoulder, looking anxious and asking.

"Giant, why did you fall over?"

"Falling is a normal occurrence!"

"Do giants fall easily because they're so tall?" The Shell Lady sat on Chen Shouyi's shoulder, cupping her cheeks and curiously asked.

Hearing this, Chen Shouyi paused slightly, feeling a bit stifled: "Yes!"

"Did it hurt to fall just now?" the Shell Lady asked curiously again.

Could it not hurt, I'm not a robot.

In fact, the increase in constitution didn't dull the body to pain, instead, it was more sensitive. If one were to slice Chen Shouyi's body for examination, they would find that the nerve density in his body was entirely seven or eight times that of an ordinary person. Even a slightly larger speck of dust falling on his skin, he could sense it acutely.

"It didn't hurt!"

At this moment, Chen Shouyi had a thought, reaching out to touch the Shell Lady sitting on his shoulder, but discovered the previous slight resistance had vanished, and the fragmented multicolored light no longer appeared.

"Good Giant, why are you touching my leg!" the Shell Lady asked, confused by Chen Shouyi's action.

"Did you gain any new abilities after drinking that?" Chen Shouyi straightforwardly asked the Shell Lady.

The Shell Lady looked bewildered, thinking for a while before saying: "I don't know, it seems like flying is easier, and my strength has increased a bit. I should be able to jump higher now."

Just as expected with this outcome.

Ah, never mind, with such a muddle-headed person, asking is futile.

Chen Shouyi shook his head, deciding to give up.

After all, he had never counted on the Shell Lady.

Chapter 175 - Chen Xingyue Kills

Early morning, inside a bedroom.

"Biao, stop sleeping, it's time to work!" A twenty-something young man dressed in black with a scholarly appearance said to the short and sturdy young man lying on the bed.

"Ah Long, what time is it."

"Almost three o'clock!"

The short and sturdy young man immediately flipped over and got out of bed.

The two of them just graduated from college this year, were classmates, and soon after starting work, they faced unemployment.

After the mutation, transportation was interrupted, and they had no way to return to their hometowns, so they had to stay in Hedong City. The little cash they had left was quickly spent, and without being able to find work, the landlord came to the place half a month ago, made a huge scene, and explicitly stated that if they didn't pay the rent, they would be kicked out.

This immediately made both of them entertain the idea of taking desperate measures.

The first job didn't go smoothly; as soon as they opened the bedroom door, they alarmed the homeowner.

Panic, coupled with nervousness, caused the two to make a ruthless decision, directly stabbing the entire family of three to death, including a seven or eight-year-old boy. Both had practiced some Martial Arts, so for ordinary people, there was no way to resist.

In a panic, the two only grabbed a necklace off the young lady's chest and hurriedly fled the scene.

Initially, they lived in constant fear every day, terrified that the police might suddenly come for them, but soon found that the police had not traced anything to them.

With no electricity, there was no surveillance, DNA testing couldn't be done, and when they acted, they had deliberately worn rubber gloves, leaving no fingerprints, plus there were no eyewitnesses, making the case incredibly difficult to solve.

They secretly sold the necklace to pay for the rent and lived quietly for more than ten days, but seeing the money run out quickly again, the idea of committing another crime immediately crossed their minds.

It is a fact that once the doorway of crime is opened, one occurrence is usually followed by a second.

"Smoke a cigarette to wake up," the young man named Ah Long handed him a cigarette and said.

The short and sturdy young man yawned, took the cigarette, and pulled out a box of matches, striking several times before finally lighting it.

In the weak flame, he took a deep drag and said gloomily, "Hope we don't make such a big fuss this time."

"Last time was an accident, if we hadn't made such a big noise and alarmed everyone, we wouldn't have needed to kill them." The scholarly young man exhaled a puff of smoke, looking calm, "It's a pity that young lady was quite pretty."

Hearing the other's attitude of not giving a damn about human life, the short and sturdy young man's heart sank, and he felt a tinge of regret, "I think if we keep doing this, we'll run into trouble sooner or later!"

"Stop overthinking it," the scholarly young man sneered, "How will we survive if we don't steal? Do you really want to carry bricks, or stand in line for two or three hours in the cold at the relief station to get a few buns? I refuse to lose face like that. I've realized, in today's society, to live like a person, you have to be more ruthless, more vicious than others."

The short and sturdy young man's face darkened, he took a strong puff of the cigarette, then threw it to the ground and stomped it out fiercely, "This is the last time! I heard the train has started running again recently, once we split the money, I'm planning to head back home."

"Suit yourself!" The scholarly young man said nonchalantly, one less person also means one less person to share the money with.

...

Early morning, Chen Shouyi returned from training, just climbed through the window, and jumped into the bedroom.

He immediately sensed something was wrong, he smelled a strong scent of blood.

Chen Shouyi's heart tightened, he hurriedly placed the Shell Lady on the bed, immediately opened the bedroom door, and found a candle lit in the living room, his parents and Chen Xingyue were all sitting on the sofa, silent, their faces tense and uneasy.

Two people were lying on the floor, with two daggers dropped beside them, one of them was covered in blood, motionless, and seemed already dead. The other was tied up, with a rag stuffed in his mouth, struggling and twisting continuously.

Seeing his parents and sister unharmed, Chen Shouyi was relieved and closed the bedroom door.

"Brother, you're back!"

Seeing Chen Shouyi come out, Chen Xingyue and Chen Father and Mother seemed to have found a pillar of support, their uneasy expressions becoming much more relaxed.

"Shou Yi, where did you go?"

"I just went outside for a bit, Mom and Dad, what's going on with these two people?" Chen Shouyi glanced at the two on the ground, then withdrew his gaze and asked.

When asked about the crucial matter, Mrs. Chen immediately forgot to ask why Chen Shouyi went out in the middle of the night, and hastily said:

"These two are thieves, they came to steal, Xing Yue was awakened and tried to subdue them, these two tried to resist, your sister got nervous and accidentally killed one of them, will there be any problems?"

Chen Shouyi couldn't help but glance at Chen Xingyue, seeing her façade of calmness, though her tightly clenched hands, with fingers turning white, betrayed her real feelings, after all, it was her first time killing.

He comforted them with a calm expression, "No problem, this is self-defense. Mom, Dad, you can go to sleep without worry, we'll handle this."

He had killed more people than he could count on his fingers, with psychological resilience incomparable to ordinary people.

"Dad, Mom, I told you it would be fine!" Chen Xingyue immediately said, "You should go back to your room and sleep."

"Really okay?" Chen Dawei said, still skeptical.

"Really okay! I'll call the police over in a while to have them take away the body and the other person." Chen Shouyi said.

Perhaps the rag stuck in the mouth of the tied-up thief was too loose, and as he struggled continuously, it fell out, he spat it out forcefully and said in a panic, "No, don't call the police, please let me go."

"Let you go, why should we let you go?" Chen Shouyi turned his head and scoffed coldly upon hearing this.

"I'm just a failed thief, I would only be locked up for a few days and then come out, but your parents live here all the time," the thief appeared scholarly honest, but his words carried a hint of threat and arrogance.

"What do you mean?" Chen Shouyi's heart turned cold, he asked impassively.

The scholarly young man's heart inexplicably flashed with anxiety, the other side was too calm. But at the thought of the consequences of being arrested by the police, where further investigations might

expose the murder, he pressed on, "You know that there are one thousand days a thief, but not one thousand days to guard against one."

Chen Shouyi smiled, a hint of murderous intent rising in his heart, he had never seen anyone so arrogant in front of him.

But he didn't kill in front of his parents, there was no rush, he could deal with him once he was out of the detention center, he turned away, ignoring him, and said to Chen Xingyue, "I'm going to the police station for a bit, you stay here."

"Okay, Brother!" Chen Xingyue forced herself to stay calm.

...

Not long after, four duty police officers followed Chen Shouyi back, one of them was even the deputy director of the police station.

The police quickly put the body onto a stretcher and carried it away, even enthusiastically helping to clean up the bloodstains in the living room.

The entire time, only verbal inquiries were made, not even mentioning going to the station to make a statement.

After seeing the police out, Chen Shouyi thanked them:

"Sorry to have troubled all of you."

"No trouble at all, it's our duty. Besides, we should thank Chief Advisor Chen for assisting in maintaining community security," the deputy director of the police station said promptly, he had long known through the public security bureau that a Martial Artist lived in this community, unexpected that it was even a Great Martial Artist, it was truly terrifying.

The scholarly-looking young man already handcuffed and held by two officers was shocked to hear this, who exactly was the person he had just threatened?

Chapter 176 - Untitled

Watching the police leave, Chen Shouyi closed the door and returned to the living room with his parents and sister.

"Shouyi, is it really over?" Mrs. Chen said, still in disbelief. They had been worried for so long, but as soon as the police came and took away the body and another thief, it was all over.

"Mom, don't always treat me like an ordinary person. As long as we don't commit any crimes, no one can do anything to us," Chen Shouyi said with a laugh that was half crying, half amused.

In fact, to be honest, ever since the changes, the City Government's constraints on martial artists, especially grand martial artists, have further weakened. There's a severe lack of punitive measures. Even if a crime is committed, as long as it's not too serious, they turn a blind eye.

"Your mom and I are old and inexperienced. Eventually, this family will depend on you!" Chen Dawei sighed and said, "But don't abuse your status to bully others and act recklessly."

"Dad, I've always been well-behaved, okay? I don't even bother with people who stir trouble with me," Chen Shouyi said, exasperated.

Chen Xingyue couldn't help but want to spit in his face. Her brother killed without blinking, and he calls that being well-behaved.

"I'm just reminding you, so you don't lose your head and do something rash. Last time..." Chen Dawei started to say but quickly closed his mouth.

Chen Shouyi knew his dad was thinking about the last cult incident. Back then, his killing had scared his parents badly, so he quickly said, "I know."

Next, the group repeatedly cleaned the living room floor several times. It wasn't until after five o'clock that they finally stopped.

"Go to sleep, we'll talk tomorrow," Mrs. Chen said as she put down the mop.

...

Chen Shouyi returned to his bedroom.

The Shell Lady was hiding under the covers. Upon hearing Chen Shouyi's familiar footsteps, she quickly poked her head out. Upon seeing him, she crawled out completely.

"Good giant, you're finally back," the Shell Lady breathed a sigh of relief and said, "I heard you talking to many, many bad giants just now!"

Chen Shouyi patted her head and said with a smile, "Don't worry, they're just weak bad giants."

The Shell Lady felt at ease upon hearing that. "I knew the good giant was the best!"

"I need to pee!"

"Why didn't you go when you were outside?"

"I didn't need to then, but I do now!" The Shell Lady blushed, looking shy.

She had been scared by hearing so many giant voices.

...

Early the next day, after just four hours of sleep, Chen Shouyi got up.

He picked up the Shell Lady and put her back into the briefcase, then dragged out the suitcase. After opening it, he took out three vials of Divine Blood from the cooler, locked them up again, and went out the door. Chen Dawei and Mrs. Chen were mopping the floor again, and the living room was full of water traces.

"Awake already?" Mrs. Chen called out.

"Didn't you just mop this morning, why are you doing it again?" Chen Shouyi asked.

"Your mom says she can still smell blood, but I can't smell a thing!" Chen Dawei complained.

"Your heart is big, you can sleep like a dead pig in bed. Someone just died here; if it isn't mopped a few times, how can anyone stay here?" Mrs. Chen replied, looking displeased.

Chen Shouyi wisely changed the subject: "Where's my sister?"

"In her room!" Mrs. Chen replied.

Chen Shouyi walked to his sister's bedroom and knocked on the door: "Xingyue, come out for a minute, there's something I need to tell you."

The door opened quickly. Chen Xingyue, wearing a thick pajama set and holding a sword, came out with a head full of sweat, looking puzzled as she asked,

"Brother, what's up?"

"I'll tell you in a bit. Dad, Mom, you guys stop for now too."

Father Chen and Mrs. Chen, curious, also put down their mops and buckets:

"Why are you being so mysterious?" Mrs. Chen asked.

Chen Shouyi placed the three vials of Divine Blood on the sofa: "These are for you, one each."

"What is it?" Chen Xingyue asked curiously, picking up a vial and looking at the faint golden glow of the unknown liquid inside.

"Remember not to tell anyone. This is Divine Blood, the blood of a god from another world, incredibly precious. After taking it, you'll likely be close to becoming a Martial Artist," Chen Shouyi said earnestly.

Divine... Divine Blood!

The blood of a god!

Chen Xingyue's eyes widened, nearly dropping the vial in shock. Realizing the situation, she quickly held on tight.

Father Chen and Mrs. Chen, even more stunned, took a while to react.

"Where did you get this? It's too precious. You and your brother should use it, we don't need it," Mrs. Chen repeatedly refused.

"Yeah, yeah, it'd be wasted on us," Chen Dawei said too.

"I've already used it. These are for you and Xing Yue, to prolong your lives to some extent," Chen Shouyi explained.

"Yeah, Dad, Mom! If you don't want them, then I don't want them either," Chen Xingyue also caught on and insisted, resolute.

"Alright, alright, we know you're filial. We'll accept them," Mrs. Chen finally gave in with a gratified look.

"Be very careful when taking this; the effects are quite potent. Dad, Mom, just one or two drops each time, spread over a dozen days. Xing Yue can take a bit more, but be cautious," Chen Shouyi patiently instructed.

The parents were both ordinary people, and even Chen Xingyue was just a Martial Artist Apprentice, unlike the Shell Lady and him, one being a supernatural creature from another world and the other a grand Martial Artist, both able to tolerate much higher doses of Divine Blood.

"Why not try it now!" Chen Xingyue said eagerly.

"Up to you," Chen Shouyi replied.

Chen Xingyue quickly ran to the kitchen to grab three cups. Pouring warm water left over from last night into them, she asked, "Dad, Mom, just a drop, right?"

"Yeah," Chen Shouyi nodded.

"What about me?"

"Start with about one-tenth," Chen Shouyi thought for a moment and said.

Chen Xingyue gently pulled the cork from her vial of Divine Blood and carefully poured one drop into each of the other two cups, then poured five or six drops into her own. She then placed the two cups in front of Father Chen and Mrs. Chen: "Dad, Mom, these are yours."

Seeing the two elders accept without refusing, she felt gratified.

Chen Shouyi glanced at Chen Xingyue, just knowing she's a suck-up!

In matters like this, he couldn't match Chen Xingyue a hundredfold.

It was a matter of personality, and it couldn't be changed.

From childhood to now, when parents bought snacks or fruits, after distribution, Chen Shouyi would just eat by himself, while Chen Xingyue had to run downstairs to let the parents try first. As a result, every time, Chen Xingyue ended up with more, and gained more praise and favor.

Seeing the parents' satisfied expressions, it's clear they won't use up all the Divine Blood, and will definitely try to secretly give some to Chen Xingyue.

But this isn't ordinary wealth. His sister was more sensible than him since childhood, and Chen Shouyi believed she wouldn't accept it.

At this moment, as he saw his sister and parents picking up their cups, readying to drink, he quickly stopped them: "Not here, go to your rooms to drink."

After consuming Divine Blood, one often experiences a hallucinatory euphoria, leading to loss of composure. If Xing Yue lost her composure, he could laugh it off, but seeing the parents lose theirs would be awkward.

Chapter 177: The Age of Steam

The time has quietly approached the Spring Festival.

Early in the morning, Chen Shouyi walked out the door.

Today, the temperature was particularly cold, and the entrance of the apartment building's lobby was already hung with long icicles like sharp spears, some nearly half a meter long.

A gust of cold wind blew past, and Chen Shouyi, dressed lightly, couldn't help but feel a shiver.

The sky was gray and filled with dense fog, and the air was filled with a sour, pungent smell.

The age of steam!

Chen Shouyi sighed slightly,

nearly two months have passed since the last mutation, and a lot of steam factories have sprung up in Hedong City like bamboo shoots after a spring rain, with chimneys spewing white smoke day and night. Often after being out for just an hour or two, clean clothes would get completely covered in coal dust.

The once clean and bright tall buildings that could reflect a person's shadow have now turned dark and stained, completely losing their original luster.

Most of these office buildings are already in a semi-abandoned state, empty and with no property management to clean them.

When Chen Shouyi reached the gate of the community, he glanced at the bulletin board, which was always crowded with people.

There were even more job postings stuck on it.

In a prominent spot in the upper left corner, there was also a call-up notice for retired soldiers with the stamp of the subdistrict office:

All retired soldiers under the age of forty-five must report to the Hedong Military Region by March 1st.

The two-decade-long quasi-wartime state in the Great Xia Country has resulted in the military maintaining a force of six to seven million troops, while retired veterans number over ten times that, approaching a hundred million.

With a population of 1.7 billion in the Great Xia Country, this means that one in every seventeen people is a retired soldier.

And this number increases by two to three million annually.

In a city like Hedong, with a population of tens of millions, even after eliminating retired soldiers who are too old, it can easily recruit three to four hundred thousand soldiers.

Chen Shouyi sighed. The situation hasn't improved much recently, and instead, all sorts of crazy rumors are spreading in Hedong City, causing panic among people.

They say that the gods have already started an invasion, with some areas already fallen, and that there's extreme cold in the north, freezing many to death.

He doesn't know the specifics about the latter, but for the former, Hedong City has indeed seen an increase in refugees from other places recently.

...

Chen Shouyi walked out of the community and turned into a barber shop.

He hadn't had a haircut in almost two months, and his hair was already covering half of his ears.

Since it was still early, when Chen Shouyi went in, there was no one other than the barber.

The barber, a young lady in her thirties, stood up as soon as she saw Chen Shouyi and asked.

"What kind of hairstyle do you want?"

"A crew cut, leave half a centimeter," Chen Shouyi said as he sat on the barber chair.

"That's pretty short in this weather; it might feel cold," the young lady said, picking up the trimmer.

"It's alright, just cut it like that."

"Your hair is so tough!" the young lady complained after a while.

Without an electric trimmer now, it's all manual. As soon as the young lady started, she felt something was off. The hair was too tough, like steel wires, and after just a few cuts, her hand was already sore.

"I know, don't worry, I'll pay you well!" Chen Shouyi said.

His constitution is more than 7.5 times that of a normal person, which not only represents physical strength but also reflects the strength and resilience of various body tissues, the sharpness of the five senses, and other various aspects of the body.

Last month's salary had already been paid, with nearly a hundred thousand in cash. After leaving fifty thousand at home, he still had thirty thousand left, making him financially more comfortable.

"You said it, cutting your hair tires me out more than cutting three or four people's. How did you grow such tough hair!" the young lady said happily.

"Natural!"

Chen Shouyi and the young lady talked on and off, and suddenly the door was pushed open, with two more people coming in. Chen Shouyi glanced at them; one was a middle-aged man in his forties and the other an elderly man in his fifties or sixties.

As soon as they sat down, they started chatting.

"It's really chaotic lately, haven't you heard? The whole of Yun Mountain is now sealed off; who knows how many have died," the middle-aged man said in a low voice.

"Really? Yun Mountain is in the city, might it affect here?" asked the elderly man.

"It shouldn't, as it's quite far. It takes over an hour by bike," the middle-aged man replied.

"Alas, things are getting chaotic, who knows what to do next?" the old man sighed pessimistically. "Why on Earth are these creatures from another world coming here?"

"They must be bored after eating their fill. In the old days, they'd have been blasted. Didn't a few invading Barbarian Gods also die?" the middle-aged man said, then added in a low voice, "Honestly, I don't mind the Barbarian Gods from another world, as long as they aren't Evil Gods starting evil blood sacrifices. Life can stabilize; whoever we believe in doesn't matter!"

"Ain't that the truth!"

...

Chen Shouyi listened in silence. After his haircut, he fished out a hundred-yuan bill from his wallet and handed it over, "Keep the change."

The young lady took it with a joyful face. Now that there's a great depression in Hedong City, service prices have plummeted. A haircut, which used to cost at least twenty to thirty yuan, can now be done for just five yuan, making a hundred yuan twenty times the price.

Chen Shouyi brushed the loose hair off his shoulder, opened the door, and walked out of the barber shop.

In the distance, anti-aircraft guns started firing again, blasting bursts of black smoke in the sky. However, pedestrians on the road were used to it and hardly anyone looked up. With the many fierce birds from another world loose on Earth, the anti-aircraft guns sounded every few days.

...

When he got home, Chen Shouyi found Bai Xiaoling was there too.

Seeing Chen Shouyi with his shaved head, Bai Xiaoling stifled a laugh, "General Manager Chen, you're back?"

Chen Shouyi nodded and saw a lot of things in the living room, including a slab of pork, five or six chickens and ducks, and various dried fruits and fresh goods, prompting him to ask in confusion, "What's all this?"

Even though prices have dropped significantly in the city, it wouldn't be cheap, and some of these items aren't even available in the market.

"Officer Bai sent it over as New Year's goods. In such cold weather, it's a lot of trouble for her, a young girl, to ride a tricycle to deliver it," Mrs. Chen brought a cup of hot tea from the kitchen, saying, "You must be cold; have some hot tea."

Bai Xiaoling quickly took it, "Thank you, Auntie, but no need to be polite. It's my job; I'm dedicated to serving General Manager Chen."

"But we can't let a young girl like you do such hard labor. Next time, let Shouyi know, he's sturdy and can handle it," Mrs. Chen said.

Bai Xiaoling covered her mouth with a laugh, "That won't do! If the higher-ups get upset, I'll be out of a job. Auntie, you look a lot younger now!"

Mrs. Chen, delighted, asked, "Really?"

Since she started taking Divine Blood, her complexion had become rosier, her steps firmer, and even the wrinkles at the corners of her eyes had faded. Overall, she looked five or six years younger.

...

After chatting a bit more, Mrs. Chen and Bai Xiaoling left the living room to Chen Shouyi.

"Here are your house keys and related documents," Bai Xiaoling handed a document to Chen Shouyi.

He took it and found it was a property certificate with stamps from the military region and the city government.

"Villa 24!" Chen Shouyi said, puzzled, "Has the Safe Zone over there been completed?"

"It already was a bare shell; the delay was mainly to set up military defenses. Jiangnan University, major research institutions, important factories, and government agencies will be relocated there in due time," Bai Xiaoling explained.

Chen Shouyi nodded gravely.

The current mega-cities no longer suit the post-mutation environment. On one hand, exorbitant logistics costs severely impact both industry and daily life.

On the other, a scattered layout hampers the concentration of power to defend key strategic units.

The Safe Zone is designed for the potentially looming war.

"When can we move?"

"In seven days at noon. A steam truck will come, and you don't need to take furniture; new ones are already there."

Chapter 178 - Gravely Wounded

Midnight.

In the park, a shadowy figure swiftly darted and leapt between branches, the twigs splintering like fragile shells underfoot, sending splinters flying.

Though the noise was alarming, it evoked the lightness and grace of an ape.

This was a grove of red magnolias; even in the dead of winter, the red magnolias had quietly bloomed. As the shadowy figure moved like a ghost, the trees shook violently, showering countless pink petals down.

If it were daytime, this scene would be undeniably breathtaking.

Unfortunately, it was late at night, and the place was enveloped in darkness, utterly deserted.

Nightlife had become a memory for everyone.

Once night fell, the streets became empty, save for the main roads sporadically lit by gas lamps; the rest remained shrouded in darkness.

Soon, the figure came to an abrupt halt. There was no doubt; it was Chen Shouyi, with his hand resting on his long sword, and his eyes intently fixed on a large pine about a hundred meters away. He shouted softly, "Who, come out!"

There was no response for a long time.

A small figure swiftly jumped down from a nearby tree, climbed the big tree like a squirrel, then nimbly scampered up Chen Shouyi's pant leg and onto his shoulder, whispering, "Good Giant, there's a bad giant, hiding there?"

What he thought was just an illusion turned out to be someone truly hiding there.

Chen Shouyi felt a chill in his heart. It was already one o'clock in the morning; outside, the temperature froze water in an instant. At this hour, apart from soldiers on duty, no normal person would be out wandering, let alone come to this deserted park.

"Since you won't come out, I'll go over there," Chen Shouyi sneered coldly, saying.

He leapt down from the branches, spanning fourteen or fifteen meters in a stride, taking only a few steps.

Suddenly, an unexpected change occurred. With a twist of light, a tall, strong figure abruptly appeared under the big tree.

Seeing such an unbelievable sight, Chen Shouyi was shocked, involuntarily stopping: "Who exactly are you?"

He wore human clothing, his bald head tattooed with the image of a fierce beast, exuding a sense of formidable bravery and wildness, yet his calm expression bizarrely gave a sense of indifference to life and death and gentleness.

"I... am a servant of my master, the great God of Courage. May my master shelter you, mighty warrior, I mean no harm!"

He spoke with difficulty, in a strange accent, and the meaning of his words made his identity evident.

The atmosphere thickened instantly. Chen Shouyi slowly drew his sword: "You mean no harm, then why come here?"

"It was my master's guidance, mighty warrior, put down your weapon. You face a servant of a god." The tall barbarian remained calm, seemingly oblivious to the sword in his hand.

This barbarian felt different.

Chen Shouyi had encountered many barbarians invading Earth, some confused and wary, some vicious and eager to kill, but this one gave a sense of wisdom and peace.

"You, such a strong warrior, are exactly what my master admires. Soon, the great and merciful God of Courage will descend in person, to save this fallen and filthy world. This world will ultimately be ruled by gods. Offer your faith, and you will gain more."

Listening to these words made Chen Shouyi's heart sink; the truth of the words was hard to discern, making it impossible to tell the real from the fake.

Twenty years ago, gods invaded Earth several times and suffered disastrous defeats, with even some gods falling.

Now, humanity's mightiest weapon—the nuclear bomb—though still usable, had little impact, but without electricity, satellite navigation, or highly mobile delivery methods, even the most potent weapon is just a giant firecracker, losing its deterrent power entirely.

Since the mutation, humanity's overall strength had diminished by thousands of times, while, conversely, the gods' power on Earth had partially recovered. Should they invade again...

Thinking of this, he felt as if a boulder weighed on his heart, heavy and oppressive. Chen Shouyi refocused, looking at the barbarian:

"Your god, I naturally cannot contend with, but you will not see it."

There was nothing to say to barbarians; the number that had died at Chen Shouyi's hands was countless, let alone this clearly sinister invader.

The barbarian's expression faltered, still pondering the meaning of these words as Chen Shouyi's toes touched the ground, his body shot forward like the wind.

Shell Lady was startled, quickly jumping down and scampering a few steps to hide behind a large tree.

Only thirty meters separated him from the barbarian, and in less than half a second, he was upon him.

The barbarian sensed danger, reacting swiftly, a streak of anger and ferocity on his face, muttering in his heart, "Giant's Power!"

In the next moment, his body swelled like a balloon, his height of nearly 1.9 meters swiftly transforming to a small giant over 2.1 meters tall, muscles knotted like gnarled roots, countless blue-black veins violently bulging like worms.

At the same time, a powerful and obscure aura spread.

Seeing the approaching figure, a fan-sized hand, tangled with dense veins, tore through the blurred air, lunging towards Chen Shouyi, his voice booming like a bell: "Foolish unbeliever, seeking death!"

Chen Shouyi had not yet approached when a violent airflow hit him in the face, a massive blue-green hand wrapped in milky white lunging towards him.

Facing the sound barrier-breaking sonic cone cloud, Chen Shouyi's expression shifted, feeling immense pressure.

What he thought was a mere barbarian, easily slain, had turned out to be a great white shark, so powerful.

Perhaps Chen Shouyi had grown overconfident; since consuming divine blood and optimizing his swordsmanship, though not outwardly shown, an intense inner confidence subconsciously emerged, seeing himself above all.

His foot moved, slightly shifting his body, and in the next instant, with a boom, the violent wind brushed past, shredding his clothes into myriad tatters.

Clenching his jaw, as he evaded, he silently slashed his sword across the waist.

The barbarian didn't dodge, instead, he withdrew and kicked fiercely at Chen Shouyi's head.

His movements carried great force, every move surpassing the speed of sound, like a descending Giant Spirit God, crushing everything.

Yet Chen Shouyi noticed his seeming unfamiliarity with combat; his actions revealed considerable amateurishness and lack of method, although he still attacked with sonic booms, demonstrating his tremendous physical power.

In terms of strength, Chen Shouyi estimated he had less than half the opponent's power, perhaps even less agile, but in terms of physical coordination, he far surpassed this barbarian.

Dodging in a flash, Chen Shouyi witnessed a red magnolia, as thick as a thigh, getting snapped in half by his opponent's kick, toppling with a crash.

Both figures moved at high speed, creating explosive noises, the ground bursting into shallow pits, frozen soil flying outward like bullets.

However, the opponent, ultimately not a battle-hardened warrior, allowed Chen Shouyi to find an opportunity after a dozen exchanges.

As the barbarian lunged with a punch, he sidestepped, instantly moving to the opponent's side.

Body following the sword, he gripped it reverse, slashing hard along the opponent's waist, tearing with a sound like cutting old leather.

The barbarian roared in pain, before he had time to react; Chen Shouyi twisted back, his long sword stabbing into his back like lightning, creating a blood-filled hole.

Achieving success with a single sword stroke, Chen Shouyi felt slight relief, quickly preparing to withdraw, but just as he pulled out the sword, he was kicked heavily in the chest by the barbarian, with a cracking sound, countless ribs fractured. Chen Shouyi, like a kite with a broken string, flew over twenty meters, finally landing heavily.

Immediately he rolled to his feet, standing sword in hand, watching as the barbarian clutched his chest quickly fleeing, vanishing into the darkness in a blink.

Chen Shouyi stood unmoving, suddenly paling, spitting a mouthful of blood, his gaze fixed gravely where the barbarian had disappeared.

Chapter 179 - Vengeance Does Not Wait Overnight

At this moment, Chen Shouyi was quite miserable. Except for his pants, most of his clothes were gone, with only tattered strips hanging on him, leaving him almost naked. What was more terrifying was the horrifying indentation on his chest, just looking at it made one's scalp tingle.

"Six ribs are broken, and it seems two ribs have pierced into the internal organs, causing severe pain even when breathing." Chen Shouyi carefully explored his chest with his hand, looking grim. This was his most severe injury ever, nearly fatal.

At this moment, an invisible mysterious power began to gather rapidly here, delivering a hint of coolness to the intensely painful wounds, which seemed to be healing quickly.

"No, it can't just heal like this; the ribs haven't been repositioned. Even if it heals, it's useless if it heals improperly, might need to be broken again."

Chen Shouyi hesitated for a moment, then suddenly clenched his teeth. He picked up his sword, turned it around, aimed the tip at his chest, and with a fierce expression, forcefully cut open the surface muscle and skin, revealing the grim ribs, then with shaking fingers, reached into his chest cavity, carefully repositioning the ribs.

The intense pain caused his whole body to tremble violently, sweat pouring like rain.

The most painful were the two ribs that were lodged in his lungs and liver.

That near-fainting, excruciating pain made him almost scream, mouth filled with blood, even in the deep night of minus ten degrees, sweat beads the size of beans slid down his face like rain.

"Damn it!" Chen Shouyi flashed a look of ferocity.

After the rib repositioning, he quickly controlled the muscle and skin to close the wound.

The Shell Lady hiding behind the tree ran out in panic, her calves moving swiftly, desperately running towards him, but stopping a few steps away from Chen Shouyi, not daring to get closer. Seeing Chen Shouyi covered in blood, her small face filled with worry, she said, "Good Giant, you're not going to die, are you?"

"Good Giant, please don't die."

Chen Shouyi felt a tightness in his chest upon hearing this and spat out another mouthful of fresh blood.

He quickly waved her off to get away.

If that Barbarian's kick didn't kill him, her words would.

The cool sensation at the wound became stronger and even the pain was greatly reduced.

He felt his lungs getting itchier, unable to hold back a few light coughs, ending with several mouthfuls of coagulated blood being spat out.

The blocked breathing immediately became smooth.

In fact, not just the lungs but also the pierced liver, broken ribs, self-inflicted wound, all brought forth a strong itchy feeling.

Yet Chen Shouyi dared not scratch, dared not move, standing motionless.

As time passed, his condition improved; five or six minutes later, he was able to walk slowly, and ten minutes later, the wound was completely devoid of pain.

"The recovery speed is astonishingly fast, this Natural Healing is indeed powerful. If it's like this on Earth, it would be even more astonishing in another world."

He rested for a few more minutes and discovered that except for some lingering pain upon intense movement, there was no more hindrance. He looked at the trail of blood left by the Barbarian.

His gaze chilling.

"Barbarian, you can't escape." Chen Shouyi muttered softly, a trace of ruthlessness flashing across his face. This was his first big defeat, defeated so miserably, nearly losing his life.

The Barbarian had been stabbed by him, a fist-sized blood hole penetrating his waist, such severe injury, even if not dead, could not escape far.

"Get on!" Chen Shouyi turned and said to the Shell Lady.

The Shell Lady exclaimed in surprise, "Good Giant, are you okay?"

"Stop the nonsense." Chen Shouyi said with a dark expression.

The Shell Lady stuck out her pink little tongue quickly, climbed along Chen Shouyi's bare leg to his shoulder.

Then he lightly tapped the ground with his toes, following the blood trail to swiftly chase away into the distance.

...

In a two-story deserted office building in a remote corner of the park, a figure suddenly smashed the door into pieces.

"High Priest, what's happened?"

"Encountered a formidable enemy!" said the Barbarian High Priest to the strong Barbarian next to him.

He quickly lifted the giant transformation power; his originally giant form rapidly shrank like a deflated balloon, his whole body seemed exhausted, collapsing to the ground, sweat pouring cold.

"Even you were injured, how could such a feeble world have such a powerful enemy?"

"Barber, don't underestimate; this is not our world, the divine art is too weak here. A full hundred percent of power can't unleash even a fraction. But no worry, that man has been kicked by me already, estimated seriously injured too." The Barbarian High Priest said weakly, sweat pouring cold as he looked down at the terrifying wound, gently pressing his hand and mentally chanting, "Heal the wound!"

A sliver of faint radiance flashed across his palm; he moved his hand away, finding the wound only slightly shrunk, yet futile, he sighed.

Divine arts are granted by the gods, not used at will. Each grant requires devout prayer, fortunately for this incursion behind enemy lines, before departure, he had been specially endowed with numerous divine arts, even bestowed a divine grace once, making his body comparable to powerful warriors.

He used the divine art, "Heal the wound," five consecutive times, and at last, the terrifying wound slowly closed; though still looking bloody, at least it wasn't so lethal, and he felt life no longer slowly ebbing away like before.

"Herbs!"

The strong Barbarian immediately took out a handful of herbs from his bosom; the High Priest picked several, chewed them to a pulp, then cautiously applied them to the wound, breathing a long sigh of relief.

After quite a while, he continued speaking, "Don't underestimate this world; it is indeed quite formidable, several gods have fallen here. If not for the Original Force from our world affecting here through spatial rift, we couldn't have so easily entered. Nonetheless, we must be cautious."

As a High Priest, he knew more than common Barbarians, maintaining clear logic, not blinded by fervent belief.

Zealots cannot become priests.

Besides, he clearly felt the God of Courage's power slowly waning recently, perhaps that's why the God of Courage eagerly tried to conquer this world.

He needed more belief to sustain his divinity.

Such thoughts were too shocking, blaspheming gods; momentarily, driven out of his mind.

"As the Great High Priest of the mighty God of Courage, you're exceptionally cautious!" said the strong Barbarian.

"That's why I am the High Priest and you're simply a priest. Blind courage won't earn the god's favor. As servants spreading godly belief, we require wisdom, composure, and insightful eyes on worldly affairs."

The High Priest cast a glance at him, said, then tiredly closed his eyes, speaking no more.

Then, out of nowhere, he sprang a thread of unease. Initially, he thought it was an illusion, but a few seconds later, he abruptly opened his eyes wide: "We can't stay here; let's go!"

Keen hearing allowed him to detect unusual sounds.

"What's wrong, High Priest?"

"Enemy approaches."

Hardly had the words been spoken when a figure swiftly zipped into the small building like a clap of thunder.

Barber, the strong priest, eyes ablaze, lifted an office desk, violently hurling it at the figure. Next instant, a sword light flashed as the desk split into halves. Before it fell fully, the figure, borrowing force, leapt like a hawk, airborne, swinging towards the Barbarian.

The strong priest, caught in haste, had scant time to fetch the nearby long spear, nor opportunity to utilize divine art. Faced with ferocious sword light, he retreated in panic.

This time, Chen Shouyi was much more cautious, perceiving the opponent's crude strength through Memory Space before entering, weaker compared to the previous giant-transform Barbarian.

A few steps later, the Barbarian fiercely collided with the wall, the hard concrete shattered by his mighty force, causing a slight stall, and just then, Chen Shouyi lightly landed, feet barely touching the ground, his body blurred, instantly stepping forward.

Next moment, the fierce wind howled, a swift sword light bore into his forehead like lightning, creating a terrifying bowl-sized wound.

Chapter 180 - Sword Aura's Special Effects

When Chen Shouyi drew his sword and turned back to look, he found that the Barbarian from earlier had disappeared without a trace.

He quickly took a step, bolted through the door like a gust of wind, looked around, and circled the office building, but found no sign of him.

He felt a deep frustration rising within him.

Wasn't this guy supposed to be a follower of the God of Courage?

Where's your courage now?

Why are you running faster than a rabbit?

It was like this last time, and it's the same this time.

However, Chen Shouyi believed, he must be nearby.

The earlier fight was swift like a rabbit's leap and a bird's flight. From the start to the end of the fight, it only took about a second or two.

In such a short time, given the current state of his body, how far could he have gone?

What's more, the surroundings were deathly silent, and he hadn't heard the faintest sound of footsteps while running. He must be hiding in some corner.

It seems the Shell Lady is needed. With the sharpness of her senses, nothing can escape her notice.

"Little girl, come here quickly."

Hearing the call, the Shell Lady quickly jumped down from a small tree hole and ran over swiftly, agilely climbing onto Chen Shouyi's shoulder. Before Chen Shouyi could ask, she was already breathlessly speaking loudly, her little face flushed with excitement:

"Giant, Giant, I've found where the bad Giant is hiding!"

Chen Shouyi was delighted and quickly asked, "Where is he?"

"That bad Giant is hiding in that big tree over there." The Shell Lady quickly pointed with her small hand.

As expected, he was hiding nearby.

Upon hearing this, Chen Shouyi quickly looked in the direction. The big tree the Shell Lady was pointing at was near the office building, just over thirty meters away. With his eyesight, even in this deep night, nothing would be indistinct from this short distance.

However, he couldn't see where the opponent was hiding at all.

He furrowed his brow slightly.

This was the second time he saw the opponent using invisibility.

Such an ability was truly disgusting.

He wondered how the Shell Lady discovered it.

Chen Shouyi took a deep breath, his gaze turning serious.

Holding his sword, he walked step by step, and after taking a few steps, his eyes finally distinguished a slight incongruity. He noticed a slight distortion and blur in one part of the tree's branch, like it had been photoshopped.

He approached cautiously, highly alert.

When they were within ten meters of each other, the opponent finally couldn't hold back.

As the light twisted, the Barbarian suddenly appeared, angrily kicking the branch. The branch, the size of a bowl's mouth, instantly snapped. At the same time, his body rapidly expanded, looking down from above, and he punched heavily toward Chen Shouyi.

Seeing the fierce attack coming at him, Chen Shouyi felt a sense of relief instead.

He was most afraid that the opponent could remain invisible during combat. If that had been the case, it would have been troublesome. Fortunately, the worst-case scenario didn't happen.

Watching the rapidly approaching figure, he had been preparing for a while. With an easy sidestep, he avoided the attack while slicing his sword toward the opponent's chest and abdomen. The Barbarian raised his right hand to block, but with a flash of the sword light, a sturdy arm already detached from his body.

The High Priest let out a low growl of pain, stepping back continuously upon landing, his eyes filled with despair.

His previous injuries were too severe, his abdomen perforated with a bowl-sized blood hole. Although his Divine Art had barely healed the wound, it couldn't possibly recover so quickly. Just a slight movement had already torn the wound back open.

Compared to the beginning, when he possessed terrifying Giant Spirit God-like strength and speed, his condition had declined by more than fifty percent, his movements weak, and his steps wobbling.

Chen Shouyi leisurely walked toward him step by step:

"That kick just now hurt me a lot."

The High Priest looked at the dense muscle of the opponent's chest, where a dark footprint was clearly stamped, unable to stop the twitching of his face.

He distinctly remembered that with that kick, he had broken a few of his opponent's ribs. Such an injury was not much less than his own. Yet, he couldn't figure out how, in the blink of an eye, the opponent was already lively and bouncing, as if he hadn't been injured at all.

"I... I am the High Priest of the God of Courage, you foolish unbeliever..."

Before he could finish his sentence, he saw the opponent's footsteps suddenly blur. The High Priest immediately swallowed the threat stuck in his throat. Having no way to escape, he could only fight to

the death. In despair and anger, he let out a low roar, gathering his remaining strength, he stomped forcefully towards the rapidly approaching figure, choosing to advance rather than retreat.

The two brushed past each other instantly. The Barbarian continued a few more steps, a head rolled off the body, and blood spurted into the sky.

Seconds later, the small giant-like headless body fell heavily to the ground with a muffled thud.

Chen Shouyi flicked his sword, spraying the blood droplets clinging to it away at high speed, before sheathing his sword.

"That scared me!"

"But the position of the High Priest doesn't seem low!"

According to his understanding, in an alternate world within a mature True God Church, priests are generally divided into Priests, High Priests, and further up, Chief Priests and Popes.

Although the High Priest is only the second level in the hierarchy, the productivity in the alternate world is underdeveloped, and the population density that it can support is extremely low.

Miles of uninhabited land are almost the norm, and even a True God might only have hundreds of thousands or millions of followers.

In an entire tribe, the chances of becoming a priest might be less than one in ten thousand.

After all, priests are the shepherds of the gods. Their main tasks are to propagate the gods' might and greatness, persuade people to believe, inspire followers, and fight if necessary to handle the tribe's crises.

But all this requires daily divine art bestowed by the gods, consuming their own Divine Power. The more priests there are, the greater the consumption, and if too many are trained, it might not be sustainable.

In a tiny church with only about a hundred people, the position of a High Priest is obviously not low, since there are fewer people above.

But once killed, they're killed. As far as he knows, not even True God is omnipotent. Unless wholeheartedly praying with utmost devotion, even a True God cannot receive the information from followers. Moreover, this is still Earth, Chen Shouyi quickly abandons these thoughts.

Just as he was about to call the Shell Lady to leave this place.

At that moment, he suddenly noticed something strange about the corpse, a cold breath permeated, and soon a faint glow emerged as a shadow slowly floated up from the body.

His facial features were blurred but faintly visible, one could see the visage of that Barbarian.

Chen Shouyi whispered with curiosity, as it was his first time witnessing a soul with his own eyes.

Perhaps because these priests often use divine arts, their souls were tainted with a hint of Divine Power, and these souls emitted a barely noticeable glow, possibly invisible during the day, but quite conspicuous in the darkness.

At this time, he looked around in confusion:

"Have I reached the Divine Country?"

"Why does it look different from what I imagined, yet some of the scenery seems familiar!"

Soon he noticed Chen Shouyi nearby, was startled, and displayed a hint of fear as he quickly backed away, floating like a gentle breeze close to the ground.

At this moment, he vaguely sensed a faint and elusive guiding force, and he was overjoyed. In the soul state, his thoughts were sluggish and incapable of complex thinking. If he were a rational person, he would definitely first distance himself from danger.

But for him at this moment, this matter was obviously more important. He immediately shook off the fear of Chen Shouyi and prayed loudly with unprecedented devotion: "Great and merciful God of Courage, your most faithful servant pleads for your guidance..."

However, he soon discovered in despair that although the soul's guiding force was a lot clearer than before, it still wasn't enough to draw the soul to the Divine Country.

"Impossible! Impossible!" he muttered to himself as his expression gradually turned manic.

Suddenly he felt a gust of roaring wind; his figure was swaying. He raised his head blankly.

He saw the human rapidly approaching, with a sword in hand radiating a blinding glimmer like the sun, and in the next moment, all his thoughts halted completely.

The entire soul disintegrated, bursting into countless faint points of light.

Chen Shouyi was taken aback, looking at the sword in his hand.

Feeling somewhat unexpected.

"I didn't expect that a single sword could annihilate it. Could physical attacks also harm souls?"

"No, it's not. It should be the Sword Aura of will!" With his mind somewhat muddled, Chen Shouyi felt a stirring in his heart.

He suddenly remembered there was still one more in the office building, immediately returned to the hall, searched around, but didn't see the spirit of this Barbarian.

Did it escape?

Chen Shouyi immediately called over the Shell Lady, hiding nearby. After asking, she expressed that she hadn't noticed anything.

He didn't doubt the words of the Shell Lady; she was always timid. If she said she hadn't noticed, then she surely hadn't.

But why, when killed in the same way, did one manifest a spirit and the other not?

Of course, that High Priest Barbarian was much stronger than this Barbarian, which might have been a reason.

But Chen Shouyi felt it definitely wasn't due to this reason.

Even during the first mutation, the soul of an ordinary Earth person could turn into a spirit due to their resentment after being assassinated.

A Barbarian warrior, on the other hand, couldn't, which made no sense.

At this point, he had a sudden thought and remembered the powerful damage the will-infused Sword Aura could inflict on spirits.

He couldn't help but ponder.

He recalled the earlier scene when he dispatched the Barbarian High Priest.

At that time, as the two were rapidly approaching each other, just about to contact, he sidestepped to avoid the opponent's punch and slashed off the head with his sword, relying on his speed.

In such circumstances, he couldn't concentrate his spirit, and the sword might not have formed a will-infused Sword Aura, which led to an escapee slipping through the net.

"It seems I'll have to be careful in the future. After the mutation, death is no longer the end. Earth is gradually becoming a supermundane world."