

New Era 271

Chapter 271 - The War Begins (First Update)

A few days later.

Early morning, in front of the newsstand.

The crowd lined up in long queues.

"War has started, war has started."

"This time the Ningzhou area should be recaptured, right?"

"I doubt it!" The talking voice lowered: "It still depends on the Barbarian God; as long as the Barbarian God isn't dealt with, occupying Ningzhou is useless."

"I heard that even a nuclear bomb didn't kill the Barbarian God last time!"

"Sigh, I hope it won't affect us here!"

Sporadic fighter jets occasionally roared in from the east, and Chen Shouyi looked up to see that the ammunition they carried was completely empty.

The frontline air force supply base was located in Hedong. In the past few days, hundreds of fighter jets have been frequently shuttling between Hedong and Ningzhou daily.

"Give me one."

Chen Shouyi handed over the money and then took the newspaper. When he opened it, the headline was:

"The recovery of the war is going like a hot knife through butter, and the Barbarian Army is retreating step by step!"

"To resist the invaders from another world and reclaim our homeland, all officers and soldiers have bravely fought. Within half a day, the frontline has advanced twenty kilometers, and as of two o'clock yesterday afternoon, has entered Ningzhou City..."

Chen Shouyi quickly skimmed through it, finding his mood calmer than expected. Perhaps he had already adapted to this chaotic world; he could now face it with a usual mindset.

He threw the newspaper into the trash can, turned, and walked home.

...

Five days later.

Chen Shouyi felt the power surging in his body.

"Finally reached a thousand kilograms of strength!"

These days he hadn't gone to the other world.

With the war starting, Hedong was no longer considered safe. If the Barbarian God appeared, it could affect here at any moment.

However, these days he found that the cultivation speed on Earth was much slower than in the other world. It took eight days for both agility and strength to improve by only 0.1 points, which was like heaven and earth compared to before.

He walked to the window, his expression serene.

The frequency of fighter jet sorties hadn't decreased at all these days, and there was even a trend of increase. The reports in the newspapers about the battlefield were becoming increasingly vague.

Obviously, things weren't going well after the army entered the city.

...

At noon, Chen Shouyi went to the family's new restaurant.

Unexpectedly, he found that business was quite good; by noon, it was already full of people.

"What's up?" Mrs. Chen, busy and frazzled, placed a customer's dish on the table and wiped her hands.

"Nothing, just came to have a look," Chen Shouyi said.

"Have you eaten?"

"I've eaten!" Chen Shouyi replied.

"Boss lady, is this your son? So handsome, like a star?" said a middle-aged woman waiting for her dish.

"My son only became good-looking when he grew up; he was ugly as a kid." Mrs. Chen said this, but couldn't hide her wide smile.

"Does he have a girlfriend? My niece works at the hospital and she's quite pretty. Maybe they could meet sometime," the woman offered, eyeing Chen Shouyi like a wolf in sheep's clothing.

"He's still young, no need to rush getting a wife!" Mrs. Chen said hastily.

Hearing this, Chen Shouyi's face turned black immediately. He said quickly, "Mom, I'm leaving now."

"Go ahead, remember to collect the clothes off the line tonight!"

"Got it!"

As Chen Shouyi walked back home, he saw Bai Xiaoling and two soldiers standing at the door.

...

In the tea room.

"Now the war on the Ningzhou side is mired, making no progress. These Barbarians are quite cunning, with human traitors advising them, they never engage the army directly. Plus those deluded followers pose a serious threat to the troops, causing massive casualties.

"Now the battlefield command is preparing an assassination plan and needs someone to execute it." Bai Xiaoling's calm voice sounded in the tea room.

"So you want me to kill their church leaders?" Chen Shouyi drummed his fingers on the glass coffee table, speaking in a deep voice. This mission was even more dangerous than the previous nuclear bomb task.

"No, just locate their leaders. Once found, the frontline fighter jets will immediately deploy for large-scale bombing!" Bai Xiaoling said.

"General Manager Chen, here's your summons." Seeing Chen Shouyi's hesitation, a black-faced officer took a stamped document from his briefcase and placed it on the coffee table.

Chen Shouyi turned his neck, staring coldly at him.

An immense pressure instantly bore down, causing the officer's face to freeze and sweat to bead on his forehead.

"I execute missions out of patriotism, not because of any summons!" Chen Shouyi said flatly.

"I... I'm sorry!" the black-faced officer quickly apologized, breathing heavily.

Is this what a Martial Artist is like? Truly terrifying.

"When do I set out?" Chen Shouyi turned his gaze to Bai Xiaoling and asked.

"Preferably now!" Bai Xiaoling promptly replied.

"Additionally, the advance mission's Colonel Xiao has been missing in Ningzhou for three days, his life and death unknown. If possible, could you help rescue him?" the accompanying officer cautiously phrased.

"Xiao Changming!" Chen Shouyi whispered to himself, nodding solemnly.

...

Swoosh... Swoosh...

On the rooftop of a building.

A helicopter, its rotors swaying, whipped up fierce winds.

Accompanied by an officer, Chen Shouyi ducked into a military helicopter.

Soon the helicopter lifted off and ascended higher.

Chen Shouyi, sitting by the window, toyed with his sword hilt, calmly watching the buildings below grow smaller, quickly leaving the Safe Zone.

This time he only carried his sword; he didn't even bring his War Bow.

After all, this mission was a deep infiltration behind enemy lines, not just slaughter. The key was to find the Barbarian church leaders' position. Carrying a bow would undoubtedly make him too conspicuous, hindering the mission.

As for the Shell Lady, there was no need to worry. Before leaving, he had already brewed a large cup of honey and comforted her with a Crystal Ball; even being gone for five or six days wouldn't leave her starving.

"Damn, I forgot to collect the clothes. Hopefully, my sister will remember when she returns from the Martial Arts Academy."

Chen Shouyi patted his thigh lightly.

"General Manager Chen, is there something you forgot?" the accompanying officer asked nervously.

"Just remembered something trivial, nothing major," Chen Shouyi said.

After about an hour, the helicopter flew over Ningzhou.

In the distance, smoke billowed, explosions sounded like boiling thick porridge, and buildings below were steeped in smoke and devastation, many reduced to rubble. Occasionally, fighter jets roared down from the sky, their aerial cannons like the scythe of Death sweeping below.

Chen Shouyi looked toward the distant sky but didn't see a single fighter jet from the enemy.

Clearly, the army had gained air superiority.

The helicopter circled a few times and finally landed gently in front of a square at the rear of the battlefield.

Soon someone came to greet him:

"I'm Li Weiguo. Welcome, General Manager Chen. The commander has been waiting in the command room for you. Please follow me."

Chen Shouyi nodded expressionlessly, "Lead the way!"

Chapter 272 - Puppet Army (Part 2)

The area was heavily guarded, with machine guns placed in large numbers all around the buildings.

Chen Shouyi withdrew his gaze and, accompanied by the others, entered the building in front.

Inside, soldiers were hurrying about, busy with activities.

Now that communication was cut off, information spread slowly, and all intelligence from the frontline required a vast amount of manpower for transmission and processing.

The two soon arrived at a large conference room on the third floor.

There were no fewer than a dozen people inside.

A middle-aged man with the rank of Vice Admiral, looking haggard, saw Chen Shouyi enter and came forward with others to greet him, "My name is Wang Jianfeng, welcome, welcome!"

The two shook hands.

Chen Shouyi, unwilling to make small talk, asked directly, "General Wang, I need more intelligence."

"Of course!" Wang Jianfeng said, indifferent to Chen Shouyi's attitude, "Let me introduce you, this is Advisor Xing, he will brief you on the frontline situation."

The young officer named Advisor Xing immediately stepped forward, "Hello, General Manager Chen, here's the situation: according to the intelligence we've gathered, the Barbarians' stronghold has basically been locked down in this area."

He pointed with a pointer to a section on the map, "There's a camp of puppet soldiers there, which was fortunately bombed by fighter jets five days ago. Besides that, Barbarians have frequently appeared in this area, and we preliminarily judge it to be their main base in Ningzhou."

Looking at the scale of the map, Chen Shouyi frowned. The area was too large, almost like a Safe Zone. He asked, "Do you have more precise intelligence?"

"We don't, so we need you to locate their stronghold. There are a large number of civilians living here, making large-scale bombing impossible."

...

After a few minutes, Chen Shouyi, accompanied by the officer who had come with him, left the command center and headed to the frontline.

He was playing with a black object in his hand that looked like an old-fashioned flashlight.

This was a specially designed laser device with batteries of up to fifteen hundred volts.

Without such high voltage, it would be impossible to generate electricity in the current environment.

Once the Barbarians' stronghold is discovered, the laser will guide fighter jets at night for bombing.

He examined it for a moment before putting it into his pocket.

A large group of refugees, looking numb, stumbled toward him under the soldiers' maintained order, many of them weeping softly.

"Tens of thousands of refugees are being rescued daily now!" the accompanying officer said. "As for those not yet rescued, the numbers are even larger, which is one of the reasons the front line hasn't advanced."

Chen Shouyi remained silent, knowing that while there were many misguided cultists in the city, even more people were coerced, threatened, and subjugated by the cultists. Their existence made the army hesitant to act recklessly.

If they really went all out, disregarding the casualties among civilians, this war probably wouldn't have been so difficult.

"How about Dongning?" Chen Shouyi asked after a pause.

Ningzhou had only recently fallen, but Dongning was, in a sense, the original stronghold, even the Barbarian God emerged from the spatial passage on the Dongning side.

"The army has already cut off Dongning from Ningzhou, with a blockade in place now!" the officer said.

Perhaps feeling there was nothing to hide from Chen Shouyi, he continued, "All nuclear strategy forces are stationed there, waiting for the Barbarian God's appearance. With the lesson learned last time, if It appears again, we will not let It escape."

Upon hearing this, Chen Shouyi sighed softly, his expression complex.

This time, they would clearly not just use low-yield nuclear bombs, but strike with overwhelming force, and even if dropped in uninhabited areas, Dongning would undoubtedly be affected.

This would be the best-case scenario.

Seeing a large-scale recapture movement in Ningzhou, they've obviously long prepared to protect Ningzhou and abandon Dongning.

After all, Ningzhou is a deputy provincial city with nearly ten million people, whereas Dongning, a county-level city, has only around a million—perhaps less than half that due to the mass exodus, likely down to 300,000, with a significant portion already cultists.

Once the Barbarian God appears, Dongning might become a complete wasteland.

The officer, observing his expression, carefully asked, "Do you have any relatives in Dongning?"

Chen Shouyi shook his head, "I'm just from Dongning!"

The officer was silent for a moment before speaking comfortingly, "There's no helping it; this is war!"

...

"Tatatata..."

Machine gun bullets continuously fired.

A few cultists holding rifles erupted in blood sprays and collapsed onto the ground.

Suddenly, a grenade flew in from the distance, landing in a sandbag-filled trench, causing a violent explosion that blew several soldiers away.

Meanwhile, a Barbarian with a tattoo on his chest shattered a building's glass and leaped down from the third floor. The soldiers at the back quickly turned their guns, but in their haste, couldn't hit the target.

As soon as he landed, he launched himself with a powerful kick, gusts of wind whistling, and sped towards the distant soldiers like a phantom.

Within just half a second, he rushed into the front trench, beginning a bloody massacre.

The Barbarian moved extremely quickly, making it impossible for distant snipers to lock on.

He tore the neck of the last soldier without pausing, swiftly escaping towards a nearby building.

These human warriors were both fragile and dangerous; many tribesmen had entered the Lord's embrace because they didn't heed the warnings of the human priests, becoming overconfident.

However, as he darted into the building, he suddenly felt a coolness on his throat, and the next moment, the surroundings spun rapidly.

Chen Shouyi sheathed his sword, his expression grave.

The frontline was more brutal than he imagined, like a meat grinder devouring lives, with soldiers dying almost every second.

He kicked the Barbarian's head away and quickly headed towards the stairs, reaching the rooftop of this eight-story office building.

Chen Shouyi glanced at the building in front, lightly sprinted forward, kicked hard with his feet, and leaped twenty to thirty meters into the air, breaking through the opposite window.

The dense city buildings were his best cover.

In less than half a minute, Chen Shouyi was already far from the jagged frontline, entering the territory controlled by the Barbarians.

...

Chen Shouyi stood by a window in a tall building, quietly observing the outside.

A squad of puppet soldiers, fully armed, was rushing to the frontline.

The failure of the last war evidently left a large number of arms and ammunition on the battlefield, which the Church had capitalized on.

Some wore soldiers' camouflage uniforms and helmets, while others were simply in short-sleeve T-shirts; some seemed to be fifty or sixty years old, and some were merely fourteen or fifteen-year-old inexperienced youths.

Chen Shouyi noticed that many faces showed fear and tension.

He didn't know how many were true believers and how many were forcibly coerced by other followers, but the moment they held guns against human troops, they became enemies.

Once the group had passed, he lightly leaped, swiftly landing on the opposite building's rooftop.

Chapter 273 - The Old Man (Part 1)

Chen Shouyi sped through the city buildings swiftly.

As he moved further from the frontline, the passing militia heading to the battlefield dwindled, and sparse pedestrians began to appear, causing him to move more gently and cautiously.

Before completing the mission, avoiding trouble was crucial, with everything focused on the mission.

Chen Shouyi noticed that most of the pedestrians were hurried, while the entire city was enveloped in an eerie calm. Even when encountering acquaintances, they merely nodded or whispered softly.

On both sides of the street, a few scattered shops were open with cold business and hardly any customers.

"From various indications, this place is undoubtedly under tight control; keeping this pace will eventually lead to discovery." Chen Shouyi thought to himself.

He pondered for a moment, landing lightly on the rooftop of a residential building in an alley. He tilted his head and listened quietly for a while before silently jumping down from the rooftop. The homeowner seemed to have gone out, with the doors wide open and the courtyard empty.

Chen Shouyi stepped inside.

A strong scent of incense candles greeted him.

On a square redwood table in the main hall, a half-foot tall wood-carved statue of the God of Hunting stood quietly, with three pillars of incense burning in front, smoke rising.

Chen Shouyi glanced at it expressionlessly before shifting his gaze away.

The house was decorated in a classical style, with calligraphy and paintings hanging on the walls.

Upon seeing the calligraphy and paintings, he was prompted to quickly focus on a large silk painting among them. This silk painting was two meters forty-five long and one meter twenty-three wide, enough to hold a Long Sword.

With a light jump, he took the painting down, placing the sword inside, and quickly rolled it up.

Before leaving, the reflection from the glass door showed his face.

He paused, furrowing his brow slightly.

This face was too handsome.

Too eye-catching.

No matter how low-key he tried to be, he would still draw unusual attention.

Especially after becoming a Divine Creature, he often drew strong attention from older women whenever he walked down the street.

Fortunately, for Chen Shouyi, who had long completed the flesh refinement, this minor issue wasn't difficult to solve.

He looked at the glass door.

The muscles on his face quickly changed and adjusted.

Within a dozen seconds, a youthful face with thick eyebrows and a naive look carried a rolled-up silk painting out of the courtyard. An elderly woman passing by glanced at him with slight surprise, staring for several moments before looking away.

"Is there something wrong with me?" Chen Shouyi noted the odd look on her face, thinking silently.

He increased his pace without a fuss.

As pedestrians increased, Chen Shouyi noticed they showed slight astonishment upon seeing him, causing him to feel even more uncomfortable.

If these people all knew each other, noticing a stranger like him would indeed be absurd.

The city is not like the countryside; population density is high, with a single neighborhood holding thousands, sometimes tens of thousands of people, and even frequent gatherings wouldn't mean knowing everyone inside.

"Something definitely went wrong somewhere!"

He discreetly observed the few passers-by!

Wait...

The pedestrians seemed to be mostly elderly or women, with hardly any young or middle-aged men.

His heart chilled slightly, realizing the truth.

All these people were likely forcibly conscripted by the Barbarian God Church as soldiers.

Chen Shouyi quickly moved to a secluded corner, and after emerging, he was hunched, wrinkles filling his face, as he walked slowly.

Sure enough, after changing his appearance, no one paid him any mind.

Passing by a spired church.

The cross atop the church had long been removed, discarded somewhere unknown, replaced by a Divine Emblem of the God of Hunting.

This emblem resembled an abstract bird head.

Searing red eyes looked down at the earth.

Imparting a sense of mystery, terror, and Barbaric Wilderness.

The church doors were open wide, with two bare-chested Barbarians guarding the entrance.

Chen Shouyi could see the dense crowd inside the church kneeling and singing a solemn, ancient hymn.

Passers-by would kneel afar in piety, while some would enter the church awed.

Though disguised, expressing devotion to the Barbarian God was challenging for Chen Shouyi.

He decisively turned to make a detour.

But it was already too late.

One of the guards at the church entrance noticed Chen Shouyi's odd behavior, revealing a malicious grin: "A blasphemer!"

He signaled his companion before striding toward him.

"Trouble!" Chen Shouyi sensed the pursuing Barbarian, slightly furrowing his brow, faking a fearful expression while pretending to flee desperately, his eyes calm like a deep, bottomless abyss.

There were hardly any pedestrians, and other than these two at the church entrance, no other Barbarians were in sight.

"Foolish human, do you think you can escape!" A rough Mandarin exclamation emerged from behind, tinged with mockery, accompanied by a faint sound of air displacement.

A massive hand of a Barbarian reached for Chen Shouyi's back.

Chen Shouyi feigned a stumble, his body staggering into a side alley.

"Courting death!" The Barbarian sneered contemptuously, following closely into the alley, suddenly stunned, as the human elder had vanished.

"Are you looking for me?" A cold voice resounded by his ear.

The Barbarian shivered in fear, unable to react in time.

Massive hands clamped his neck like iron claws, followed by a crackling sound, leaving him terrified and his vision quickly blurred...

Chen Shouyi gently placed the corpse on the ground, grasping the nearby manhole cover carefully lifting it, stuffing the body inside.

He then waited quietly at the corner. About half a minute later, another set of footsteps approached.

The other Barbarian, sensing something amiss with his delayed companion, quickly ran toward him and was instantly pierced through the throat by Chen Shouyi's quick strike, breaking the neck bones.

These were merely regular door guards, no different from ordinary people in Chen Shouyi's view.

Chen Shouyi replicated the process, stuffing the corpse into the manhole, promptly replacing the cover.

He glanced at the blood on his hands, flicking his wrist gently.

"Snap!"

A slight air burst, as blood mist filled the air; when he retrieved his hand, the fresh blood had vanished.

Scanning his surroundings, Chen Shouyi hunched his body slightly again, quickening his pace to leave the scene swiftly.

...

The sun slanted westward, fiery red clouds at the horizon casting a faint blood-like glow over the city.

At the intersection, Chen Shouyi withdrew his gaze from a half-lying road sign on the street.

"Finally reached Baoceng District!"

The military intelligence pointed to this area.

Chen Shouyi checked the time; it was five o'clock: "Must speed up, and definitely find it before dawn."

Chapter 274 - Traitor

The square was riddled with craters, a giant divine statue had already collapsed, shattered into a pile of rubble.

A patrol of five barbarians spoke in their language as they walked, and apart from them, there were no pedestrians on the road.

Chen Shouyi's figure moved like a specter, hiding behind a heap of garbage at the corner.

"I heard the Leiba Warrior is dead too."

"What, that's one of the tribe's powerful Beast Soul Warriors!"

"It's the human infidel army's 'bomb' that did it!"

"These damned lowly races, only worthy of being slaves, should all be captured for blood sacrifices, offering their sinful souls to the great God of Hunting," a tall young barbarian said agitatedly.

"Quiet down, the Chief Priest presiding over this parish is human; do you want to taste the punishment of flaying and pulling tendons?" a barbarian, clearly the team captain, advised: "Moreover, it's the will of the master."

"I'm not afraid, Budalu. This treacherous human, along with those human priests, have surely deceived the great God of Hunting. Humans are merely our slaves, and we are their conquerors!" Though saying this, his voice dropped, nearly muttering.

All the barbarians' faces were grim; their great master seemed to love humans particularly.

In this world, the number of human priests had already far surpassed those of their tribe.

At this moment, the drone of aircraft came rumbling through the night sky.

The patrol leader's face changed upon hearing the sound: "Find a concealed spot, hide quickly, don't get discovered; these 'planes' will drop 'bombs'!"

All the barbarians looked tense, swiftly running to a nearby office building.

Several fighter jets hovered nearby for a long time, gradually moving away after a few minutes.

Soon, the group of barbarians emerged from the office building, looked up at the sky, and continued to patrol forward.

Chen Shouyi hid behind the garbage heap, clenching his fist tightly, causing a creaking sound.

"The Chief Priest here is actually human?"

"No wonder, the control over all of Ningzhou is so strict, even organizing a human-composed army!"

"No wonder the barbarians are so cunning, never confronting the army head-on, always favoring guerrilla warfare. With the barbarians' strong individual strength and mobility, they cause heavy casualties to the human army."

He restrained himself from taking action, only emerging from the shadows after the patrolling barbarians had moved far away, face darkened.

"Damned!"

Compared to the barbarians, traitors are undoubtedly more despicable.

Chen Shouyi took a deep breath, body moving swiftly like a specter.

...

A church's resting room.

Tonight, Cao Weizhong slept uneasily, tossing and turning unable to sleep.

Reluctantly closing his eyes again for a few minutes, he felt increasingly irritable, finally tossing aside the thin blanket to sit up.

He was a disciplined person; even upon becoming a priest, he did not indulge himself like other human priests, succumbing to debauchery as soon as he gained power.

Even though he could beckon countless women to climb into his bed.

He had no interest in women.

Since becoming a believer, he decided to devote his entire heart and soul to the God of Hunting.

This is a True God.

A truly existing deity.

Completely incomparable to those virtual gods.

Life is short, believers of the master gain eternal life, death marks the beginning of life.

He often spoke these words before the congregation, and he also believed them fervently.

Because this was plainly true.

Not false, not deceitful, not a pretense, not an empty promise.

This is a divine-human covenant between gods and mortals.

...

He fumbled, picking up and striking the firewood multiple times before the lamp on the table finally ignited, the tiny flame flickered and burned, casting the bedroom in alternating light and shadow.

He could faintly hear the sounds of artillery from afar.

Feeling somewhat anxious about the war.

This was already the third encirclement by the Government Army, each time larger and more intense than the last, even using small-yield nuclear bombs last time.

This time, they seemed prepared, possibly resolved for mutual destruction.

Despite being a devout believer, he knew the great God of Hunting wasn't omnipotent, and as someone with a high level of education, he understood the power of human weaponry.

At least he knew that the great God of Hunting.

Once hit by a nuclear bomb, would certainly fall.

Sometimes he pondered.

Why didn't the government, without negotiations, frantically launch their encirclement, not hesitating to use nuclear weapons on their own soil.

In fact, if the government was willing to negotiate, open faith, he believed Chief Priest Luo could persuade the great God of Hunting, allowing those barbarian fools to return to the otherworld, perhaps even compromising, partially returning to government leadership.

Only recently did he figure it out.

It's pride.

The pride of humanity!

The pride of a highly developed material civilization over the barbaric otherworld's civilization!

Especially the Great Xia Country, as one of the world's top powers, its formidable military strength capable of destroying the Earth.

This pride of a top power would never allow forces from another world to encroach upon its soil.

Reflecting on this, he sighed:

"But God is not a barbarian."

"He is powerful, he is sacred!"

"He transcends regions, he transcends the universe!"

"He can belong to the barbarians and become part of humanity, why can't they see that."

"Is this just your god?" An unfamiliar and cold voice interrupted his monologue.

Cao Weizhong was startled, about to shout loudly, but a hand immediately covered his mouth tightly, under the flickering candlelight he noticed the bedroom door had somehow opened.

"If you're smart, don't shout, or you'll die faster!"

With the other's cold warning, his throat hurt, and then felt liquid slowly trickling down his skin.

He knew it was blood.

And he also knew there was an extremely sharp sword across his neck.

"And don't think you'll enter the Divine Country after death, from what I understand, on Earth, the Barbarian God cannot guide believers to the Divine Country; Earth's Original Force is far from sufficient."

Cao Weizhong's body froze involuntarily, his heart also slightly shaken.

No, this is the devil's temptation.

He immediately reaffirmed his faith.

Under the flickering light, a tall silhouette stood quietly; without a doubt, it was Chen Shouyi, having been unable to find the cult's lair, went directly into the church, luckily finding a human and not a barbarian, otherwise, it would be much more troublesome.

"Tell me the location of the cult's lair! If you agree, lightly tap the table, if not, don't blame me for being ruthless!"

Cao Weizhong's face was resolute, unmoving, understanding the other's identity and intention, just days before someone from the Government Army was found and slaughtered by the barbarian Beast Soul Warrior promptly found.

Besides, his faith wouldn't permit betrayal.

The more critical the moment, the firmer the faith.

He believed this was a test from God.

Chapter 275 - Enemy Attack

"Quite tenacious!"

Chen Shouyi chuckled softly, shaking his neck as his vertebrae cracked audibly.

He sheathed his sword, a hint of brutality flashing across his face. He grabbed the man by his face with a large hand, ignoring his struggles, lifting him straight from the seat and slamming him hard onto the ground.

With a loud thud, the floor shuddered slightly.

Cao Weizhong grunted heavily, his eyes glazed from the fall. All he felt was searing pain throughout his body; it seemed as if all his bones had shattered. Soon, blood slowly seeped through Chen Shouyi's fingers.

"Is it really worth it? The Barbarian God you worship is doomed, unable to protect himself. You're smart; you wouldn't choose foolishly, would you?" Chen Shouyi said coldly.

Cao Weizhong stared angrily at Chen Shouyi, his hands clutching Chen Shouyi's arm that covered his mouth, struggling desperately.

Annoyed, Chen Shouyi grabbed his head and smashed it against the ground repeatedly.

Bang...

The floor tiles immediately cracked!

After just two hits, he passed out swiftly and thoroughly, blood gradually spreading over the floor.

"Too weak, only slightly stronger than an ordinary person physically."

Chen Shouyi glanced at the unconscious Cao Weizhong, slapped him twice to wake him up.

Cao Weizhong's face quickly swelled as blood gushed from his mouth. He opened his eyes into a narrow slit, glaring venomously at Chen Shouyi, barely whispering:

"Blasphemer fool, you will never find reprieve in the afterlife."

With a chilling expression, he lost all patience for interrogation, pressing the man's head down forcefully.

With a "crunch," Cao Weizhong's head shattered like a watermelon, his limbs twitched, and his body quickly went limp, while an awful stench emanated from below.

"Damn it!"

Chen Shouyi looked at the corpse, now incontinent, with disgust and kicked it aside.

"I should've known not to waste time here!" Chen Shouyi thought in irritation, preparing to leave the chapel and continue his search.

Then, his steps halted.

Wait...

He scanned the bedroom, his gaze quickly fixing on a filing cabinet in the corner.

He immediately strode over and opened it.

It was packed with numerous documents.

Chen Shouyi felt a surge of spirits, picking up the topmost document.

"Latest Procedures for Handling Captured Blasphemous Individuals"

— Luo Zong Mountain

He skimmed through it at lightning speed.

His expression turned dark immediately.

Every word in this document reeked of blood.

Once labeled a "Blasphemer," their fate was a blood sacrifice.

He took a deep breath, suppressing the urge to lash out, examining each document systematically.

"Notice on Strengthening Religious Establishment by Household, Summoning Defender of the Faith"

— Luo Zong Mountain

"Third Edition Doctrines Document"

— Doctrine Theory Committee.

"Monitor the Thoughts of Believers, Strengthen Supervision Work"

— Luo Zong Mountain

"Notice on Curfews"

— Luo Zong Mountain

Chen Shouyi noticed that most documents bore the signature "Luo Zong Mountain."

"He must be the Chief Priest mentioned by the Barbarians!" His expression turned frosty.

Chen Shouyi flipped through a dozen or so books.

Finally, he found the information he was searching for.

"Notification for Meetings Above Priest Level"

He quickly searched for the address.

"163 Changfeng Road, Baoceng District, Hunting God Church Building, Fourth Floor Conference Room
(Former Ningzhou Limei Grand Hotel)"

Chen Shouyi glanced at the date and felt slightly disappointed.

This notification was almost a month old, back when Ningzhou had just fallen. Given the passage of time and the current war, the cult's headquarters likely wasn't there anymore.

He continued to check the remaining files but found no other address information.

"No matter, I'll take a look anyway!" Chen Shouyi resolved, quickly leaving the chapel.

...

It was already nine o'clock in the evening.

A full moon cast a bright glow.

Several fighter jets roared above, constantly circling.

Chen Shouyi glanced up, frowning slightly.

He knew these jets awaited his laser guidance for a precision strike, but their presence undoubtedly increased his risk of exposure.

The streets were deserted, but he dared not move, wary of hidden Barbarians in the surrounding buildings.

Fortunately, the jets did not linger, gradually leaving.

Sure enough, as soon as the jets departed, a few scattered Barbarians appeared, cursing loudly.

Chen Shouyi waited for them to walk away before slipping ghost-like across the street, vanishing in a blink.

With his intellect at a high of 14.5, the map of Ningzhou was imprinted in his mind. Even if he rarely visited Ningzhou, he knew each street clearly.

As he neared the file's address, he noticed Barbarian appearances increasing in frequency,

strangely pleasing him.

This meant the Barbarian God Church's base must be nearby.

His movements became even more cautious.

...

An hour later, Chen Shouyi entered the Limei Grand Hotel.

The opulent hotel lobby now lay under a layer of dust. Watching the trail of footprints he left, he brushed his toe across the dust.

"The dust's thickness suggests this place has been abandoned for at least a week."

"Damn it! Where are they hiding?"

Tap tap tap...

Just then, faint footsteps echoed behind him.

Chen Shouyi's expression shifted slightly. He quickly turned to see a towering Barbarian approaching, shirtless, long sword in hand, muscles rippling like mercury.

"Your human chief priest was right; these days, more prey would come face their death," he snarled, revealing a bloodthirsty smile as he spoke broken Mandarin. As he advanced, a fierce beast tattoo on his chest emitted a dim light:

"Last time with the prey, I crushed every bone, and he wailed for a long time before dying..."

Xiao Changming!

Chen Shouyi's face turned icy.

Though he and Xiao Changming weren't close, they'd fought side by side multiple times!

The Barbarian kept advancing, eyes filled with murderous intent: "I wonder how long you will last before I..."

Before he finished, his pupils contracted sharply. A swift, fleeting shadow came with the wind. In the next instant, the tip of a sword rapidly enlarged before his eyes, intense danger squeezing his heart.

With a roar, he fiercely kicked off the ground, shattering the concrete and propelling himself backward.

But just as his body moved.

It shuddered violently as blood and flesh exploded into a mist, splattering everywhere.

In disbelief, he looked down to see a gaping, bowl-sized bloody hole through his chest, a wave of despair washing over him.

Chen Shouyi stopped abruptly: "Courting death!"

With a single step, he traversed over ten meters, quickly heading away.

Only then did the Barbarian's body smash into the opposite building's wall and then slide down slowly. Struggling to sit up, leaning against the wall, blood bubbling from his mouth, he saw the rapidly receding figure and opened his mouth: "Enem...y...attack!"

His voice, however, was faint as a mosquito.

Chapter 276 - Slaughter

More than a month ago, when Chen Shouyi went to Dongning to pick up his aunt, he faced these powerful totem Barbarians with great effort, and even then, life or death was uncertain. But now, he can kill effortlessly.

In this past month, his agility has increased by 0.7 points in total, and his strength has also increased by 0.6 points.

Calculating at 0.01 for a 5% improvement of the original attribute, both have improved by 35% and 30% respectively, which is an astonishing progress. In terms of combat power, it's like going from being evenly matched to crushing dominance.

Even facing an attack from four or five Barbarians of such strength, he can confidently kill them one by one, remaining unscathed himself.

Chen Shouyi sprinted along the way and suddenly stopped at an intersection, immediately pressing his body against the wall of a building.

The sound of wind and dense footsteps echoed in his ears.

The fight just moments ago had alerted the surrounding Barbarians.

Blood dripped drop by drop from his Long Sword. Chen Shouyi took a deep breath, and his heart gradually calmed down.

Seconds later, a group of seven Barbarians ran past him and stopped at the intersection.

One Barbarian sniffed and instinctively glanced in Chen Shouyi's direction.

Only to see a blurred shadow rapidly approaching, a hint of fear flashed across his face:

"Enem—"

The first word was still rolling in his throat, and then it stopped abruptly. He stood motionless as his head slowly rolled off his neck.

A Barbarian quickly reacted, and just as he drew his sword, a flash of a blade sliced through, severing half his head like a watermelon, revealing pink brain matter.

Chen Shouyi dispatched two Barbarians with two consecutive sword strikes, expressionless as he stepped towards the third Barbarian.

The terrified Barbarian retreated repeatedly, his face twisted with fear. The next moment, his expression froze completely, as his neck was blasted through by a stabbing sword, leaving only a layer of skin, about an inch wide, intact.

Another Barbarian tried to seize the opportunity to launch a sneak attack, but Chen Shouyi twisted his body and kicked heavily at his side. Accompanied by a series of bone-cracking sounds, the Barbarian's body twisted unnaturally, flew out, and lay on the ground motionless.

Without looking at the result, Chen Shouyi rushed towards the last few Barbarians.

The remaining three Barbarians had already been scared to the point of collapse; one even collapsed to the ground, desperately scrambling and crawling backward.

Chen Shouyi instantly reached in front of him, his toes heavily tapped his chest cavity.

Like an explosion, his chest skin and flesh burst open, his chest cavity collapsed entirely, and blood gushed out of his mouth like a pillar.

He continued his speed towards the other two...

This was a complete massacre.

Completely powerless to resist.

...

Three seconds later.

The ground was littered with corpses.

Without a glance, Chen Shouyi quickly moved away and soon disappeared from sight.

...

In front of a fifth-floor window of an office building.

"Damn it!" Chen Shouyi looked at the large number of Barbarian patrols appearing on the street, his face grim:

"The Church's stronghold is definitely nearby, or there couldn't be such a formidable guard force."

Even with his current confidence in strength, he didn't dare to act recklessly at this moment.

That would be asking for death, and furthermore, several Barbarians gave him a sense of danger.

He withdrew his gaze, leaned his body against the wall, and checked the time:

"It's almost eleven, I must come up with a plan." He slowly caressed the rough pattern of the sword hilt with his fingers, pondering silently.

At this moment, a thought struck Chen Shouyi, and his expression became invigorated.

He immediately left the room and quickly ran towards the corridor.

In half a minute, he slashed off the lock on the rooftop door with his sword and pushed it open.

This office building has thirty floors, it's the tallest structure in this area. From here, everything below was visible at a glance.

Below, the Barbarians seemed to have mobilized in full force, searching for his whereabouts everywhere.

At this moment, he quickly lowered his head and squatted down.

He noticed that quite a few rooftops of buildings had Barbarians standing on them.

"Is this necessary?"

"Just because I killed a dozen Barbarians!"

He grumbled inwardly, cautiously hunching down and carefully observing around, then picked up a bamboo stick from the ground, walked to the rooftop's iron door, and gently set the wooden strip on it.

Even if the Barbarians found this place and pushed the door open, it would cause a huge commotion.

After doing all of this, Chen Shouyi found a corner and immediately sat down.

He sank into deep concentration.

Then entered the memory world of the Gray Mist Space.

...

An hour and a half later, Chen Shouyi opened his eyes again, his gaze bright and sharp.

"So, this is it, who would've thought the cult's stronghold is inside the nearby subway station!"

He checked the attribute panel and felt a pang of regret as he saw only 0.7 Energy Points remaining.

"Thankfully, it's all worth it. Without the deduction from the memory world, acting rashly, I might have already died."

At this time, he keenly heard a commotion of footsteps and the voices of Barbarians:

"I smelled the disgusting scent of humans, he's definitely still here."

"It's up top!"

...

"Finally, they found this place!" Chen Shouyi's face turned cold, he stood up and looked at an adjacent building, then took a running start and made a bold leap.

The fierce wind whooshed past.

Under the moonlight, he leaped over tens of meters, landing heavily on the opposite rooftop.

With several rolls to disperse the impact, Chen Shouyi's figure quickly stabilized.

A Barbarian who was watching around the rooftop was about to cry out in surprise when Chen Shouyi swiftly beheaded him with a single stroke.

He swiftly leaped forward between the buildings.

"He's in the air!"

"Human invader!"

"Kill him!"

As if a hornet's nest had been poked, the shouting of the Barbarians echoed incessantly. Some even mimicked Chen Shouyi, leaping between the rooftops, relentlessly pursuing him.

However, at this moment, Chen Shouyi didn't care about being exposed. As long as he didn't encounter the terrifying strong ones guarding their lair, most Barbarians were not much of a threat to him, provided their numbers were not overwhelming.

Hearing the faint roar of airplanes approaching, Chen Shouyi perked up.

A few minutes later, he suddenly stopped on a rooftop of a five-story building, took out a laser device, placed it on the rooftop, and pressed the switch.

Instantly, a blinding green light pierced the sky.

Dozens of fighter jets circling above Ningzhou suddenly changed direction, flying swiftly towards this spot.

This type of laser bombardment guidance didn't need to be too accurate. With the current mechanical fire control, it couldn't be too precise anyway. Knowing the general position was enough.

After doing all this, Chen Shouyi didn't dare stay longer. He randomly chose a direction, pushed off the ground, and quickly escaped.

The time was of the essence now.

It was imaginable that soon, this area would become a sea of flames. If he couldn't escape in time, even he might get caught in the bombardment.

The wind howled down the street, and Chen Shouyi sprinted at a speed of over a hundred meters per second.

Twenty seconds later, the first wave of the bombardment had already arrived.

...

Chen Shouyi couldn't resist his curiosity and glanced back. It was a sea of red flames, half the sky seemed to be set ablaze.

The surrounding buildings collapsed one by one like blocks, swallowed by the fire.

Even the subway stations, under such bombardment, would be hardly stronger than tofu!

At this time, he saw dozens of Barbarians, relentless in their pursuit from seven or eight hundred meters behind, being swept by a terrifying shockwave and flung into the air.

Chen Shouyi shivered all over, exerted all his strength, and ran desperately.

He ran continuously for five or six kilometers before gradually slowing down, panting heavily with a weary expression.

The distant sky was still a scene of red, as numerous fighter jets, like shadows of death, continuously dropped bombs, causing the bombardment area to keep expanding.

Even here, he could feel waves of scorching heat continuously rolling in.

For some reason, Chen Shouyi suddenly remembered what that officer said:

"This is war!"

He relaxed entirely, sitting down on the curb.

Suddenly, he felt like having a cigarette.

Only now did he understand why so many Martial Artists were addicted to smoking.

It's for nothing else.

Simply too stressful.

He noticed shadows flickering in the windows of a nearby residential area, but no one came out.

Nearby, the door of a church suddenly opened.

A disheveled middle-aged man hurriedly stepped onto the street, staring blankly at the vast fire in the distance.

He stared for a long time before noticing Chen Shouyi by the roadside.

With a frown, he tried to muster an authoritative tone and said, "How dare you not realize there's a curfew going on? What are you doing here?"

Chen Shouyi glanced at him and said nothing.

A flash of anger crossed the middle-aged man's face. Ever since becoming a Priest, no one had dared to ignore his questions.

Just as he was about to reprimand, he suddenly noticed the long sword tightly held in the other's hand and the bloodstains, his heart sinking. He quickly retreated, shouting loudly, "Someone, someone, a desecrator..."

With a blank expression, Chen Shouyi took a stride and slapped him to the ground, his neck bending in a grotesque manner.

Without looking at the result, he continued forward.

After a few steps, a group of five or six people, all part of a human night patrol team, jogged around the street corner, holding a variety of weapons from wooden sticks to machetes, even a fireman's axe. Only the leader held a rifle.

"Stop, don't move!"

"It's the Priest!" someone suddenly exclaimed.

"Quick, quickly capture him, or else we're all dead." The leader turned pale with fright. With the Priest killed on the street, their patrol team would be the first to be blamed. He quickly released the rifle's safety and aimed at Chen Shouyi.

Chen Shouyi didn't feel any anger, instead finding it somewhat amusing.

Two young men rushed over to subdue him, but upon touching him, they were thrown back by a tremendous force, flying five or six meters before crashing into the buildings on either side, sliding to the ground with no further movement.

He kept walking towards the crowd.

Seeing this, the middle-aged leader couldn't help but swallow and kept retreating, shouting loudly with false bravado, "Stop, or I'll shoot."

"Die for me!"

"Bang bang bang!"

Chen Shouyi didn't dodge, only shielding his eyes with his hand.

The bullets struck his body and were quickly deflected by his muscles. He touched the hit areas with his left hand and found he was unscathed.

"As expected, rifles are already useless against me..." he thought to himself.

He quickly stepped forward, his long sword sweeping horizontally. The remaining three froze all over, and the next moment, three heads rolled down, blood spurting from their necks.

Chapter 277 - 264: The Cunning Bug (Part 1)

Plop...

Several headless bodies fell down.

Chen Shouyi sheathed his sword and tore off his ragged clothes, revealing his densely packed, knotted muscles.

He looked down at where the bullets had struck.

He found only a few bruises left on his chest.

"This is the effect of a close-range assault by a rifle; if it were a hundred meters away, it might not even leave a bruise," Chen Shouyi thought with slight surprise.

He inhaled the air mixed with the strong smell of gunpowder and blood, and clenched his fist tightly.

"I am becoming less and less human!"

He glanced back at the towering flames; this was no longer his battlefield, and his mission was complete.

Feeling his stamina gradually recovering, he turned around, ready to leave quickly.

"Finally found you?"

A gnashing voice suddenly came from beside his ear.

Upon hearing it, Chen Shouyi's pupils shrank, and his hair stood on end. He spun around abruptly.

In the moonlight, a tall, strong Barbarian emerged from the shadows.

He looked quite miserable, with patches of black and red all over, and no intact skin left on his body, leaving bright red footprints on the ground as he walked.

Yet even so, Chen Shouyi was on high alert, his mind taut.

This voice, he was all too familiar with.

Chen Shouyi had fought him before, more than once.

Of course, it was in the virtual memory world.

His best attempt, he lasted merely four moves before having his neck twisted broken.

Letting Chen Shouyi breathe a slight sigh of relief, this time he was unarmed, barehanded.

"I think I've already run far enough!" Chen Shouyi slowly drew his sword, speaking in a deep voice.

"Ignorant human, I'll let you die with understanding; as citizens of the God of Hunting, no prey escapes our grasp," said the tall Barbarian, pulling a cruel smile at the corner of his mouth.

As he spoke, a phantom beast with four legs and wings, seven to eight meters tall, seemed to roar behind him.

A suppressive aura spread wide.

"Look, there's a plane!" Chen Shouyi suddenly lifted his head, spoke.

The Barbarian's aura paused, unconsciously also lifted his head to look.

If it were a human, in other circumstances.

He would not have been so easily caught off guard.

But at that moment, five to six kilometers away, the planes kept bombing in turns, especially considering he had just been bombed once. Only by instinctive capabilities had he narrowly escaped death, and he was understandably jumpy about planes.

Upon realizing he was tricked, he saw the human already sprinting frantically through the streets.

Instantly outraged, his face turned ferocious.

"Despicable human..."

"Boom!"

He stomped fiercely, the cement ground exploded like tofu, leaving a shallow pit, as his body turned into a blurred phantom, shooting electrically toward Chen Shouyi.

At that moment, the burst speed nearly reached subsonic levels.

Chen Shouyi felt the fierce whistling wind from behind, his heart sinking, his body moved like an agile monkey, grabbing the window ledge of the second floor nearby. With a light arm strength, his body was swiftly flung into the room, shattering the anti-theft iron grates along with the glass.

His toes touched the walls of the bedroom like tiptoeing on eaves, rapidly tapping, forcibly diverting the inertia of speed, heading straight for the door.

"Boom!" The door crashed apart, affected by it, the wall riddled with holes already, swayed, followed by a rumbling collapse.

Inside the bedroom, a pair of elderly spouses woke with fright, shakily propping themselves up, bodies petrified by the demolition-like scene before them, stiffened with fear.

However, their misfortune was not over yet.

Before they could gather their wits, the wall by the window behind exploded once more, another blurred figure swiftly passed through the bedroom.

...

The two figures, one chasing the other, darted through building after building.

Feeling the presence drawing nearer, a ferocity flickered in Chen Shouyi's eyes:

"His power compared to the virtual memory world has diminished significantly."

"Also, judging by his appearance, he's quite badly injured."

"Damn it, I'm all in!"

He gritted his teeth, steeled his mind, took a step, swiftly leaping downstairs, ran a few steps forward, then halted his body.

The next instant, the Barbarian also jumped down, stopping in front of Chen Shouyi.

"Cunning insect, finally ready to embrace your end?" The Barbarian panted heavily, eyes fixed tightly on Chen Shouyi; this human was extremely cunning, a moment's carelessness, and he was deceived.

His body had turned into one dripping with blood, the intense motion and collision had left him bleeding profusely, and the wounds couldn't heal.

"It's you who'll die!" Chen Shouyi sneered coldly.

He tapped lightly on the ground, his body shot forward like an arrow released from the bowstring, viciously charging.

The Barbarian's body slightly sidestepped, easily dodging Chen Shouyi's thunder-like strike, at the same time, a large hand like a blurred phantom reached for Chen Shouyi's arm.

But Chen Shouyi, who had a substantial understanding of his combat style from the virtual world, would never let him succeed.

Mid stab, Chen Shouyi immediately changed tactic, slicing toward his abdomen.

"Too weak..." The Barbarian retreated slightly, his expression shifted, an invisible sword blade swiftly sliced across his abdomen, he retreated several steps, clutching the spot, his face showing some bewilderment: "What power is this?"

"The power that can kill you," Chen Shouyi said coldly.

Internally, he felt somewhat disappointed, the Sword Qi was still too short, this slash at most cut open his entire abdomen, yet far from being fatal.

"Interesting, is this a new human Cultivation Technique? I almost don't want to kill you anymore." He loosened his hand from his abdomen, muscle slightly writhing, blood immediately ceased seeping.

Chen Shouyi's pupils shrunk upon seeing this, it was a capability similar to humans entering the realm of silent-refinement and reaching the body-refinement stage.

Of course, he didn't believe only entering the silent-refinement realm could achieve such effect.

Silent-refinement merely allowed more efficiently, systematically reaching this level. But one who relentlessly tempered their body over years, coupled with intentional training, like water chipping away stone, could also control their muscles.

However, from his tone...

Before Chen Shouyi could think further.

"Boom!" A cracking sound in the air.

A blurred figure rapidly approached, just when Chen Shouyi intended to dodge, he saw a huge phantom beast roaring at him.

A brief blank crossed his mind.

Returning to his senses, a sharp pain erupted in his chest, followed by a series of bone-cracking blasts, his body swiftly recoiled backward.

With a "thud," his body crashed into the building, continued to slide several meters, and slammed hard into the wall, finally halting.

Dust sifted down.

He spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, felt as if his body had been trampled by eight elephants, with his chest caved in.

"Hehe... hehe, cough!" Chen Shouyi gazed at the Barbarian crawling through the breach, whose abdomen once more bled profusely, revealing a manic smile as he slowly stood up.

The abdomen was the power transfer point of the body, with the wound in his abdomen, the Barbarian was evidently having his power seriously affected.

"Is this all the strength you've got? For me, it's far from enough!" He walked step by step towards the Barbarian, while slowly inhaling, internal organs and muscles started writhing, the caved-in chest gradually swelled, meanwhile, his bones crackled lightly, snapping into place automatically.

Chapter 278 - Narrow Escape from Death

"Didn't die? I underestimated you!" The Barbarian's expression shifted slightly.

"Underestimate your mother!" Chen Shouyi's expression turned fierce as he controlled his organs to firmly clamp down on his broken ribs, then he kicked a desk in front of him into pieces.

Amidst a shower of debris, he quickly charged forward with his sword.

Bang!

The Barbarian remained expressionless, took a step back to dodge Chen Shouyi's attack, and during a gap in the assault, kicked fiercely at Chen Shouyi's neck, creating a sonic boom in the air.

Chen Shouyi's face was whipped by the strong wind, pain like his skin was being torn apart. He dropped to his knees and leaned back, sliding swiftly while sweeping his sword at the Barbarian's other foot.

The opponent's reaction speed was astonishing, lifting his left foot, making both feet leave the ground as if floating, as he launched a knee strike towards Chen Shouyi's chest.

Seeing this, Chen Shouyi stopped in his tracks, rolling to the side to dodge.

The wind howled around them, and the ripped air seemed to explode, a close brush would mean broken bones for an average person.

At this moment, it was impossible to tell they were both already heavily injured.

A loud crash.

A large hole was smashed through the building's wall, with dust billowing.

Two figures rushed out one after the other.

Engaging again in fierce combat, the wind howled.

"Bang bang..."

A lamppost was sliced by a swift sword light, slowly toppling over.

It was then struck by a kick reminiscent of a war axe, splitting it into two. The upper half fell onto the street with a piercing crash, sparking an explosion of dazzling sparks.

A squad of patrolling soldiers in the distance watched the blurry battle and felt the gusts hitting their faces, staring with wide eyes, involuntarily swallowing.

"Run! Run quickly!"

One of them, instinctively sensing danger, shouted loudly, but before they could escape,

their vision blurred.

The two figures were already upon them.

Bang bang bang...

Several twisted, broken corpses were mixed with a rain of flesh and blood, rolling onto the street, leaving silence in their wake as countless scraps of cloth fluttered in the wind.

The intense battle quickly worsened both of their injuries, while their strength rapidly waned.

The speed and power of their attacks were becoming slower and weaker.

The eerie phantom Beast Soul let out another roar.

"Bang!"

Chen Shouyi, affected, reacted a beat slow and was kicked flying. He slid over ten meters before stopping, spitting blood but his eyes grew brighter: "Is it only this much?"

"Do you think you've won?" The Barbarian glared viciously at Chen Shouyi like a fierce beast, panting heavily, one hand on his blood-gushing abdomen, his body already a bloody mess.

Chen Shouyi relished in delaying time, sensing his body beginning to self-heal as damaged organs and bones started to itch intensely.

"Why don't we both take a step back and pretend we've never met?" Chen Shouyi proposed.

The Barbarian was slightly shaken, but his gaze quickly sharpened: "The God of Hunting's people never let their enemies go."

Inwardly, he regretted not finding a weapon before coming; otherwise, he would have already dealt with this cunning human.

"Why be so stubborn; if you don't flee now, soon you won't be able to. Once our army retakes this city, you'll have no way out." Chen Shouyi continued to stall.

"Just relying on you humans!" the Barbarian sneered.

"Then die!" With his injuries slightly improving, Chen Shouyi charged forward.

This time, after only a dozen moves, the tide slowly turned in Chen Shouyi's favor.

"Can't be delayed any longer!"

Risking injury, Chen Shouyi struck the Barbarian's shoulder with his sword like a venomous serpent, while his side was brutally hit, but it only made him stagger back slightly.

In the next moment, Chen Shouyi let out a low roar, his sword slicing horizontally.

The sword light cut across most of the Barbarian's chest, making him take a hasty step back, eyes bulging in rage as he opened his mouth before his body fell with a thud, stirring up a dust cloud.

Chen Shouyi was drenched in blood, head to toe.

He swayed, then steadied himself again.

After a long while, he exhaled deeply, wiped the blood off his face, still on edge.

"Finally over!"

This battle was undoubtedly his most dangerous yet and against the strongest Barbarian he had encountered. Several times, he skirted death.

If it weren't for initially slicing open his opponent's abdomen, he might have already perished.

"Luckily, I won and survived, while the other died!" Chen Shouyi muttered to himself.

Blood choked his throat, making him cough repeatedly, pulling on his damaged organs, his body trembling in pain.

During the battle, adrenaline surged, numbing pain; now, as he relaxed, he felt the searing pain and complete exhaustion.

Even an ordinary Martial Artist could easily take him down now.

Yet the street was empty.

He glanced around, noticing shadows behind the windows of nearby buildings, many people watching but none daring to approach. He could vaguely hear hurried breaths from a street corner behind him.

He chuckled softly, dragging his weakened body and walking slowly forward.

A minute later, he violently coughed up several mouthfuls of black coagulated blood, accelerating his pace.

...

"That monster finally left." At the street corner, a group of a dozen patrolling soldiers watched Chen Shouyi's fading figure, all simultaneously breathing a sigh of relief, their backs completely soaked.

The fight between the two was terrifying, like two raging Giant Beasts.

Everywhere along the way was destruction, even the asphalt road was pockmarked.

"Can we humans be that powerful too?" a young man asked in a daze.

The atmosphere fell silent; no one answered.

After a long while, someone finally spoke.

"It's said the front line is constantly retreating..."

"I also feel like we can't hold on much longer!"

...

"Shut up, do you want to die, remember what happened to those people." The patrol leader urgently warned in a low voice, interrupting their discussion.

Everyone's heart seized with fear, placing cautious glances at each other,

as if anyone might turn into an informant.

The air became repressively silent, many already contemplating secretly leaving with their families once the army arrived.

Then no one would know their identities or pasts.

...

The sky gradually lightened, with a red glow rising in the east.

Listening to the faint explosive sounds of gunfire in the distance.

Chen Shouyi prepared to check the time.

Only to find his watch had long disappeared.

Recalling something, he quickly searched his pant pocket.

Feeling the hard-shelled document.

Chen Shouyi breathed a slight sigh of relief.

Thankfully, the temporary battlefield observer ID from the military command was still there.

Chapter 279 - Beast Soul

A trench at the front line.

The intense gunfire crackles like beans frying, occasionally accompanied by the muffled sounds of cannons.

Since dawn, the battle has suddenly become fierce.

The pseudo-army on the other side is manageable. Despite their numbers, their poor military quality and low morale render them nothing more than a bunch of civilians with guns, posing little threat to the frontline soldiers.

The greatest danger comes from those Barbarians.

These Barbarians today seem to have gone mad, attacking frantically.

"Dada Dada..." A machine gunner operates a high-angle dual-purpose machine gun, furiously firing at a fast-moving figure.

The dense bullets whip past like lashes, quickly piercing through the dilapidated buildings on both sides.

The rapidly moving Barbarian explodes into a sudden cloud of blood mist, his body split into two.

A low cheer arises in the trench.

"Damn, finally took one down!"

"Quick, quick, change the ammo belt."

In fact, the ammo belt of the high-angle dual-purpose machine gun still had a little less than half remaining, but in the battlefield, this little amount of bullets is undoubtedly dangerous, especially when facing the attacking Barbarians, the snipers stationed nearby are useless, leaving no better choice than sweeping in large ranges.

At this time, once the bullets run out, it almost means death.

Despite this, the Barbarians frequently break through, resulting in massive soldier massacres.

The loader hurriedly attaches the already prepared ammo belt to the machine gun.

However, for a whole minute afterwards, there is no movement from the opposite side.

A gust of wind brings a strong bloody scent from afar.

"What happened, could it be that they fled?" A soldier with a face covered in ash hoped.

"Don't relax your vigilance, maybe preparing for the next wave of attack."

At this moment, a piece of wavering white cloth appears on the distant street.

"Look, someone wants to surrender!"

"Don't be careless, be wary of a deceptive surrender."

Under a lot of firearm aiming, soon a blood-covered figure is seen slowly walking towards here step by step.

...

"This is your identification!" A soldier quickly salutes, filled with respect.

Chen Shouyi takes back his identification, followed by an anti-cult investigation.

Following his request, the frontline quickly assigned a team of soldiers to accompany him away from the battlefield.

The trenches here are intertwined, heavily guarded, and without soldier accompaniment, one has to be prepared for endless inspections when walking alone.

Behaving like before, holding up a white cloth, was an act of shame he really didn't wish to repeat.

"Mr. Chen, you're a Martial Artist performing a special mission, right?" A young soldier, smelling the intense bloody scent on him, asked with awe and curiosity.

Chen Shouyi nodded wearily.

He was exhausted, hungry, and sleepy, not really wanting to talk.

"What mission are you executing?" With the topic opened, another soldier soon asked.

"Don't probe into everything." The squad leader instructs.

Chen Shouyi chuckled and said, "Actually, it's nothing much, just recon on cult intelligence. By the way, is there anything to eat?"

"Yes, I only have some compressed biscuits!"

"I have an Energy Bar."

Upon hearing this, the soldiers immediately took out the food they had, Chen Shouyi hurriedly expressed gratitude and accepted them one by one.

"Want some water?" The squad leader asked while preparing to unscrew the water bottle.

"No, no!" Chen Shouyi quickly refused upon seeing, he really wasn't used to drinking beverages shared with strangers.

After swallowing some compressed biscuits and Energy Bars, he felt like his condition finally somewhat improved.

Self-Healing consumes one's energy tremendously, ever since becoming one of the Divine Creatures, he had rarely felt this hungry.

...

Chen Shouyi walked into the command center to carry out a task handover.

As the battle results were yet to be confirmed, he couldn't leave for a while, staying in the rest area of the command center.

He took a shower and caught some sleep.

Upon awakening, he heard cheers coming from outside.

Chen Shouyi opened the door.

A female orderly, carrying a thermos with a cheerful face, immediately tidied her hair when seeing Chen Shouyi, boldly sizing him up without hiding her curiosity: "General Manager Chen, you're awake. Would you like something to eat? I brought you something."

"I'm not hungry now, don't bother, what's going on outside?" Chen Shouyi asked.

"The front line has triumphed greatly, we're about to win." The female orderly spoke with excitement.

After thorough understanding, Chen Shouyi learned that the pseudo-army's morale suddenly collapsed, leading to mass surrenders, and according to various intelligence, Ningzhou is now in chaos, leaderless.

"Seems like the cult's lair has truly been eradicated!" Chen Shouyi felt a subtle excitement rising within his heart.

...

In the evening.

A helicopter lands on the rooftop of a building in the Safe Zone.

Chen Shouyi exits the helicopter, leaving the building.

He watches the bustling crowd on the streets, feeling a surreal sense of disorientation.

A moment ago, it was a war-torn battlefield with smoke and death everywhere, but now it is peaceful, lively, and prosperous.

He shakes his head and briskly walks towards his home.

...

After dinner, Chen Shouyi hurriedly returned to his room, shut the door, and put down his sword.

The bed was covered with Barbie Doll's clothes and gems, the cup of honey still was halfway full.

But the Shell Lady was nowhere to be found.

"Little one, can you come out now?" Chen Shouyi called.

Soon, the Shell Lady crawled out from under the covers. She quickly jumped off the bed, and swiftly climbed up Chen Shouyi's leg, finally reaching his shoulder, saying excitedly: "Good Giant, why did you come back so late?"

"Little one was so scared!"

"Alright, alright, don't be scared, don't be scared, didn't I come back!" Chen Shouyi hurriedly comforted.

Looking at the Shell Lady, even his fatigue faded away.

Chen Shouyi took out two Crystal Balls from the drawer, smiling and asked: "Guess what's this?"

"A big gem, are they all for me?" The Shell Lady widened her eyes, full of surprise.

"All yours!" Chen Shouyi generously said.

"Muah, muah, muah!"

The Shell Lady excitedly kissed him several times on the face:

"You're really a good Giant!"

Chen Shouyi smiled, placing the Crystal Balls into her pile of gems.

The Shell Lady immediately abandoned him, jumped off his shoulder, and onto the bed, starting to excitedly count her gems.

Chen Shouyi watched with a smile for a while, then withdrew his gaze, his smile gradually fading.

His mind recalled last night's battle.

"Totem Warriors, or perhaps more accurately Beast Soul Warriors!" He thought, this fearsome enemy encountered made a lasting impression, particularly the massive beast shadow that emerged in battle, twice nearly leading to his death:

"The Barbarians who fought against me were stronger than ordinary Beast Soul Warriors, of higher rank, even able to manifest as shadows on Earth.

If in a different world..."

Chen Shouyi's expression became serious.

Ordinary Beast Soul Warriors, he could now easily slay, but this is on Earth.

The more extraordinary a creature is, the more their power diminishes on Earth, whereas those who rely on physical strength are scarcely affected.

If every Barbarian Beast Soul Warrior in another world can exhibit similar and even stronger prowess, whether he can overcome them is uncertain.

"Could it be that these Beast Soul Warriors really seal a Beast Soul?"

Chapter 280 - Sword Qi Enhancement (Part 1)

Since he had just recently recovered from his injuries, Chen Shouyi's body still felt a bit weak. When he finally opened his eyes, it was already eight in the morning. He sat up and put on a T-shirt.

As soon as his body moved, the Shell Lady beside him was startled awake.

She groggily opened her eyes, saw that it was Chen Shouyi, and reassured, she closed her eyes again, turned over, and went back to sleep.

He finished dressing, got up, and got out of bed.

After washing up in the bathroom, he opened the bedroom door and heard the voices of his cousin Chen Yuwei and his sister speaking.

...

"Xing Yue, how do you practice this move? I can never get it right." Chen Yuwei held a wooden sword, demonstrated a lunge and thrust, and asked Chen Xingyue for advice.

Ever since she had narrowly escaped death in Dongning last time, she resolved to practice martial arts diligently.

Luckily, there are also specialized Martial Arts classes offered at school now, with two sessions every evening. However, since she rarely practiced martial arts before, she had no real foundation. Moreover, because she started late, she fell behind the progress of her classmates.

After all, martial arts has never been mainstream in society; unless one's talent for it is notable or academic pursuits seem hopeless, few parents would let their children gamble on such a narrow path.

"Like this, the body should be relaxed, but the muscles shouldn't be too loose. The force should be smooth and rhythmic. Additionally, stepping forward should be decisive... I can't explain it well, it's something you have to experience repeatedly yourself." Chen Xingyue demonstrated and said.

Chen Yuwei practiced a few times and sighed, "Ah, why is it so difficult? I can't feel that spring-like tension release at all."

"Swordsmanship is indeed very difficult, sis. Why don't you ask my brother? I'm only a Martial Artist Apprentice, and he is already a great Martial Artist." Chen Xingyue said.

In her heart, she felt a little discouraged as well, unclear about how her brother practiced.

Earlier, he used to be far worse than her; she could teach him a lesson with one hand, but now the roles were reversed.

But her own progress isn't slow either!

No one in the advanced class of the entire Martial Arts Academy is her match.

Even her teacher said she already possesses the capability of a quasi-martial artist; she's just a bit short on the basics to become a Martial Artist.

"I don't want to ask him for advice!" Chen Yuwei quickly responded.

"Sis, what happened? Did my brother bully you?" Chen Xingyue asked curiously, her eyes full of eager curiosity.

"What are you thinking? It's just that I feel a bit nervous facing Shou Yi now." Chen Yuwei whispered.

Back in Dongning, the brutal and bloody side her cousin showed left a significant psychological shadow on her. It was truly a scene of slashing and hacking, heads rolling, blood raining, without even blinking an eye.

This led to her feeling somewhat scared when she sees her cousin now.

"What is there to be nervous about? You're the older sister!" Chen Xingyue asked strangely: "You used to beat him up often!"

Precisely this is why I'm nervous! Chen Yuwei thought to herself.

Chen Shouyi's face darkened upon hearing this. Unable to hold back, he coughed, walked down the stairs, and said casually: "Sis, you're here. Why didn't Aunt come?"

"Shouyi, you're awake. My mom is at work!" Chen Yuwei said.

Currently, the factory only has a single day off, and sometimes they have to work overtime on Sundays too.

"What kind of job did Aunt find?"

"An accountant at a state-owned machinery factory!"

Chen Shouyi immediately remembered that Aunt seemed to have worked in finance before.

"Bro, sis wants to practice martial arts, you should teach her!" Chen Xingyue said from the side.

"You want to practice martial arts?" Chen Shouyi pretended not to have heard their conversation and asked.

"Yes, yes, do you have any good methods, Shouyi?" Chen Yuwei perked up and gathered her energy.

Her cousin is a great Martial Artist, and her Martial Arts Teacher said that there are fewer than ten great Martial Artists in the whole Hedong, and fewer than twenty in the entire Jiangnan Province. For such a person, even a single word would be enough for ordinary folks to benefit for a lifetime.

Chen Shouyi thought for a moment and said: "Actually, I don't have any particularly good methods.

For beginners like you, at this stage, you should still focus on practicing the Thirty-Six Forms of Body Refinement and Entering Tranquility to cultivate yourself first, improving physical fitness, and then gradually learning techniques. Rushing can cause injuries, and once you've mastered the Initial Tranquility to the point of body refinement, practicing techniques will be much more efficient."

There's no shortcut to martial arts; it primarily relies on one's talent and effort. If he hadn't possessed the Book of Knowledge, he probably would have remained an ordinary person by now, being a Martial Artist Apprentice would have been a stroke of luck.

"Tch, saying it is as good as not saying it, who doesn't know this reasoning?" Chen Xingyue retorted.

"Then why are you progressing so slowly?" Chen Shouyi gave his sister a sidelong glance and said: "I have already completed bodily refinement through Entering Tranquility, yet you haven't completed muscle refinement yet."

"How can I compare with someone as uniquely thinking as you."

Chen Shouyi immediately got frustrated: "How can this be called unique thinking, this is clearly talent, you know!"

"What are you guys talking about? I don't understand." Chen Yuwei asked curiously.

"It's another method of Entering Tranquility that my brother pondered over, controlling the subconscious to change the sequence of refinement. I've practiced it too, but it's practically impossible for humans to practice." Chen Xingyue said somewhat discouraged.

Chen Yuwei's eyes lit up as she listened: "Explain it in detail!"

Chen Xingyue immediately recounted her brother's optimized version of Entering Tranquility to cultivate oneself.

"Is there really such a method?" Chen Yuwei said in surprise: "It seems really feasible! Where is a quiet place? I'll go try it out."

"It's difficult, if you want to practice, go to my bedroom." Chen Xingyue said.

The two quickly ran upstairs.

The living room finally quieted down.

Chen Shouyi shook his head and walked to the dining room.

He sat down and ate breakfast while checking the attribute panel.

Strength: 15.7

Agility: 15.6

Physique: 16.2

Intelligence: 14.5

Sensitivity: 13.5

Willpower: 14.2

Huh!

Willpower increased by 0.2!

This was clearly the result of the task from the past two days.

He swallowed the bun in his mouth, extended his finger, and focused his mind, vaguely sensing an invisible force violently breathing on his fingertip. He glanced at the table, quickly shifting his gaze to the chopstick on the table.

Picking one up, he brought it near his finger.

Ten centimeters...

Eight centimeters...

When it was close to seven centimeters, an imperceptible crack silently appeared on the surface of the chopstick!

"It's actually already seven centimeters." Chen Shouyi immediately stopped, secretly contemplating.

"If it weren't for this Sword Qi catching that Barbarian strongman by surprise during this task, delivering a fierce blow and slicing his abdomen, I might have been the one to die in the end."

"This can completely be deemed my trump card. Now, both my physical attributes and sensitivity are steadily and rapidly improving, there's no rush to accumulate energy points for optimization. It's time to continue training in the aspect of willpower."

He made up his mind, picked up another chopstick, paired it into a set, and continued eating breakfast.