

New Era 241

Chapter 241 - Requisition

Slept until broad daylight.

When Chen Shouyi woke up, it was already half-past seven.

He glanced at the Shell Lady; she hadn't slept yet and was still playing with seven or eight cabbage worms on the bedside table, full of enthusiasm.

These worms were caught by Chen Shouyi in the vegetable garden of the hotel courtyard before going to bed last night, specifically for her to play with at night. After all, even a creature from an alternate reality with forty-hour days couldn't possibly sleep for over forty hours straight.

After a night of tossing around, these poor cabbage worms were already limp with no sign of movement. Even if they were still alive, they probably had only one breath left, but even so, these poor worms were still being posed by the Shell Lady in all sorts of ways.

"Good giant, you're finally awake." Seeing Chen Shouyi get up, the Shell Lady frowned and complained, "These worms don't move anymore."

No matter how resilient the worms are, they can't survive with you tormenting them like this!

"I'll catch more for you next time, bigger ones!"

"No, let me catch them!" the Shell Lady said excitedly, "I want to catch one... a worm as big as me!"

She immediately added, "A good worm!"

"Fine, fine, I'll let you catch that," Chen Shouyi replied helplessly, having long seen through her bluffing nature.

...

Thinking that his aunt and sister might not be up yet, he began to assume a posture and practice the thirty-six forms of Horizontal Training,

Soon, a blue whirlwind started to spin crazily inside his Dantian, threads of Mysterious Power quickly converging towards him, his skin and muscles constantly wriggling, making his whole body feel a tingling sensation as if electricity were coursing through.

Chen Shouyi practiced fifteen times in a row before he stopped, exhausted.

His skin was burning red, steam enveloped his entire body, radiating intense heat.

"Phew!"

Chen Shouyi exhaled deeply.

The white steam shot out over a meter away like an arrow, hitting the wall with a light "pop" sound, dispersing a ring of dust, causing tiny specks of lime to fall.

The body, which had swollen by a size, gradually shrunk back to its normal state as he exhaled.

After a night's rest, his physical weakness had mostly recovered.

Chen Shouyi poured himself a cup of water, drinking it while taking a moment to check his attribute panel.

His will had increased by 0.1 points, and perception had also increased.

His perception attribute was now at 12.9, just a step away from thirteen, and his range of perception could already reach a two-meter radius, allowing for some form of intuitive sensing of danger.

At that moment, a thought crossed his mind, and he focused his will, causing a thin magazine on the bedside table to start flipping pages on its own as if manipulated by a large unseen hand.

In the next moment, the entire magazine began to waver and float up.

Beside him, the Shell Lady was wide-eyed, her mouth opening wider and wider before she hastily covered it, holding her breath, seemingly afraid that a tiny stream of air would blow the magazine down.

Chen Shouyi remained undisturbed, paying no attention to the Shell Lady's small actions, controlling the magazine to rotate slowly around him.

His mental energy flowed like water, soon causing his temples to throb and his skin to swell faintly; he immediately stopped, a hint of surprise flashing across his face.

"Pop," the magazine fell to the ground.

Chen Shouyi stepped forward and bent to pick up the magazine.

He weighed it lightly; the whole magazine was about a pound or two, which wasn't exactly light.

"I remember, the will has only increased by about 0.3 points recently, but why has the mass of objects I can manipulate increased several times?" he wondered, deep in thought.

"It seems this growth of willpower isn't linear but exponential."

With this thought, a tinge of excitement flashed through Chen Shouyi's heart. Although this ability was still very weak, having little offensive power at the moment, if this growth ratio continued, his will might play a significant role in the future.

In fact, he had long suspected that the increase in willpower was not linear.

Like the Sword Qi he discovered early on, it initially only reached two centimeters in length, but now it had grown to five centimeters, not only increasing in length by 2.5 times but also multiplying in destructive power.

During this period, the growth in willpower wasn't even 1.5 times.

As for why the growth rate in Sword Qi length was much smaller compared to the mass manipulation by Telekinesis, Chen Shouyi didn't find it surprising.

After all, Sword Qi is much more complex than simple Telekinesis manipulation. The strength of Telekinesis manipulation is related only to weight, while using Sword Qi involves both length and destructive power, requiring balance between the two.

Feeling the sweat on his body.

Chen Shouyi went to the bathroom to take a shower and changed into the clothes he had brought.

...

By nine o'clock, his aunt and cousin finally came to knock on the door.

Chen Shouyi put the Shell Lady into his backpack and opened the door.

"Shou Yi, did you wait long? We overslept a bit!" his aunt said apologetically, seeing that Chen Shouyi was already neatly dressed.

Although their complexions were still a bit haggard, after a night's rest, their faces had regained some color, and they were in good spirits.

"It's fine; you could have slept a bit longer. There's nothing urgent!" Chen Shouyi said.

...

Soon, the group checked out of the room, and after having breakfast at a nearby breakfast shop, they hired two tricycle rickshaws and headed straight to the railway station. The streets were filled with steam trucks carrying weapons and soldiers, casting a solemn atmosphere.

"Another war brewing!" The rickshaw driver sighed, "Who knows what it'll be like this time?"

"Isn't your family evacuating?" Chen Shouyi asked, making small talk.

"Evacuate to where? Dongning is far away from here; they can't reach us. Besides, even if we flee, where could we go, where would we stay, what would we eat and drink? Many places are even more chaotic than Ningzhou!" the rickshaw driver chuckled, clearly in good spirits.

Chen Shouyi remained silent. Indeed, where could one escape to? For ordinary people, there is no absolutely safe place.

Even for someone as powerful as him, a Martial Artist, he had narrowly escaped death twice in the past few days. If not for his talent in Natural Healing, he would have been dead by now.

"Where are you headed?" the tricycle driver asked again.

"We're taking the train to Hedong!" Chen Shouyi replied.

"Hedong, young man, why are you going there? I heard there's fighting going on, it's chaotic!" the tricycle driver said in surprise.

"Your information is outdated; the fighting stopped there a while ago." Chen Shouyi said with a smile.

"Ah, it's over? News travels so slowly these days!" the tricycle driver remarked.

...

An hour later, the vehicle finally arrived at Ningzhou Railway Station.

After paying and getting off the vehicle, Chen Shouyi felt a chill in his heart. The station was already sealed off; everywhere on the square inside were soldiers and mountains of ammunition. Several steam cranes were hoisting large ammunition boxes onto a queue of trucks.

At this moment, Qin Shufen and Chen Yuwei also got off.

Seeing this scene, they couldn't help but look worried. Qin Shufen said anxiously, "I guess we can't take the train?"

"I'll go ask!" Chen Shouyi said.

He immediately stepped forward but was quickly stopped by the soldiers blocking the area: "National defense mobilization, the train station is temporarily requisitioned, it's not open right now."

"When will normal passage resume?" Chen Shouyi asked.

"The time is uncertain; wait for the notification until then."

Unable to get any information from a soldier, Chen Shouyi helplessly returned and shook his head at the two women, saying, "There's nothing we can do; the trains have been requisitioned. We probably have to wait one or two days before it opens. Let's find a place nearby to stay first!"

If he were alone, he would have bought a bicycle and set out long ago, but now he could only continue to wait.

Both his aunt and cousin, after rushing around the whole day and night yesterday, still hadn't recovered. If they had to ride bicycles for another day and night, they'd collapse.

"I guess that's our only choice." His aunt sighed and said, "Shou Yi, we've really burdened you."

"Aunt, what are you talking about, there's no such thing as burdening between family." Chen Shouyi quickly said.

Although his uncle's family was more enthusiastic towards his sister, he knew that was mainly due to his own circumstances. At least, every year from childhood, he received the same amount of New Year money as everyone else.

"Sigh, we're lucky to have you!" His aunt looked at Chen Shouyi, who seemed completely different from before, and sighed.

...

Because of the large number of outsiders at the station, there were many hotels still in operation, and it didn't take much effort for the group to find one.

Afraid that his aunt would pay again, Chen Shouyi quickly walked to the service desk: "Two rooms, one double and one single."

"Deposit of one hundred, seventy for the double, fifty for the single, two hundred and twenty in total," a pretty receptionist said with a standard smile, showing eight teeth.

After the mutation, industrial goods became expensive, but service prices had plummeted. The cheapest hotels near the railway station were twice this price before, let alone a hotel of this standard, which was at least three times.

But before Chen Shouyi could take out his wallet, his aunt had already handed the money over.

"Aunt, let me pay; I'm really not short on money. I don't even spend all my monthly salary," Chen Shouyi said helplessly. From yesterday till now, every time he tried to pay, he couldn't manage to do it, not even for breakfast today, which his aunt insisted on paying.

"This isn't about the amount of money; you came all the way from Hedong to rescue us, how can we let you pay? My conscience wouldn't allow it."

Chen Shouyi argued slightly, but he couldn't win, so he had to give in.

Alas, still too young.

In matters like this, he's almost like an elementary school student, with weak negotiating skills. If his mother were here, Chen Shouyi believed it wouldn't be so easy to surrender.

...

There were quite a few guests in the hotel, all in the same situation as them, waiting for the trains to resume service.

By noon, there were still plenty of soldiers and ammunition on the station square. Chen Shouyi secretly estimated that there were about ten thousand soldiers just on the square. Counting those already transported, he surmised that twenty thousand soldiers were moved in this whole morning.

Fifty thousand per day.

The entire Ningzhou was undergoing a massive military mobilization.

Chen Shouyi watched for a while with a solemn expression before drawing the curtains.

He resumed practicing the Horizontal Training Thirty-Six.

During this period, he was experiencing a phase where its effects were becoming pronounced.

Especially the horizontal training part.

He could clearly feel his body becoming stronger day by day.

His muscles were becoming increasingly dense, as if continuously tightening and compressing, making him look much leaner.

But this was only the appearance.

In fact, his weight hadn't decreased at all, in fact, it had increased.

The density of his muscles was increasing, making them tougher and his defense stronger.

And it wasn't just his muscles; his skin was thickening, the surface becoming smoother, pores shrinking, and apart from his hair and certain areas, everything else started to fall away.

As for his internal organs, he had yet to feel deeper changes due to the inability to observe or test.

However, his lung capacity was indeed increasing. While practicing the Horizontal Training Thirty-Six breathing technique, a single breath could make his chest and abdomen expand like a balloon, transforming him from a normally sized person into a large, robust man.

Chapter 242 - Nuclear Explosion (4K)

In the evening, Chen Shouyi informed his aunt and cousin before walking out of the hotel with a backpack on his shoulder.

He walked to the roadside and waved down a tricycle.

"Where to?"

"To the cold weapon shop!" Chen Shouyi said.

The war-like atmosphere in Ningzhou made him a bit uneasy. Thinking that he had exhausted his supply of arrows, he planned to stock up just in case.

"It's a bit far, ten bucks!" the tricycle driver said tentatively.

"Alright, hurry up!" Chen Shouyi got into the vehicle.

"Okay!"

...

A few minutes later, Chen Shouyi walked into a cold weapon shop that was open; it was quiet inside, with only a few scattered customers.

Chen Shouyi glanced around the arrow counter, his face slightly grim.

Since the mutation, steel prices had skyrocketed due to soaring processing costs. The price of ordinary arrows had increased from ten yuan each to nearly forty yuan each, and now, in just a few months, they had risen six to seven times.

But unexpectedly, the price of arrows in Ningzhou was forty percent more expensive than in Hedong, with a single ordinary arrow costing a staggering one hundred forty yuan.

Still, no matter how expensive they were, he had to buy them.

Luckily, he had brought quite a bit of money with him on this trip, so he could afford it.

"Give me one hundred ordinary arrows and ten armor-piercing arrows."

...

Chen Shouyi placed the arrows in his backpack and, as he walked out of the cold weapon shop, he saw a fully armed special police unit quickly surrounding a five-story building not far away. Then came a burst of dense gunfire followed by the explosion of flashbangs.

Someone, in a panic, jumped out of a fifth-floor window, falling and landing on the cement ground with a dull thud. The body bent peculiarly and twitched a few times, then lay still.

Chen Shouyi paused slightly, then quickly walked over.

The gunfire had barely ended when, slowly, a large group of people with shackles, being escorted out by the police at gunpoint, came out of the building. Many of them were emotional, their expressions manic:

"We are not a cult, we truly believe in the True God. The ones that should be abolished are those legal religions."

"Earth is on the brink of destruction; humanity is facing doomsday. Only the divine can save us humans. You people who refuse to see the truth are the sinners driving humanity to the abyss!"

"Kneel and repent, the divine exists, Heaven exists, everyone knows this, yet you stand against divine forces and blaspheme the divine. You are all going to Hell."

Several special police officers were visibly flustered, a hint of sway in their expressions. A senior officer, sensing the problem, didn't hesitate to strike one of them harshly in the face with the butt of his gun, instantly causing their mouth to flood with blood: "Shut up."

Other special police quickly reacted, and those still trying to delude others soon let out wails of agony, shocking everyone into silence.

"Turns out they were secretly running a cult. Someone even tried to recruit me back then, saying it was some Peace Cooperative Association. Good thing I was sensible and didn't go!" A middle-aged woman outside the police line said, feeling fortunate.

"You're lucky then. If you joined, you'd be brainwashed, just like those in multi-level marketing schemes. By then, you wouldn't be able to leave. These lunatics can do anything." A middle-aged man with glasses said.

"I heard many of those spreading the cult now came over from Dongning, it's like a cult nest there."

"Isn't there a lockdown?"

"How long has it been locked down? Many people from Dongning settled here before it was closed off."

"Sigh, society is becoming more chaotic by the day."

Listening to the crowd's discussion, Chen Shouyi's face was grim. Cults were like a plague, impossible to guard against, and even in Ningzhou, they seemed to be spreading. After observing for a while, he turned and left the crowd, heading back to the hotel.

...

In the dim night.

The room was filled with deep, periodic breathing.

Suddenly, Chen Shouyi felt a tremor in his heart and awoke from sleep, opening his eyes.

He looked at the watch on the bed; through its cracked glass, the needles glowed faintly.

"Only four o'clock!"

He rose from bed and walked to the window, opened the curtains, only to find the outside still enveloped in darkness.

Amidst the silence, faint cannon sounds seemed to come from afar.

"The war has already begun!" Chen Shouyi felt heavy-hearted.

The war was faster than he had anticipated; he thought it would be in a few days, but the fighting had already commenced on the second morning. Given the current stance, unless the God of Hunting doesn't appear, nuclear weapons will surely be used as soon as it does. The higher-ups won't just sit by and watch Dongning remain like a malignant tumor inside the Great Xia, consuming significant material and manpower in defense.

Moreover, the longer it drags on, the more disorderly people's hearts become.

But once the nuclear missiles are launched, the consequences would be tremendous, with unknown casualties.

Chen Shouyi sat back on the bed, glancing at the Shell Lady, who had turned over and continued to sleep, and stared blankly into space.

Time slowly slipped by, and soon dawn was breaking.

Only when there was a knock at the door did Chen Shouyi wake up from his trance, looking at the time, realizing that in a daze, he had sat for over three hours without moving.

Chen Shouyi gently covered the Shell Lady with a blanket and opened the door.

"Shou Yi, I brought you breakfast!" Chen Yuwei handed over a big bag, smiling: "I hope it's enough!"

"Sister, it's enough, more than enough." Chen Shouyi hurriedly took it, opened it, and glanced inside. There were buns, fried dough sticks, rice balls, and egg pancakes—a bit of everything, as if she had bought a little of each.

"I just went to the train station. It's still not open, so we might be here for a few more days." Chen Yuwei said.

Chapter 243 - Nuclear Explosion (4K)_2

She obviously didn't hear the sound of artillery, after all, the battlefield is at least thirty to forty kilometers away from here in a straight line, an ordinary person could not possibly hear the sound of guns from such a remote distance.

"No, we are leaving today, notify Auntie that we are leaving immediately," Chen Shouyi said seriously.

This kind of war with the gods is no joke. Given the high mobility of the gods, if the war becomes unfavorable, Ningzhou could be affected at any time.

"Shou Yi, what's wrong?" Chen Yuwei asked anxiously, sensing something amiss.

In the corridor, a young couple walked toward them, chatting and laughing.

"You guys prepare first, pack up, we'll talk on the road!" Chen Shouyi glanced over and retracted his gaze, saying.

He quickly went into the room, put on a coat, ate breakfast, and closed the door: "I'm going outside for a while."

Chen Yuwei stood for a while, with a changing face, and promptly walked briskly to the next room.

...

Chen Shouyi walked out of the hotel, looked up at the gloomy sky in the distance, asked a passerby for directions, and quickly headed to a nearby bike shop.

Within a few minutes, he reached his destination.

The bike shop was quite lively, crowded with people.

After the mutation, bicycles became the most important means of transportation, and despite the high cost, they couldn't resist the reality of demand.

Originally, Chen Shouyi intended to buy three bicycles, but was instantly drawn to the tricycles when he saw them.

...

Ten minutes later, Chen Shouyi, whose wallet shrank once again, was riding a tricycle with a serious expression, controlling the handlebars with stiff hands, moving crookedly forward.

Initially, he thought tricycles were like bicycles, and even more balanced due to three wheels, should be simpler to maneuver, but once he got going, he realized it was a completely different thing.

The tricycle was not only bulkier than a bicycle, but the handlebars seemed impossible to straighten, slightly careless, and it veered to one side.

Fortunately, he wasn't an ordinary person, with meticulous control of his whole body's strength, after a few adjustments, he gradually tamed the unruly tricycle.

When passing a repair shop, he got off, specially bought five sets of matching chains, to avoid breaking down like last time.

...

Ten minutes.

Luggage packed, Chen Shouyi and his aunt stepped out of the hotel.

"Aunt, wait here, I'll get the vehicle," Chen Shouyi called to them.

He went to a brand-new tricycle parked outside the hotel, unlocked it, pushed it in front of them, patting the sidecar: "Aunt, Sis, hop in."

"Shou Yi, are you taking us to Hedong with a tricycle?" Aunt opened her mouth, asked in surprise.

Beside her, Chen Yuwei was also shocked, this was too exaggerated, even by car it would take four or five hours to get from here to Hedong, and most of the journey would be on the highway, yet the tricycle is slower than a bicycle.

"Well, for safety reasons, we can only make do for now," Chen Shouyi said.

"It's not... I don't mean that, just it's so far..." Aunt said.

Chen Shouyi looked at the time: "Actually Hedong isn't that far, if we depart now, we should arrive tonight!"

As he spoke, a pedestrian on the distant street suddenly shouted: "Look at the clouds over there!"

Chen Shouyi was taken aback slightly, hurriedly looking up at the sky.

Today's weather was gloomy, full of dark clouds, yet at this moment, one area of cloud was slowly dispersing, breaking open a large hole, as if a powerful force was dispersing all of it.

The next moment, a red-black mushroom cloud slowly ascended from the horizon, with colorful ribbon-like white clouds swirling around it.

The street suddenly fell silent, all pedestrians stopped in their tracks, as if petrified, quietly watching the distant sky.

It's a nuclear bomb!

The scene of a nuclear bomb, everyone has seen it more or less in movies or online videos.

But witnessing it firsthand is rare.

This destructive power, shocking and terrifying.

It's not just one mushroom cloud, soon a second one slowly rose, followed by a third a few seconds later, notably the third mushroom cloud was several times larger than the previous two.

This third nuclear bomb has a greater yield.

Chen Shouyi noted that these three nuclear bomb's mushroom clouds were not clustered together, but spaced at a certain distance, apparently the first two smaller yield nuclear bombs didn't kill the God of Hunting, hence fired the third larger yield bomb.

Afterwards, no new mushroom clouds appeared for a long time.

"Hopefully, the God of Hunting is really dead!" Chen Shouyi couldn't help but silently pray.

Time ticked by, about two minutes after, the sound of the nuclear explosion faintly arrived, like a series of low rumbling thunder, based on the speed of sound, Chen Shouyi estimated the distance to the nuclear explosion site was roughly thirty kilometers away.

By now, the crowd slowly came back from the shock.

"Oh my god, they really used atomic bombs."

"Maybe it's a hydrogen bomb!"

"Will we have radiation over here?"

"Probably not, since it's so far away?"

"Who can say for sure!"

The crowd was discussing, fearful and uneasy.

Only a few clueless kids, excitedly shouting, ran around.

Soon, more and more military and police appeared on the streets, starting to maintain order. The power of nuclear weapons not only lies in destruction but also in the panic of people's hearts, without a strong maintenance of order, the whole Ningzhou could instantly turn chaotic.

"Get on the vehicle, we're leaving!" Chen Shouyi snapped back to reality, immediately said, a vague feeling of unease arose in his heart, he suspected that the God of Hunting was not dead at all.

Maybe he was overthinking it, but as long as there's a one in ten thousand chance, he wouldn't take the risk.

The Barbarian God's strength, he couldn't possibly contend with, even the injured and weakened God of Courage he couldn't deal with until now, let alone this even stronger God of Hunting.

Qin Shufen and Chen Yuwei were already at a loss, immediately climbed into the tricycle upon hearing.

Once both of them settled down, Chen Shouyi stepped on the pedal, and the tricycle swiftly drove onto the street.

He rode faster and faster, the pedals were like spinning wheels of fire, overtaking steam trucks one by one, the scenery on both sides quickly receding, the two clung desperately to the tricycle's handrails, afraid of being flung out if they weren't careful.

An hour later, the tricycle gradually drove out of the urban area, then Chen Shouyi suddenly sensed something, instinctively, he turned to look back at the sky.

In the distance, a blurred human figure emitting faint golden light, quietly floating in mid-air, auroras swirling around, dancing enchantingly.

With just one glance, Chen Shouyi's mind trembled, faintly seeming to see a majestic and grand figure with a bird's head and human body, reflected in his soul.

The God of Hunting!

He immediately turned around, dared not look again, pedaled fiercely, heart a tangled mess.

"The war really failed!"

Although he had already suspected in his heart, truly seeing the terrifying figure was still somewhat beyond belief.

"Could it be even nuclear bombs have no effect?"

But such thought was immediately dismissed upon turning.

"No, maybe it's the military being too cautious this time, after all, used on the battlefield, surrounded everywhere by soldiers, nearby are cities, the nuclear bomb yield was obviously not large, except the third one slightly larger, the first two estimates are just several kiloton-level nuclear bombs.

For a Barbarian God with keen danger instincts, it is entirely possible to dodge beforehand at high mobility, at one-fold or even several times sonic speed, escaping this level of nuclear attack range in the blink of an eye.

Don't know if those three nuclear-powered strategic airships managed to escape?

As a nuclear arsenal, there must be quite a few nuclear bombs left inside, if caught by the God of Hunting or its Church, it would be a threat to Jiangnan and even the whole Great Xia Country."

Thinking of this, Chen Shouyi's heart felt as though pressed by a boulder, a bit suffocated.

"Shou Yi, what is that?" Chen Yuwei apparently also noticed the small golden dot, asked with unease.

"It's the God of Hunting!" Chen Shouyi said solemnly.

The atmosphere instantly fell silent, into quietness, only left with the sound of heavy breathing.

Soon, the tricycle entered the highway.

Chapter 244 - Aftermath

Scattered airships are retreating into the distance.

A short distance away, on an elevated railway bridge, an old steam train loaded with munitions, billowed thick white smoke, making a clanking sound, as it accelerated away from Ningzhou.

The intense sound of artillery fire could still be faintly heard from behind, but this was the last resistance. In a sense, the war had officially ended after three nuclear bombs had proven futile.

There were few cars on the highway, making for a smooth journey.

Chen Shouyi was pedaling a tricycle rapidly, constantly overtaking one steam truck after another.

Until Ningzhou gradually receded from view, his heart, though heavy, also felt a slight relief. Those who haven't experienced it wouldn't know the kind of pressure there is when facing the Barbarian God, it's like an ant gazing up at a giant, that suffocating and despairing feeling of fragility as if life were a soap bubble.

He looked back for a moment, then turned around and continued forward.

Several traffic policemen at the toll station attempted to stop Chen Shouyi's non-compliant tricycle from entering the road, but upon seeing his speed, they immediately gave up, letting him speed away.

Goodness, this speed is almost seventy miles per hour.

Carrying two people, it's faster than an accelerated steam truck.

You can tell at a glance he's not an ordinary person!

Chen Shouyi sped all the way, changing the chain three times in the process, and by 3:30 PM, he had already reached Hedong City.

Chen Shouyi did not stop by the parking lot at the Hedong Railway Station to retrieve his bicycle. Instead, he had a late lunch at a restaurant in the city center, then headed straight to the Safe Zone.

By this time, the workers in the industrial district were already getting off work.

The streets were bustling with people, the sounds of bicycle bells ringing endlessly, forming a cacophony of noise. Seeing this lively atmosphere, much of the gloom weighing on Chen Shouyi's heart was dispelled.

"Is this the Safe Zone?" Chen Yuwei asked curiously, "It's so lively here!"

"Yes, now many important institutions from Hedong City have moved here, also, Jiangnan University is here now too. If you attend school, it's only a ten-minute bicycle ride away." Chen Shouyi said as he pedaled the tricycle slowly, explaining:

"The city experienced a battle before; now there's hardly any people in the city, while the Safe Zone is getting more prosperous!"

"Are the house prices expensive here?" Qin Shufen inquired.

"I didn't really pay attention to it, but they shouldn't be expensive." Chen Shouyi replied, usually not focusing on these matters, "Auntie, you can stay with us at our house."

"Staying too long would be inconvenient!" Qin Shufen said.

She was a strong-willed person, moreover, even among relatives sometimes boundaries are needed; staying a few days is okay, but staying too long can sour even the best relationships.

All the cash she had was just over ten thousand. Coupled with the jewelry she brought, considering the current gold prices, she could probably make thirty to forty thousand by selling them. If need be, she could borrow some from her sister-in-law.

Chen Shouyi tried to persuade a bit but then stopped trying.

The tricycle gradually made its way to the villa area, and the crowds immediately thinned out.

Gazing at the rows of exquisite houses, Chen Yuwei's eyes widened gradually, "Shouyi, does your family live here now?"

"Yes!" Chen Shouyi replied, "We're almost there!"

The tricycle came to a stop at the entrance of a villa.

"Dad, Mom! I'm back!" Chen Shouyi shouted, "Aunt and sister, I've brought them along too!"

Father Chen and Mrs. Chen heard the commotion and quickly ran out, followed by Chen Xingyue.

"Why are you so late? Sister-in-law, Yuwei, come on in quickly." Chen Dawei chuckled, "Where's my brother, why isn't he here?"

...

In the living room, the atmosphere was a bit stifling.

Everyone except Chen Shouyi had slightly reddened eyes.

"Sigh, if only we had sent Shou Yi sooner to fetch you guys, I didn't expect Dongning to turn out like this," Chen Dawei said in a low voice, "Otherwise, my brother wouldn't have... Sigh! Thank goodness you and Yuwei are safe!"

Qin Shufen wiped the corners of her eyes, "It's all fate. If not for Yuwei, I wouldn't have had the courage to go on living."

"Sister-in-law, don't say such ominous things!" Mrs. Chen said, "Are you hungry? I'll get some food."

...

Unconsciously, a week had passed in the blink of an eye.

Chen Yuwei went back to class, and her aunt, after borrowing some money, bought a house on the outskirts of the Safe Zone by the fifth day and moved out.

Chen Shouyi repeatedly visited Jiangnan University to borrow books through Guan Miao, aiming to broaden his martial arts thinking, thus providing direction for optimizing the Book of Knowledge, while also diligently inquiring about the situation in Ningzhou.

To his disappointment, however, not much information was available.

He specifically sought out Xiao Changming to ask about the situation, but the latter remained tight-lipped. It was evident that all information was being suppressed. All he knew was that during this time, all the tall buildings in the Safe Zone were installing anti-aircraft guns.

...

"Bang, bang, bang..."

Chen Xingyue wielded a thick iron rod, aimlessly battering Chen Shouyi.

His bare upper body, with each blow, his muscles instinctively vibrated rapidly, dispersing the force across his body, so much so that by the time it penetrated the muscle layer, most of the power had dissipated. Chen Shouyi realized that with Chen Xingyue's strength, it no longer had much effect on him.

Even when struck on the bone, it just hurt without inflicting any real damage.

The Horizontal Training in thirty-six forms not only increased muscle resilience but also enhanced the strength of internal organs and bones.

With a "crack," the iron rod struck Chen Shouyi's forehead, instantly bouncing back forcefully, numbing Chen Xingyue's grip and looking at Chen Shouyi, whose face showed no change.

She suddenly felt a bit disheartened; this guy was simply becoming more formidable.

After just a few minutes of hitting, she threw down the iron rod in frustration and said angrily, "I'm done hitting; I won't do this anymore, you pervert! Don't think you can make me do this again!"

"Three hundred!" Chen Shouyi, looking unmoved at his sister's hysterics, extended three fingers, "Three hundred an hour."

"You said it!" Hearing the number three hundred, Chen Xingyue's eyes widened as she quickly responded.

Three hundred per hour, with some effort, a three-hour session earns nearly a thousand, and a full month's work would bring in close to thirty thousand, instantly multiplying her small savings several times over.

Chen Shouyi suddenly realized that dealing with his sister was precisely the same as dealing with the Shell Lady.

Seeing his sister grab the iron rod, preparing to strike down again.

Chen Shouyi had a sudden thought and quickly said, "Wait!"

"What, having second thoughts?"

Me, worrying about such a small amount?

"Don't hit; use the iron rod to thrust!" Chen Shouyi said.

The same force, applied over a different contact area, naturally results in different levels of damage.

"Have you lost your mind? That's absolutely out of the question!" Chen Xingyue exclaimed hastily.

In Martial Arts, a thrust is the most powerful of all Sword Forms. Back when Chen Shouyi hadn't even reached the Martial Arts Apprentice stage, he could pierce through walls with just a chopstick, showing its immense power.

"I didn't ask you to immediately use a lunging thrust; just an ordinary thrust, slowly, step by step."

Chapter 245 - Achieving Divinity

Night.

Inside the space of the Book of Knowledge.

At this moment, his mind dwells in the world of wind.

In this seemingly boundless, empty space,

gentle breezes, soft winds, chaotic gusts, violent gales, hurricanes, various forms of wind continue to blow harshly.

This is the product after the virtual World Tree absorbed the divinity of the Divine Tree, extracting its essence, following the last time he killed the Tree God.

Initially, Chen Shouyi often immersed his mind in it to experience and understand.

However, once he discovered that these insights at most only allowed his wind-controlling talent to become more adept, without significantly enhancing his combat power, he seldom entered it, doing so only occasionally when he remembered.

But today, Chen Shouyi found something seemed different.

Like before, he couldn't stay here for long. As soon as he entered for half a minute, he would feel dizzy and overwhelmed with indescribable information, forcing him to exit this world.

But today, he remained in this world of wind for over three minutes, yet his mind felt no sluggishness. Instead, he felt increasingly clear-headed, and even the raging winds seemed to give him a kind of...

Chen Shouyi didn't know how to describe it; it felt like a sense of familiarity, a connection as if it were part of his body.

A multitude of insights flowed through his heart like water, and he gradually immersed himself in it. In a trance, he felt himself become a wisp of gentle wind, wandering everywhere, occasionally merging with other wisps of wind, quickly growing stronger.

From a wisp of wind, he transformed into a gentle breeze, soon becoming a mighty current.

Curled up, he turned into an enormous, furious tornado connecting heaven and earth; his body expanded, covering the entire world, omnipresent.

At this moment, he was fully absorbed in this mysterious insight, completely unaware that the wind in this world of wind seemed to be weakening gradually.

As time passed, the entire space began to collapse.

...

Chen Shouyi suddenly felt a sense of loss.

When he regained his senses, he found himself unknowingly already out of the "world of wind."

"Huh! How did the World Tree become like this?"

He looked at the World Tree with surprise; he found the entire World Tree was emitting a faint and clear radiance, while countless tiny whirlwinds spun on its leaves, just like the Divine Tree he had once seen.

As for the golden fruit transformed by absorbing the Tree God's divinity, after searching for a long time, Chen Shouyi couldn't find it among the leaves.

At that moment, a stream of information entered his mind.

As he digested the information, Chen Shouyi's expression was stunned, and he hurriedly opened the attribute panel.

Strength: 15.0

Agility: 14.9

Constitution: 16.0

Intelligence: 14.5

Perception: 12.9

Will: 13.7

Knowledge: Chinese Language (Mastery 6); Physics (Proficient 12); Biology (Proficient 10); Chemistry (Proficient 11); Mathematics (Proficient 9); English (Proficient 6); Computing (Beginner 6); Culinary Arts (Beginner 5); Horizontal Training Thirty-Six Poses (Mastery 1); Meditation and Self-cultivation (Mastery 5); Swordsmanship (Mastery 12); Archery (Mastery 2); Unarmed Combat (Proficient 15)

Innate Abilities: Natural Healing, Atmospheric Control (Intermediate)

Level: Divine Creatures

Energy Accumulation: 7.98

Chen Shouyi glanced up and down and immediately noticed a new line on the attribute panel.

"Level: Divine Creatures"

Chen Shouyi stood frozen in place, unable to come to his senses for a long time.

"Divine Creatures? Could it be that I am already a Divine Creature!"

There has always been debate about whether martial arts can extend lifespan; on one hand, human modern martial arts development has not surpassed twenty years, in such a short time, even the oldest martial artists are not yet over sixty, far from reaching the average lifespan of the Great Xia Country, making it difficult to see if longevity can be extended, in fact, quite a few have died early.

On the other hand, there is no biological evidence supporting that the lifespan of martial artist groups is longer than ordinary people; perhaps more powerful Martial Artists can maintain peak physical condition longer, extending lifespan to some extent, but it's still within the human range, unable to exceed the theoretical lifespan of humans, about 150 years at most.

However, it seems that Divine Creatures from other worlds have probably already broken this biological lifespan constraint.

Chen Shouyi had read numerous books researching other worlds; the common viewpoint is that Divine Creatures possess long lifespans, with one foot already stepping into immortality, almost never dying unless faced with an accident.

At least humans have never discovered decrepit, aging Divine Creatures.

"Am I already an Immortal?" Chen Shouyi stared intently at the words Divine Creatures on the attribute panel, dumbfoundedly thinking this, feeling a surreal, dreamlike sensation in his heart.

Death is the ultimate fear for humanity; living in the world, who doesn't hope for a longer lifespan to witness the vast changes of history?

He was thrilled for a moment, then gradually calmed down: "These claims are ultimately human speculations, without definite evidence, whether one can attain immortality, remains highly questionable."

"Moreover, to become a Divine Creature, the prerequisite is a long lifespan, just like that Tree God he had killed, which gained spirituality and condensed divinity only after eons of belief and worship by generation after generation of Barbarians, excluding all short-lived species from the outset."

After thinking for a while, Chen Shouyi stopped dwelling on this issue.

He was still young, only eighteen, just an adult, far from needing to consider lifespan issues.

Chapter 246 - Achieving Divinity

He turned to examine the massive changes brought about by transforming into a divine creature this time.

First, his physique increased by 0.8 points, reaching a staggering sixteen points, becoming the first attribute to break through to sixteen points. In terms of specific data, it's equivalent to an increase of forty percent from the original foundation.

Secondly, his wisdom increased by 0.2 points, reaching 14.5.

Lastly, the change in his innate abilities, control of the atmosphere shifted from elementary to intermediate, this aspect is estimated to be the greatest change.

"However, only the soul enters here, so there's little tangible feeling of the body's changes. Unfortunately, agility and strength, which directly relate to combat power, didn't enhance." Chen Shouyi thought to himself.

Although physique can also enhance combat power to some extent, such as sharper five senses, a stronger physique, and greater endurance but in the end, they only indirectly affect, without immediate effects.

Chen Shouyi didn't linger in the Gray Mist Space for long, he quickly exited.

As soon as he opened his eyes, the surrounding air became chaotic in an instant, countless tiny air currents and whirlwinds spontaneously circulated within the bedroom.

At the same time, endless information surged into his mind.

Chen Shouyi could hear the sound of his sister's labored training breath next door, the rustling of leaves blown by the breeze in the distance, and the rhythmic sound of the steam truck linkage several kilometers away.

He could see tiny dust particles fiercely dancing in the wind and the coarse pits on the wall.

The skin all over his body became incredibly sensitive, feeling every ridge in the T-shirt against his body, and every tiny cotton fluff.

He could distinguish hundreds of faint yet rich scents in the bedroom.

Most surprisingly, he could now directly perceive the ubiquitous mysterious power surrounding him. This mysterious power permeated the entire space, omnipresent like gravity; yet compared to gravity, this mysterious power could be more easily disturbed by his thoughts.

Before, all of this could only be sensed when practicing the Horizontal Training Thirty-Six Forms.

Chen Shouyi was somewhat indulged in this sensation — it was a transcendent feeling of complete mastery of information, everything seemed to be within his control.

Shell Lady, who was alone playing with a crystal ball by the bedside, felt her hair being tousled by the wind, frowned, and glanced at the Giant:

"What are you up to again, troublesome silly Giant, can't even sleep properly?" she muttered softly.

At this moment, she suddenly felt that the Giant seemed somewhat different, subtly carrying a trace of majesty.

She looked doubtfully for a few moments and then stopped paying attention, continuing to count her gems.

...

Only after a long while did Chen Shouyi wake up.

With a flicker of thought, the chaotic air around him instantly calmed.

A trace of surprise flitted across his face — controlling the air had become as easy as moving a limb, as simple and effortless as eating and drinking.

Looking at the small Shell Lady, a mischievous smile appeared on his face — he had heard all the bad things she had muttered.

Calling him a good Giant to his face, but a silly Giant behind his back — she truly deserved a smack!

In the next moment, a stream of air wrapped around her body, causing her skirt to begin fluttering, and her hair to fly wildly.

Shell Lady reached out to press down her skirt, rolled her eyes at Chen Shouyi irritably: "Good Giant, you can't blow me away!"

She was naturally familiar with Chen Shouyi's wind control ability, but here it was of no use.

Chen Shouyi's heart felt stifled — looked down upon by her, really? He couldn't believe that intermediate wind control ability couldn't blow away this little one.

A flick of thought, and the wind rapidly increased.

A half-meter-high whirlwind began to take shape, with more and more air currents joining the rotation from all sides, the speed of the whirlwind becoming faster and faster.

Like spinning a top, continually adding force in the same direction, the speed accelerated.

Seconds later, Shell Lady widened her eyes in surprise as her body was slowly lifted by the whirlwind.

She didn't struggle at all, excitedly shouting and cheering, her body spinning higher and higher until it nearly touched the ceiling, then stopped, and continued for a few seconds more until the small whirlwind slowly descended, only disappearing abruptly when Shell Lady landed on the bed, everything becoming calm.

Shell Lady's spinning body staggered and dizzy for a long time before regaining her senses, her small face amazed: "Good Giant, you're amazing!"

Chen Shouyi smiled confidently — at last, he could blow away Shell Lady. In the other world, he had long achieved this, but this was Earth, where the innate ability was almost weakened a thousandfold.

He estimated that the conventional wind power he could now control was around level five wind speed, roughly able to shake small twigs.

Of course, to blow away Shell Lady required a certain technique.

Don't be fooled by Shell Lady's small size, her body wasn't light — a height of fifteen or sixteen centimeters, her weight was almost two ounces.

"Want to play more?" Chen Shouyi asked.

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" Shell Lady quickly exclaimed loudly.

"Give me a kiss!"

Without hesitation, Shell Lady swiftly climbed onto Chen Shouyi's shoulder, giving him three quick kisses on the cheek:

"Mwah mwah mwah!"

...

The next morning, Chen Shouyi woke up feeling wonderfully refreshed.

He stretched lazily, his whole body's bones crackling, enjoying the comfort almost to the point of moaning.

At this moment, Chen Shouyi frowned slightly, remembering a strange and bizarre dream he had last night.

A Barbarian was kneeling on the ground, devoutly praying to him — in the dream, he was called the "God of Calamity", and was asked to bless a safe day and a successful hunt to gather enough food.

This dream was just too weird, puzzling him.

"Was it a real scene, or merely a reflection of day thoughts in dreams?"

Chen Shouyi sat on the bed, muttering softly to himself:

A divine creature can already absorb faith and hear the voices of believers, but where could he have gained such devout believers?

What's more, it's another world's Barbarian.

The Barbarians he had indeed killed plenty, the idea of believers was truly a fantasy...

He pondered over the words "God of Calamity", "calamity" was clearly not a favorable term, often symbolizing disaster and death.

Just then, his expression froze!

"Could it be that a Barbarian developed faith out of fear towards me?" His heart was stirred with thoughtful speculation.

He recalled his past killings on the Barbarian Island within the Dongning Spatial Passage. If any Barbarian felt fear towards him, it would surely be from that place. That time, not only did he absorb the Tree God's divinity, he also slaughtered a significant number of young Barbarian warriors, eventually frightening the entire tribe to scatter and flee.

The more he thought, the more plausible it seemed.

"Who would have thought, I have believers too now." Chen Shouyi chuckled in surprise.

Quickly, his chuckle faded and his expression turned serious.

He suddenly realized after obtaining divinity, he was wholly different now — divine creatures transcend ordinary beings, stepping into the realm of deities, possessing part of a god's capabilities, beginning to develop followers and accumulate faith.

In a sense, the path to godhood had already extended beneath his feet.

Thinking of this, he couldn't help but feel slightly bewildered — had he already reached such a pivotal point?

He simply hadn't prepared psychologically.

Should he truly start developing believers?

For the first time, Chen Shouyi seriously considered this issue.

Firstly, to develop believers, Earth was out of the question. Given the government's strict crackdown on cults, it was fundamentally impossible to secretly develop followers.

Unless supported by the government, but this was highly unlikely.

The upper echelons would never create an existence that transcends all lives and isn't controllable, lingering above the nation's head — at least not until facing utter despair against the forces of the other world, fundamentally impossible to make such a decision.

Otherwise, attempts in this regard would have been made long ago.

The only choice to develop believers was to go to the other world.

However, Chen Shouyi quickly abandoned the thought — not to mention racial hatred, nor the sparse distribution of Barbarians in the other world making them hard to find; even if finding a Barbarian Tribe unaffected by divine influence, after expending immense energy and time, how many believers could be developed?

How long would it take to become a god?

Decades, centuries?

Chen Shouyi took a long breath, vigorously rubbed his face, the original struggling expression clearing up, no longer entranced by the lure of godhood,

If he lacked other powerful means, he might have unhesitatingly chosen this arduous path.

But possessing the Book of Knowledge, why pursue distant goals?

From an ordinary person to a Martial Artist, it took less than a year — as long as he continued to optimize and strengthen, he wouldn't believe he couldn't defeat these gods.

Moreover, relying on faith to become a god, he vaguely felt there must be some shortcomings.

Chapter 247 - Mandatory Mission

At lunchtime the next day.

Chen Shouyi was eating, and then suddenly stopped, his expression dazed.

The bowl he was eating from was different from that of ordinary people. It was a large soup bowl, enough for the portion of three adult men in one meal. In the past, he would at least eat two bowls; and if he had done intense exercise, three bowls wouldn't be unexpected. But today, after eating only half a bowl, his body conveyed a sense of fullness.

"Why aren't you eating? Is today's dish not to your liking?" Mrs. Chen looked at her son with a somewhat unusual expression and asked immediately.

Chen Shouyi snapped out of it: "Oh, no, I just remembered something."

He shoveled the remaining food into his mouth, stood up, and went to get more.

Although he felt full, another bowl could still be easily eaten without any feeling of being stuffed. To experiment, he went ahead and ate another bowl before stopping.

The same feeling of fullness was experienced—eating one bowl felt just like eating three bowls; it seemed as though he hadn't had the other two bowls at all.

...

Chen Shouyi finished his meal and quickly returned to the bedroom.

He sat on the bed and gently touched his slightly swollen belly, feeling as if his stomach was like a furnace, rapidly digesting the food. Just shortly after falling into the stomach, he felt it had almost been fully digested.

Since acquiring Divinity, his body seemed to have undergone some unknown transformation.

The May sunlight streamed in through the window, emitting dazzling rays. Countless tiny particles of dust in the room were performing erratic Brownian motion in the air.

Since the mutation, with extensive use of steam engines, the consumption of coal increased greatly, especially since most factories discharged waste gases into the air without treatment, causing air quality to worsen, and the sky was shrouded in thick smog.

Just by opening the window, without sweeping for a day, a thin layer of coal ash would cover the floor.

At this moment, Chen Shouyi's face showed slight surprise.

He discovered a strange phenomenon: the dust couldn't settle on him.

The floating dust, once within inches of his body, seemed disturbed by an invisible force, altering their flight paths to avoid his body.

Initially, he thought it was coincidental, or perhaps caused by subtle changes in air currents due to breathing or slight body movement.

But after observing for several minutes, he realized it was not coincidental; indeed, no dust could land on him.

His body seemed to emit a kind of invisible yet weak force field, repelling the approach of dust particles.

Chen Shouyi was greatly amazed by this mystical phenomenon; it was the first time he discovered such a magical force field on himself.

"Could it be because I became a Divine Creature?" he pondered silently.

Apart from this, there seemed to be no other explanation.

The force field was quite weak, calculated by its ability to disturb dust, equating only to a few micrograms or tens of micrograms of force (one microgram equals one-millionth of a gram).

Suddenly, he remembered that the Shell Lady seemed to exhibit similar phenomena. Every time they went out together, he would accumulate more dust on him than she did.

He considered verifying this but realized the Shell Lady was still sleeping, so he opted to abandon the idea.

...

In the following days, Chen Shouyi found more and more benefits of becoming a Divine Creature.

For instance, while practicing the Thirty-Six Styles of Horizontal Training, he could absorb more Mysterious Power.

If the previous version of the thirty-six poses without integrating the Thirteen Guardians of Horizontal Training was considered a score of one.

The integrated version would score 1.3.

And now, it would at least be two.

A great deal of Mysterious Power made his body feel scorching hot with redness after practicing the Thirty-Six Styles of Horizontal Training each time, as if it was on fire.

In merely three days, his agility and strength increased by 0.1 each.

His strength reached 15.1 points, while his agility reached 15 points.

However, Chen Shouyi speculated that the rapid growth of attributes was not solely due to the increased absorption of Mysterious Power, but more so as a result of his constitution, which was far beyond strength and agility at 16 points.

If the body was compared to an engine, then the constitution was like the materials used to build it. As long as the material was robust enough, enhancing the engine's output was naturally easier.

Additionally, he's become more handsome.

Over the last few days, his appearance went through continuous minor adjustments, becoming more heroic and handsome, especially his eyes, bright and piercing, looking deeply into someone's soul.

Of course, regarding this, Chen Shouyi didn't care at all.

...

Dawn was breaking.

Chen Shouyi was returning from training on the mountain.

On the highway, a series of steam trucks covered with tarpaulins drove past one after another like a dragon. At this moment, a sudden gust of wind blew, uncovering a corner of the tarpaulin and revealing a rocket launcher truck.

Chen Shouyi glanced at it, retracted his gaze, and felt heavy-hearted.

These last few days, every day, this road saw trucks loaded with military supplies passing by. Clearly, the situation in Ningzhou had made both Hedong and the entire Jiangnan Province feel as if they were faced with imminent danger.

"Ningzhou is only about one hundred and fifty or sixty kilometers in a straight line from Hedong, such a distance is hardly a geographical barrier. The Barbarian God can descend upon Hedong whenever he decides."

He clenched his fist and then helplessly relaxed it.

Looking up at the increasing number of airships, he quickened his pace and rushed toward the Safe Zone.

...

Chen Shouyi walked home and was about to leap up to his bedroom on the second floor when he saw a figure standing at the gate, causing his steps to halt.

"Liaison Bai, when did you arrive?"

"I just got here not long ago." Bai Xiaoling turned around, revealing a tired face.

Chen Shouyi looked at the newly bought watch. It was still not yet five in the morning. Arriving this early clearly meant she was worried he wouldn't be found.

Seems there is another mission.

Chen Shouyi thought inwardly, opened the door and turned to Bai Xiaoling, who followed him in, and said, "You can sit in the tea room for a while, I'll change my clothes."

He walked into the bedroom, softly placing the already sleeping Shell Lady into his briefcase.

After showering and changing his clothes, he then went downstairs.

...

In the tea room.

"There is a piece of information you may not know: the area around Dongning in Ningzhou has already fallen..." Bai Xiaoling said solemnly, briefly explaining the situation over there.

Chen Shouyi nodded, not speaking. As someone who experienced it personally, he knew more than Bai Xiaoling.

"... In this war, two of the three strategic nuclear-powered airships have crashed, with many undeployed nuclear bombs inside, including two hydrogen bombs of ten megatons each, posing a huge threat to Jiangnan Province and the entire Great Xia Country.

This mission is to locate and safely transport these nuclear bombs back to Hedong, of course, the main part of the job will be undertaken by soldiers from Central Strategic Forces, while you are tasked with ensuring their safety.

According to reliable intelligence coming in, the Barbarian God has returned to the Otherworld. This type of creature incurs great costs every time it enters Earth, and won't appear easily unless necessary."

Chen Shouyi furrowed his brow, remained silent for a long time, and then asked, "How many will be going?"

"The team mainly comes from the Capital City; our Jiangnan Province is just assisting. Apart from you, Colonel Xiao and Minister Lei are involved, and this mission is mandatory!" Bai Xiaoling said. As she looked at Chen Shouyi's increasingly charming face after a period of absence, she sighed slightly.

Sometimes she wished Chen Shouyi were an ordinary person, so he wouldn't be involved in such dangerous tasks.

Such a handsome man should be kept hidden at home.

Chapter 248 - Sending Away

Chen Shouyi wasn't surprised. As a strategic force, nuclear weapons are of great importance, something that can't be meddled with by the provinces; they even have to avoid suspicion proactively.

"When are we leaving?" he looked at Bai Xiaoling and asked gravely.

"Tomorrow at nine in the morning! Gather at City Hall Square." Bai Xiaoling avoided his gaze, her long legs in black stockings tightly together.

"Got it." Chen Shouyi nodded.

"I won't disturb your rest any longer; I'll go now." Bai Xiaoling stood up, unable to resist saying, "Stay safe, be careful!"

Chen Shouyi watched Bai Xiaoling walk out the door, slowly walked to the bedroom, and sat on the bed with a solemn expression.

"I didn't expect to have to go back to Ningzhou again after all this!"

This time isn't like the little skirmishes before.

A destructive weapon like a nuclear bomb, once seen, the God of Hunting would undoubtedly take it very seriously. Even if it fears its awful power and dares not touch it, bringing it back to the other world would still make the Church guard it heavily.

He gently stroked the hilt of the sword in his hand, and sighed lightly.

...

Nine o'clock in the evening.

Hedong Railway Station, ablaze with lights!

With a long, shrill whistle, a train spewed white smoke as it slowly pulled into the station.

The iron doors of the train cars opened one after another, and a large crowd of people poured out. After most of them disembarked, a group of soldiers emerged from one of the cars.

At the end of the line were five people dressed in plain clothes, four men and one woman.

Among these five, three looked older, around thirty or forty years old, and the remaining one man and one woman were young.

The four of them followed a blue-haired young man quietly at the back of the line, their steps light and silent.

The group quickly exited the station.

"We've finally arrived. So this is Hedong? It's my first time here, it looks much more rundown!" The blue-haired young man shook his head slightly, sighed, and said, his hair gently fluttering, his face handsome like a marble sculpture, exuding a mysterious aura.

His hair wasn't dyed, nor did he look as young as he appeared. He was a Talent Ability User, one of the first people to experiment with Divine Blood when the Barbarian God invaded twenty years ago.

After consuming the Divine Blood, his body was stimulated to possess lightning abilities, and his hair turned blue.

"I heard there was a war here, a Barbarian God invasion, but it was resolved," an older-looking middle-aged man explained cooperatively.

"It must have been a weak Barbarian God, maybe just a Demigod." The woman in the group with a cool voice said, her hair short and neat, her features delicate but her aura sharp, her eyes as piercing as swords.

"A Demigod is still a Demigod, not so easy to deal with!" The blue-haired young man said in a deep voice: "Let's go, it seems someone is here to pick us up!"

A steam truck was parked at the station entrance, and a few government workers enthusiastically welcomed the group as they approached.

.....

In the bedroom.

Chen Shouyi practiced the thirty-six poses of Horizontal Training repeatedly.

His muscles contracted and expanded throughout his body, wriggling like mice, with numerous veins protruding. After a dozen minutes, he exhaled a hot stream of air and finally stopped.

He went to the bathroom to take a shower, towel in hand to dry his head while looking at his own pale and delicate skin in the mirror.

Only he knew how tough this layer of skin was.

In these few days, his defensive capabilities have rapidly increased. Chen Xingyue used an iron rod to stab him; initially, three parts of force almost made him spit blood, but now even with five parts of force, he barely feels anything.

"If my body had such powerful defense during the last time in Dongning, it wouldn't have been so embarrassing, even though the sword strike that injured me was unavoidable, it wouldn't have been so severe. At most, it would have been a small wound that my Natural Healing abilities could easily heal."

"Of course, with my current strength, even if those two powerful Barbarians attacked, I probably wouldn't get injured." He walked out of the bathroom, opened the wardrobe, and chose a set of pajamas to wear, slowly buttoning it up.

"Although during this period, the power and agility directly reflecting combat effectiveness have only increased by 0.1 each, roughly a five percent increase, but in battles between masters, small differences mean life and death.

Plus, the constitution increased by 0.8, perception increased by 0.1, these attributes, seemingly unrelated to combat effectiveness, are actually complementary, manifesting in every little detail. In terms of combat effectiveness, in these past ten days, it should have increased by about twenty percent."

Next, he packed the bow components and a few sets of clothes into his backpack, zipped it up, readying for the trip to Ningzhou the next morning.

But there was no arrangement for Shell Lady!

This mission is quite dangerous, clearly making it impossible to bring her along, and it's uncertain how many days it will take. After much thought, Chen Shouyi decided to entrust Shell Lady to his sister's care.

He glanced at the Shell Lady bouncing around, trying hard to practice flying, hesitated for a long time, and finally spoke: "Little one, you know I have a sister, right?"

Shell Lady glided down from mid-air, her face full of innocence, "Oh, I know, you've mentioned it."

Then she added: "She's a bad giant!"

Chen Shouyi's face immediately stiffened.

Ah, the after-effects of previous safety education!

"My sister isn't a bad giant, though she's certainly a bit worse than me." Chen Shouyi explained awkwardly, feeling quite contradictory.

"Will she eat me?" Shell Lady stopped, curiously asking.

"She wouldn't dare, because I would beat her." Chen Shouyi said.

"Will you make her cry?" Shell Lady raised her head, seriously asking.

"If she's not good, of course, I'll make her cry!" Chen Shouyi promised.

"Oh!" Shell Lady nodded, reassured, thought for a moment, and continued: "I've always been very good."

Looking at such a well-behaved and adorable Shell Lady, Chen Shouyi suddenly hesitated.

Is it really okay to leave her with his sister?

What if when he returns, she's been coaxed away and doesn't want to live with him anymore, what then?

But after contemplating, he really had no other solution, he couldn't possibly leave her alone in the bedroom?

Now he could only hope that Shell Lady would hold her own, stand firm, and face sweet temptations — savor the sweetness and send the rest back.

Chen Shouyi gritted his teeth, choosing his words carefully: "I need to go out for a few days, so I want to send you to my sister for care!"

Just as he said this, Shell Lady suddenly stiffened, like struck by lightning, and the next moment, she burst into tears:

"Boohoo... I don't want to, I don't want to, I want to go with you."

Tears streamed down her face, soaking the sheets, she pleaded pitifully:

"I... I'll be good, I'll... dance, I'll sing... I'll even tuck you in..."

"Boohoo, good giant, don't... don't send me to the bad giant!"

"I... I don't want gems anymore, nor pretty clothes..."

Hearing this, Chen Shouyi's heart nearly melted, and he immediately changed his mind: "I won't send you, I won't send you."

Damn it, who says I can't take Shell Lady with me?

With his current position, is it possible they could arrest him or force him to hand over a harmless interdimensional being, and if so, they'd have to answer to his sword.

"Good giant, you... you really won't send me to the bad giant?" Shell Lady wiped her tears, sniffing and confirming.

"I won't send you, you're so good, how could I send you to someone else."

Shell Lady finally felt relieved, then remembered what she said earlier, pouting, and cautiously asked:

"Then... can I have my gems and pretty clothes back..."

"They're still yours." Chen Shouyi replied, half-smiling, half-chuckling.

Chapter 249 - Intelligence

In the living room

"Dad, Mom, it's getting late, I'm leaving!" Chen Shouyi glanced at the time and said, then picked up the backpack from the sofa and slung it over his shoulder.

Mrs. Chen quickly stood up and said, "Come back early after completing the mission!"

"Don't be careless, be careful when you're out." Father Chen said.

"Brother, don't forget the gift!"

Upon hearing his sister's words, Chen Shouyi couldn't help but feel speechless.

Gift?

Still want a gift?

How about a nuclear bomb?

To avoid worrying his family, the mission this time naturally became a regular security escort task in his words, and at most, the time away would be a bit longer, as if it could be done with a wave of the hand.

"Got it, Dad and Mom, no need to see me off."

Chen Shouyi said while turning to walk out the door, quickly striding into the distance.

At this moment, his chest experienced a slight squirming, and a small head secretly popped out from the collar of his outerwear, cautiously sticking its head out and quickly glancing around. Finding pedestrians everywhere on the road, it was immediately frightened and swiftly shrank back.

Chen Shouyi looked down at his chest, couldn't help but chuckle, and his suppressed mood was instantly relieved quite a bit.

He briskly walked all the way, and after about ten minutes, reached City Hall Square.

Eight steam trucks lined up in the square.

Among them, four had been modified, with the truck bed welded with thick, sealed steel plates, presumably used for loading nuclear bombs.

The other four, although not heavily modified, had a cannon welded on the front.

At this moment, about a company's worth of soldiers stood beside the trucks, their atmosphere solemn and respectful. Unlike regular soldiers, Chen Shouyi noticed that their arm patches bore a nuclear symbol and a shield, clearly indicating that these soldiers were from the central strategic forces.

"Chen Shouyi, you're here." Xiao Changming waved.

Chen Shouyi walked over quickly: "Is it just you? Seems we arrived a bit early?"

"People from the Capital City should still be in the guesthouse!" Xiao Changming looked at the time: "But they should be here soon, less than ten minutes until nine o'clock."

"Have you seen them?" Chen Shouyi asked.

Xiao Changming nodded: "There was a reception last night that I attended with the commander."

"How's their strength?" Chen Shouyi asked. As a martial artist, this was naturally his main concern and couldn't help but inquire.

Xiao Changming took out a pack of cigarettes, gestured, saw Chen Shouyi refuse, lit one, took a puff, and said casually: "Five people came, all should be senior martial artists! I tested one during a handshake and found I couldn't squeeze him at all; I suspect he wasn't exerting any effort."

Chen Shouyi nodded, all martial masters, nothing unusual about that. This mission is of great importance, posing a serious security threat to Great Xia Country. If a senior martial artist were sent, it would seem abnormal.

However, Chen Shouyi hadn't expected there would be as many as five, confirming that the Capital City indeed harbors hidden talents.

As the political and military center of the country, various resources are undoubtedly prioritized there, and as the only martial artist examination center nationwide, its attraction to martial artists from all over is unmatched by other provinces and cities.

...

Not long after, Lei Ruiyang also arrived.

Lei Ruiyang had a blank expression, seemingly completely ignoring Chen Shouyi, greeted Xiao Changming, and stood to the side.

Chen Shouyi's face cooled; he hadn't forgotten the small stunt the other pulled last time. If the occasion weren't inappropriate, he would've wanted to punch him.

"No one has any unresolved conflicts, this mission is extremely dangerous, and cooperation will definitely be needed at that time, how about letting bygones be bygones with a smile?" Xiao Changming tried to mediate.

But neither of them responded. They were both proud people, incompatible in personality, and didn't see eye to eye, certainly not something that could be mediated with a few words.

Xiao Changming's warm demeanor met cold indifference, he said something but didn't press further.

As time ticked by, five minutes before nine, a group of five finally walked quickly towards them, their steps fluid and graceful, each step measured meticulously.

"Hello everyone, sorry for being late." A handsome young man with blue hair and a lazy smile said, "My name is Ye Zong, let me introduce everyone, this is Lu Shouhu, this is Luo Jingwen, this is Zhang Wenlong, and of course, our ice-cold beauty Sun Mengyuan!"

Chen Shouyi glanced at him, this non-mainstream youth named Ye Zong, with dyed blue hair, gave him a sense of danger, clearly the strongest among them.

Those mentioned by Ye Zong nodded in turn to greet.

"We've already met Xiao Changming yesterday, the other two please introduce yourselves!" Ye Zong looked at Chen Shouyi and Lei Ruiyang, smiling.

"My name is Lei Ruiyang, hello everyone." Lei Ruiyang forced out a stiff smile and said.

"Chen Shouyi!" Chen Shouyi said. Although it's not apparent on the surface, he could tell that these people had a dismissive attitude towards them.

Seeing the group arrive, the company commander from the strategic forces, who hadn't come over earlier, quickly ran over, face full of respect, and said, "Director Ye, can we set off now?"

"Since it's time, let's set off."

The group didn't waste time and quickly boarded one of the trucks.

The trucks were already loaded with various supplies.

There were ten boxes of various arrows alone, eight boxes of machine gun shells, and a large amount of water and food supplies.

Ye Zong looked around, opened a wooden box labeled with armor-piercing arrows, took out an armor-piercing arrow, gently weighed it in his hand, and said to everyone: "It's a bit light; I should have brought some arrows from the Capital City."

"This one is specified to weigh a pound, meant for Martial Artists," Luo Jingwen beside him also took one out and shook his head: "We're using the one kilogram type. Should we ask Hedong City to replace these?"

"No need, they probably don't have stock. If they did, they would have brought it already," Ye Zong shook his head and said, "Forget it, it's usable, just less powerful. Hopefully, we won't encounter any strong enemies this time."

Chen Shouyi and Xiao Changming, among others, remained silent.

Hedong City didn't have Martial Masters before, so naturally, they didn't produce special arrows for them. Not to mention arrows, even bows for Chen Shouyi and the others were still Martial Artist Level.

Chen Shouyi was still unable to use them, as his strength hadn't reached the Martial Master Level.

Xiao Changming and Lei Ruiyang couldn't even buy them.

The manufacturing difficulty for Martial Master Level war bows is extremely high; there were only a handful of companies in the country that could produce them. The client base is also pitifully small, and the cost is quite high. Usually, they only produced upon receiving orders, with no inventory at all.

After the mutation, with power cut off and technological regression, producing these strong bows has become incredibly difficult. Even if one wanted to buy, they couldn't.

As soldiers gradually boarded the remaining six trucks, the convoy started moving.

...

"Wang Shouyi, you seem really young." Lu Shouhu, sitting across from Chen Shouyi, asked curiously.

Young, really young. Director Ye also seemed young, looking about twenty-five or twenty-six, but this one still had a hint of youthfulness on his face.

He had a full beard, each hair standing like steel needles, looking quite rugged.

"My name is Chen, Chen Shouyi." Chen Shouyi said with a slightly darkened expression.

Lu Shouhu slapped his forehead, apologetically said: "Sorry, my memory! I thought the name was strange."

There was a light laugh among the people, clearly catching the joke.

Chen Shouyi was used to people teasing his name since childhood and didn't mind, curiously asked: "Are there many Martial Masters on your side in the Capital City?"

"You'd have to ask Zhang Wenlong about the army; in the private sector, there are about seven," Lu Shouhu said.

"The Capital garrison has eight!" Zhang Wenlong stated concisely.

"You didn't count the newly promoted Martial Masters during this period. With them, there should be ten in the private sector by now," Sun Mengyuan said, glancing at Ye Zong with a hint of admiration on her cool face, "But Brother Ye has probably surpassed the Martial Master Level; if there were a higher level, he would already be recognized as one."

"Yes, Director Ye even personally killed a demigod," Luo Jingwen said with reverence.

Chen Shouyi and Xiao Changming, from Hedong City, were shocked to hear this.

Ye Zong waved his hand with a smile: "Don't praise me, it was just luck. If it hadn't been for It flying slowly in the air, and me ambushing, it wouldn't have been so easy to kill It. If it was in another world, I wouldn't even be enough to be killed by It in a second."

"Still, it's not something a Martial Master could handle! To kill a demigod single-handedly, even if the world doesn't know, in Great Xia Country, Director Ye is definitely the first," Lu Shouhu said.

Chen Shouyi felt shaken inside, a demigod is still a god. He suspected that the God of Courage was probably only at demigod strength. Though he hadn't seen, he wondered how slow the God of Courage flew. Even if he hit, he could only break some skin, as his attack strength was too weak.

...

The vehicle sped along the road unobstructed.

After having lunch on the vehicle, by 2 PM, the vehicle stopped in a park in Luohu City.

Like Dongning, Luohu City is a county-level city under Ningzhou, about twenty kilometers away from Ningzhou. Chen Shouyi followed the group out of the vehicle, noticing the road was desolate and empty as if it were a ghost town. The entire city's population had evidently been relocated.

At this time, soldiers from the strategic unit also got out of their vehicles, with one soldier launching a red flare.

About ten minutes later, a group of soldiers quickly ran over from the distance.

"Hello, Chief!"

"Report the current intelligence!" The strategic unit's major nodded and said, then looked at Chen Shouyi and the others: "Director Ye, please come over and understand the situation as well."

"Yes, Chief," a captain spread a high-resolution military satellite map on the grass, and as Chen Shouyi and the others approached, they promptly reported the situation:

"According to intelligence from our airship reconnaissance, those nuclear bombs have temporarily not been moved and remain at the site of the strategic airship crash; however, the guards are very tight, with about five hundred Barbarian troops stationed around this area and here!"

The captain gestured at the map, which was marked in red ink: "There are also a lot of aerial animal units patrolling day and night. Another bad piece of news is that the Barbarians have captured many people and started researching those nuclear strategic airships."

"Damn it!" The major cursed.

Chen Shouyi remained silent inside, thinking that many of those captured were willingly faithful followers.

Chapter 250 - Buddha Aspect

Chen Shouyi's face was solemn.

Five hundred barbarian soldiers, sixty or seventy battle beast units, and these are just what can be detected on the surface; the actual number is certainly much higher.

This mission is aimed at mobility, and the soldiers only brought a platoon. Except for a few artillery pieces considered heavy weapons, there's nothing with significant power. Can these martial artists along with a group of soldiers really manage?

Not to mention the possibility of the Barbarian God appearing...

"Are you really sure the Barbarian God won't appear?" Chen Shouyi asked aloud.

Everyone's face showed slight astonishment, and the atmosphere immediately became oppressive.

After a long while, Ye Zong finally said in a deep voice, "Unless He is willing to risk the danger of a temporary plummet in divine rank."

Before Chen Shouyi could ask further, he quickly explained, "You should also know Earth's Original Force is weak and doesn't support supernatural beings like the Barbarian God. When He enters this world, a significant portion of Divine Power will automatically dissipate.

But Divine Power is not like stamina that can automatically recover. It is transformed from the Power of Faith. Once dissipated, it's completely gone. You could say every entry weakens Him a bit. If He keeps entering Earth and stays long in a low Divine Power state, there could be a drop in divine rank or even more serious risks.

Of course, this is speculation. Nobody knows for sure, but judging by how gods won't stay long after invading Earth, this hypothesis is likely not far off."

Chen Shouyi nodded, his heart slightly relieved, though still somewhat doubtful.

At least the God of Courage he saw lingered on Earth for quite a long time. Of course, it's likely the God of Courage is just a demigod, so a drop in divine rank doesn't matter much. Perhaps He's just given up on Himself, betting everything.

...

The mission's departure time was set for one in the morning, so there was plenty of time to rest.

But this rest was only for martial artists like Chen Shouyi and the regular soldiers of the strategic unit recovering the nuclear weapon this time.

As time went on, more soldiers saw the signal flares and flocked here. Trucks almost covered the entire highway. Soon, these soldiers arranged defenses along the road and in nearby buildings.

Chen Shouyi noticed that the number of soldiers from Luohu City was quite substantial, probably amounting to a division.

Naturally, even if they successfully recover the nuclear weapon, they won't have smooth sailing and be allowed to leave. The barbarians' pursuit will be utterly frantic. This unit is evidently the support and rear guard for this mission.

...

Chen Shouyi walked slowly along the park path to relax. At that moment, he felt some agitation from his chest. The Shell Lady seemed restless, so he immediately got up and walked to a nearby grove.

He looked around to ensure there was no one in sight, then whispered:

"You can come out now!"

Soon, a small figure emerged, her little face nervously asking in a quiet voice, "Great giant, is it safe now?"

"It's safe!" Chen Shouyi thought with amusement.

The Shell Lady let out a long sigh of relief, "I need to pee. Can you watch out for any bad giants coming over?"

"Sure, go ahead."

She then cautiously glanced around, quickly jumped to the ground, and with small legs moving, ran behind a tree.

Chen Shouyi spotted an oval-shaped rock nearby, walked over, and sat down. He hadn't been sitting long when he heard footsteps approaching.

It was Sun Mengyuan!

She walked briskly, appearing quite urgent.

Seeing Chen Shouyi, she paused slightly, then stopped: "What are you doing here?"

"Just enjoying the scenery and catching my breath!" Chen Shouyi replied.

"Go somewhere else!" Sun Mengyuan said with a cold expression.

"Why?" Chen Shouyi asked, feeling somewhat baffled.

"Why do you need to ask?"

"I say, you're quite strange, aren't you? How am I bothering you here?" Chen Shouyi said, feeling a bit displeased. This woman's behavior was incredibly odd, almost unreasonable. And with the Shell Lady still here, even if she weren't, with such an arrogant attitude, he wouldn't yield.

"You're really not leaving?" Sun Mengyuan's face turned colder. She gently clenched her fist, chuckling lightly, "Young man, let me teach you a lesson. When facing those stronger than you, learn to be humble. You don't actually think that because Hedong City recognizes your martial artist status, you're truly martial artists and equal to us. You're just here to help us out."

"Oh, so what qualifies as a martial artist?" Chen Shouyi asked, feeling both irritated and slightly curious.

"One significant sign of a martial artist is the Buddha phase. Clearly, you all are far from qualified."

"Buddha phase? What's that?" Chen Shouyi asked, puzzled. He knew Buddha, but the Buddha phase was entirely unfamiliar.

"Look at my teeth, see anything?" Sun Mengyuan showed her teeth, sneering.

Chen Shouyi took a close look, noting her lush red lips and her teeth, neatly aligned and glistening white. He ventured, "Very white!"

Then, a thought dawned on him, and he smiled with understanding, "Ah, so that's what you mean, about the new teeth. I have them too, isn't it fascinating?"

Sun Mengyuan, seeing his equally dense teeth, was momentarily stunned, her face turning red with embarrassment and anger.

Ever since his teeth changed, Chen Shouyi had been quite careful in front of others, rarely showing them even when he smiled, causing Sun Mengyuan not to notice this anomaly in his teeth.

She had only wanted to put down this makeshift martial artist from Hedong City, making him aware of the gap and discouraging him. Unexpectedly, she ended up in a challenging position.

Urged on by the growing need to pee, she snorted and turned to leave swiftly.