

Scavengers 1041

Chapter 1041: Delicate as a Willow, Fu Feng

Ji You's face visibly turned dark, and Liu Fufeng stared at her with serious eyes and expression, saying, "Really, I'm not lying to you, it really opens your head many, many, many times..."

He used three 'many' to describe the difficulty.

Just listening to this made Ji You's hair stand on end. She took a deep breath and said, "Isn't it just opening your head? I'm not afraid! The path to being strong is bound to be full of challenges."

This ability is even more overpowered than being overpowered. To gain such an invisible enemy-hypnotizing power, what's a little bit of suffering? Ji You had full confidence in this! Then, she heard Liu Fufeng continue, "Even if you open it many times, it's not guaranteed to succeed."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You cupped her hands and said, "Sorry to disturb you, goodbye."

Ji You drew the gun from her waist and continued to stealthily move forward. In the dim underground, Liu Fufeng watched her back and felt the clear and gentle aura from Ji You. He couldn't help but step forward and said, "Ji You, wait for me..."

The panting from behind was too obvious, and Ji You couldn't help but say, "Are you really that weak? You get out of breath from just a few steps?"

Liu Fufeng held the wall with one hand, panting continuously, he said, "I just overexerted my spiritual power and it will take a long time to recover."

Ji You: "How long?"

Liu Fufeng estimated and said, "About 10 hours before I can recover my spiritual power."

Ji You's eyes focused ahead, her pace uninterrupted, and after hearing Liu Fufeng, Ji You said with slight exasperation, "You mean you used your spiritual power to perform that Ultimate Hypnosis, overextended yourself, and need 10 hours to recover?"

Liu Fufeng admitted honestly, "Yes."

Ji You asked, "During the recovery period, there's no way to perform the Ultimate Hypnosis again?"

Liu Fufeng nodded, "Yes."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You was speechless, "Your skill needs cooldown time?"

Liu Fufeng tilted his head slightly puzzled, "Cooldown time is?"

"A gaming term, go play some games on the Star Network later, you'll understand," Ji You replied perfunctorily, then lamented, "Such a powerful big move, with such a long cooldown? Consuming so much spiritual power at a time, this— is so limiting!"

Liu Fufeng's breathing didn't lie. Ever since he used his spiritual power, his steps, which were already unstable, became even more unsteady.

Liu Fufeng massaged his temple and said, "It's not that it's too limiting, I think it's especially useful for escaping."

It's just too troublesome; just opening the head is enough to scare someone, so Ji You temporarily put the idea of learning it aside. By now, the duo had groped their way 100 meters underground, surrounded by complete darkness. Wearing their night vision goggles, they could see the underground was filled with numerous passages and pipelines, networks... various man-made constructions intertwined and complicated...

They pressed against the wall, hastily advancing.

Since delving underground, Ji You and Liu Fufeng both checked their Light Computers and found that the signal had indeed been blocked, unable to connect to the network, and could only operate offline. Knowing that Chu Jiaojiao might have suddenly lost contact due to her Light Computer's signal being cut off slightly eased Ji You's concerns. Just as she was about to move forward, she suddenly heard Liu Fufeng say, "Stop."

"Hmm?" Ji You stopped and gave Liu Fufeng a puzzled glance.

Liu Fufeng said, "I feel something's not right."

Ji You: "Specifically?"

Liu Fufeng shook his head, "It disappeared again."

Ji You frowned, carefully sensed around again, and felt nothing special. Then, she released all of her Spiritual Threads, but the Six Spiritual Threads were reluctant to venture out, yet, driven by their Master's persistence, they still crawled out from the Spiritual World.

Then.

They circled around, but the First, Second, Third, Fifth, and Sixth felt nothing. Only the Fourth anxiously spun in circles, [Master, let's go back, it's neither fun here nor is there anything good to eat...]

Even the hesitant Fourth indicated serious danger.

But!

Unable to contact Chu Jiaojiao made Ji You extremely anxious as she harshly pulled at her hair.

Liu Fufeng stood quietly behind her, and all of Ji You's frustration fell into Liu Fufeng's sight. He originally intended not to speak, planning to be a quiet companion, but after some thought, he spoke up, "Ji You, don't doubt yourself, and don't obsess too much. Do what you want, and I—will give you a reading from behind."

"..." Ji You: "What did you say?"

Liu Fufeng seriously took out a seemingly ancient turtle shell from his Space Button, saying, "But my fortune-telling ability is newly learned, a bit unstable, I can only simply tell fortune and misfortune."

Ji You: "..."

Liu Fufeng lowered his head slightly, "Can't guarantee accuracy."

Ji You rolled her eyes, saying, "I just did a reading, and it says you'll get hit."

"By me!" Ji You swung a punch over, thinking Liu Fufeng would dodge, but Liu Fufeng stood still, Ji You's fist took a detour and slammed into the wall.

Liu Fufeng said, "After your punch, I calculated it, and my reading says it's auspicious."

Ji You left him and walked away.

Liu Fufeng hurriedly followed.

Just a few steps out, they suddenly heard a rustling sound from just behind a wall. Ji You stopped in her tracks, raised her gun, and quickly moved to the gap in the door. The rustling continued, and just by listening, she could tell it was the sound of a Black Thorn Bee flapping its wings. The moment Ji You arrived at the crack of the door, she immediately started shooting.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Inside the crack, the Black Thorn Bee was hit with three consecutive shots, striking vital points each time. It immediately convulsed violently, and Ji You seized the moment to leap in, jumping to the back of the Black Thorn Bee, raised her machete, and struck down forcefully.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

The Black Thorn Bee fell on the spot.

Crash~

The whole wall collapsed.

"Retreat!"

Ji You leaped out, and seeing Liu Fufeng still standing there like a fool, reached out, grabbed him up, and sprinted away!

Just then, Ji You felt a terrifying presence rapidly sweeping in, its formless, intangible intimidation was overwhelmingly overwhelming, making one shiver from hair to toes...

This——

What is this?

Ji You had a bad premonition, and then heard Liu Fufeng coming back to his senses, saying, "I have to run now, it's too strong, can't match it at all..."

After saying that.

Liu Fufeng immediately dashed away, leaving no trace behind.

Ji You: "..."

This—

This is weak Liu Fufeng?

This is the weakling who gets out of breath from just a few steps?

Ji You was so angry she almost wanted to curse!

This is protection?

This is the protection Liu Fufeng was talking about?

Damn it?

Chapter 1042: Hoarding Food

Ji You originally thought Liu Fufeng was joking and would soon return, but unexpectedly, he really did leave for good. Ji You's expression darkened, and then she deeply reflected on herself, feeling she shouldn't have hoped for others' humanity.

At any time, you are the most reliable.

Relying on heaven and earth is not as good as relying on yourself.

The ancestors did not deceive me.

...

Liu Fufeng decided to escape at this moment; he should be able to rely on his own abilities to get out. After all, his spiritual power is as strong as mine. Although Ji You was a bit worried, she put away all her chaotic thoughts and continued to explore forward...

Rustle~

Rustle~

Rustle~

Ji You furrowed her brow slightly; this sound—

Somewhat resembles the Black Thorn Bee, but not quite, as if something is desperately imitating the sound of a Black Thorn Bee flapping its wings. Ji You crouched down slightly, approaching cautiously, and strangely, the other party seemed to detect something as well and suddenly paused.

Then.

Silence.

Still silence.

A few seconds later, Ji You moved again, this time she raised her hand and lightly tapped on the wall.

Boom!

After that sound, an equally crisp 'Boom—' came from the other side.

Boom!

Ji You tapped again.

Boom!

The opposite side did the same.

Ji You's eyes brightened, and she lowered her voice, saying, "I am number 4444, calling number 1111."

On the other side of several walls, Chu Jiaojiao was both startled and happy, "Ji You!!!"

"It's me." Ji You was also delighted. Just hearing Chu Jiaojiao's strong vocal power confirmed that this girl was basically fine. If there were any problems, her voice would have long been weak, unable to reach such a high pitch.

On the other side, Chu Jiaojiao was also particularly happy. She didn't move right away but checked around to confirm there were no issues, then she quickly flashed towards Ji You's direction.

Ji You said, "Left 5 meters, then right turn 8 meters, I'm by this stone wall."

Chu Jiaojiao had already rushed over.

The entire process took less than 10 seconds for Chu Jiaojiao to reunite with Ji You. Without having time to say much, Ji You grabbed Chu Jiaojiao and ran: "Quickly, there's something terrifying approaching."

Chu Jiaojiao was stunned: "What are you talking about?"

Ji You's tone deepened: "It might be the Bee Queen."

Oh no?

Once Chu Jiaojiao heard this, she was initially being led by Ji You, but now Chu Jiaojiao grabbed Ji You's hand, bent over, hooked Ji You's shoulder, and with her strength, lifted Ji You onto her own shoulder: "You run too slowly, let me!"

Ji You: "..."

Chu Jiaojiao, true to her toughness, kept hunting Black Thorn Bees in the Underworld and running away constantly. Even while carrying Ji You, she had the energy to joke with Ji You: "Ji You, why have you suddenly gotten so heavy?"

"Did you sneak some food before we set out?"

"Ji You, sneaking food is wrong. As classmates, you must learn to share."

...

Like a maze filled with intricate passageways, lacking surveillance and navigation, forced to rely on one's judgment, it was easy to get lost. Just as Chu Jiaojiao was about to head the wrong way, Ji You hurriedly said: "Right turn! Right turn!"

Chu Jiaojiao quickly stopped and, without any doubt about Ji You, rushed directly in the direction Ji You indicated.

After running a bit further.

Ji You said, "Left, left..."

Chu Jiaojiao ran inside and was suddenly dazed: "Isn't this the place we entered earlier?"

Ji You: "... No? A maze?"

Chu Jiaojiao was bewildered and said: "I don't know, I've been following your directions the whole time."

Ji You frowned. The path she took was the one Liu Fufeng indicated, and she had been following Liu Fufeng's directions the whole way. However, Ji You likes to leave a mark wherever she goes, so at each passageway, she made a record.

Ji You was sure her records were correct; each passage entered had been recorded.

Now, it's incorrect?

Ji You patted Chu Jiaojiao's back, saying, "Put me down."

Chu Jiaojiao complied and let her down.

Ji You walked over, carefully staring at a mark on the door handle at the passageway, a Clover symbol carved with a knife. After observing for a few seconds, Ji You said: "It is right, I carved this myself."

The mark was correct.

The path taken to reach Chu Jiaojiao was smooth, and Liu Fufeng's directions were cleared.

Ji You said, "Jiaojiao, let's go to another marking place."

Chu Jiaojiao, hearing this, picked Ji You up and continued running.

A few seconds later, Chu Jiaojiao stopped and let Ji You down. Ji You stared at the mark and nodded: "It's my note." Since the note bore traces left by her spiritual power magnetic field, Ji You could immediately discern its authenticity, even if it were imitated.

Furthermore.

1.

2.

3.

...

Ji You suddenly said, "Stop!"

Chu Jiaojiao asked: "What's wrong? Did you find something?"

Ji You furrowed her brow tightly, saying: "We've been here before! This mark was thoroughly identified just now."

Chu Jiaojiao's face turned grave: "So, like being trapped? Something has controlled our spiritual thought, forcibly making us repeat in place?"

"That's how bad it is." Sweat was already forming on Ji You's forehead...

Being trapped...

Having become reality.

This—

How terrifying could this thing's spiritual power be?

Ji You clearly understood a point that Chu Jiaojiao didn't know: her Spiritual Silk Cleaning Rate is 100%, she uses spiritual power without any stagnation, and the Six Spiritual Threads have self-awareness, territorial awareness extremely strong, and they self-proclaim as the Universe's strongest entity, definitely won't allow herself to be fooled endlessly... so, the Six Spiritual Threads hadn't noticed anything unusual?

Big trouble.

Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao exchanged a glance, and Chu Jiaojiao said: "Ji You, you just run later, I'll cover."

Ji You said: "Let's not worry about that now, what's the reason for it not letting us leave?"

Chu Jiaojiao: "To eat us?"

Ji You said: "Possible. But if it wants to eat us, why not just come directly?"

Chu Jiaojiao said: "Perhaps, it wants its food to exercise more, increase muscle strength, and taste more chewy?"

Ji You: "..."

Ji You couldn't help but scold: "I think your skin is thick and meat tough, hurting teeth, no need for exercise."

Chu Jiaojiao: "Cough... I was just guessing randomly, or why is it stalling?"

Ji You cleared her throat and said seriously: "I think it already ate enough, wanting to trap us here as stored food, to be consumed when hungry."

"..." Chu Jiaojiao said: "Your guess isn't very comforting either."

At this moment, they both heard a distinct insect buzz: "Buzz—"

Chapter 1043: Bee Queen

"Buzz——"

The sound approached.

In the next moment, a figure flashed in the darkness, rushing directly toward Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao. At that instant, their pupils shrank violently, and Chu Jiaojiao pulled Ji You, spun around the stone wall, and jumped directly behind another door.

However, before they could even steady their feet, the next second, the scalp-tingling buzzing sound resounded beside their ears. Ji You urgently threw out a protective shield net, wrapping herself and Chu Jiaojiao, while Chu Jiaojiao carried Ji You and continued running madly.

The entire underground tunnel was winding and intricate. Despite Chu Jiaojiao's extreme speed, having reached her fastest pace to date, the little bug behind them still followed closely without missing a beat. It flapped its wings, flying at high speed, while Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao tried hard to see what it looked like, but its speed was faster than lightning, making it impossible to discern.

With the speed of this bug, it could catch up to Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao entirely, yet it just maintained a steady pace behind them, seemingly unhurried... Ji You gritted her teeth and said, "Jiaojiao, this thing is doing it on purpose. It's teasing us like we're on a walk."

Chu Jiaojiao: "Walking a dog?"

Ji You: "..."

Ji You was so angry she almost flipped Chu Jiaojiao over, but thought better of it and held back, just venting, "We're in a life-or-death situation, can you be serious? Even though we seem sneaky, we're not dogs. We'll die before yielding."

Chu Jiaojiao carried Ji You, running around and around, yet they remained trapped in a confined space, like a real ghost wall, unable to escape the area. Panting heavily, Chu Jiaojiao ran another step and took a big gulp of air, saying, "Classmate Ji... Ji You, natural predators often lurk in the dark to assess their prey's strength before striking. Or, appearing to toy with its prey while actually evaluating its strength and exhausting its physical strength, waiting to pounce the moment it's weakened and kill it."

Ji You's face grew a bit dark.

Chu Jiaojiao gasped for air: "Do you... do you think our current situation is somewhat similar?"

Ji You pursed her lips: "Not just similar? It's exactly like that."

"No way!" Ji You bit her lip hard and said again, "We can't let it gauge our strength; we must strike back when the chance arises! Make it fear us!" Only by instilling fear in it would their chances of escaping alive increase.

The buzzing sound in their ears got closer and closer. Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao squinted their eyes, and when the sound drew near, Ji You wrapped another layer of the protective shield around them.

Chu Jiaojiao paused her hand holding the energy knife: "... I thought you were going to make a move."

Ji You gritted her teeth and said, "What should we do? It seems like we can't shake it off, nor are we its match."

What Ji You found hard to accept was that the stinky bomb she had painstakingly improved upon was ineffective against this little bug?

In the entire underground world, the stench was overwhelming, but in this foul odor, the little bug showed no abnormality, as if its sense of taste and smell were lost; no matter how strong the stench, it had no effect on it.

What to do?

Chu Jiaojiao stared at Ji You's face right next to hers and suddenly laughed, "If my end is to be with classmate Ji You, come to think of it, it's not too bad."

Ji You: "..."

"Get lost." Ji You scolded, "I'm meant for greater things; I won't perish here. I intend to be a king standing atop the world's peak."

After finishing, Ji You took a deep breath and asked, "Do you still have physical strength?"

Chu Jiaojiao's steps faltered, slipping with every step... She suddenly grabbed a long alloy pipe with her fingers, swung forward with one hand, and slid forward, dragging Ji You with her as they glided forward together.

But even so, the buzzing behind remained pronounced. Moreover, its wing flapping frequency grew higher and louder, seemingly having figured out Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao's strength, preparing for a lethal strike.

Chu Jiaojiao gritted her teeth and replied, "I... I don't feel great, but I can exert 90% of my usual combat power!"

Ji You said, "That's enough."

"Wait for my signal." Ji You squinted while the buzzing drew near, and just as a slight sound from the air rupture approached, she opened her eyes and simultaneously released six spiritual threads.

Bang——

Within the spirit space, a violent explosion, as Boss led Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth out charging, an invisible pressure immediately swelled around them.

The six spiritual threads formed a straight line, flying out horizontally, precisely striking the little bug.

Crack~

A distinctly crisp snap echoed in the surroundings. But the little bug, with its tough skin and flesh, only slightly wobbled against the full force of Ji You's spiritual power. Upon hearing the crisp sound of its shell cracking slightly, the entire body went into a daze for a second, then a pressure capable of destroying this underground world surged in.

Sweat instantly beaded on Chu Jiaojiao's forehead.

Under the immense oppression, Ji You's six spiritual threads rapidly contracted, seemingly about to retreat back into the spirit space; yet in the next second, they advanced instead, forming a net again, and cast it over the flying insect.

Crack~

The insect gently flicked away, sending the entire spiritual silk net slamming against the stone wall beside, without netting it.

Within the tight, solid net, one thread suddenly pulled out; it was Fourth.

While casting the net, Fourth had been waiting opportunistically. Hidden under the hefty body of Boss, as the insect dodged, Fourth's body quickly elongated, its tail coiling around Boss, dangling upside down, springing out to clamp down on the insect's neck with a bite.

As Ji You's spiritual silk net was cast out, Chu Jiaojiao's energy knife already cleaved down.

For Chu Jiaojiao to have gained renown as the top combat beast in the Combat Department among a host of brutes, her strength wasn't all talk, but honed through fights.

The moment Fourth sank its teeth into the little flying insect, Chu Jiaojiao's knife cleaved precisely down.

Bam!

The knife directly hacked into the insect, pinning it fiercely under the blade.

Fourth swiftly retreated.

Chu Jiaojiao firmly pressed against the knife's back, and the insect lay motionless.

Only then did Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao see clearly what the flying insect looked like. It was a small Black Thorn Bee, with a body size about as big as Ji You's fist, two red pupils gleaming with a chilling scarlet light.

Its blue wings edged with golden trim.

Slightly different from other Black Thorn Bees, it wasn't terrifying looking, and upon close inspection, even somewhat pretty.

Chu Jiaojiao pressed against the knife handle, frowning, "Is this really the Bee Queen? Besides being fast, is its power genuinely this weak? Could it be—did we make a mistake?"

Chapter 1044: The Sound of Death

Ji You stared at the Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee in front of her, a flash of doubt in her eyes, but she dared not be careless and said directly, "Jiaojiao, use more force, crush it to death."

No matter if it's the Bee Queen or something else, as long as it's a Black Thorn Bee, as long as it's a Star Beast, it must be crushed to death immediately.

Human development up to now hasn't been without attempts to communicate with Star Beasts, even actively raising them... but all these attempts have ended in failure. Human experience over thousands and tens of thousands of years has told everyone that Star Beasts absolutely cannot be tamed by humans. They are born hostile to humans, always regarding humans as food, and every hundred years, the Beast Tide is the time when all Star Beasts riot, causing devastating damage to the human world.

...

And yet the Star Beasts are ever-reproducing, no matter how many are killed, they are still birthed continuously.

Human technology keeps developing nonstop, but still cannot eradicate Star Beasts. On the contrary, the areas where humans can move have been continuously pressured and compressed by Star Beasts over the years...

Therefore, Ji You is never naive, nor does she have the wild idea of thinking herself distinctive enough to convert a Star Beast for her own use with personal power.

Her attitude towards Star Beasts is singular:

Kill!

Chu Jiaojiao clearly shares Ji You's thoughts. She gripped the knife handle tightly and then, exerting great effort, this time she almost used all her strength to fiercely battle!

Boom!

In an instant, the entire stone column began to collapse.

The small piece of stone wall pressing against the Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee directly crumbled into powder.

However—

The next second.

The Black Thorn Bee, like a Little Flying Insect, was unexpectedly unharmed.

Chu Jiaojiao's eyes darkened.

Ji You shouted, "Retreat!"

"Quickly!"

Ji You grabbed Chu Jiaojiao, urgently dodging to the side of the stone column, but it was too late; the Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee behind them whizzed over, landing directly on Chu Jiaojiao's head, and in the next second, its sharp stinger stabbed towards Chu Jiaojiao's scalp.

At that moment, Chu Jiaojiao deeply felt what it meant for death to be near. In the silence, she even heard the sound of the Grim Reaper slowly cutting off her head with a scythe.

No way out.

No escape.

Every direction was a dead-end.

Chu Jiaojiao saw Ji You's eyes filled with extreme anger and for the first time, saw tears rush forth from them; Chu Jiaojiao wanted to say something, wanted to do something, but no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't do anything.

Her spiritual power was being oppressed by something, unable to move at all. Her limbs, her bones, her every inch of skin, every cell, and even her hair felt a weighty pressure, immovable.

How... how could it be so strong?

Just its aura was already powerful to such a degree?

This—

This is what level of Monster?

Chu Jiaojiao wanted...

At that moment, she thought many, many things, countless thoughts emerged in her mind, vanished, emerged, and then obliterated...

Ultimately, Chu Jiaojiao seemed to see the smiling faces of her parents; they looked at her softly, gently, smiling...

Then—

When Chu Jiaojiao snapped back to reality, she was met with Ji You's angry face!

Ji You punched directly towards Chu Jiaojiao's head.

Crash—

Ji You's fist smashed into the stone wall.

Boom!

...

Rattling, fragments of the stone wall fell down, dust spewed around...

Chu Jiaojiao had been pulled behind Ji You, the Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee's wings flashed slightly, dodging Ji You's attack, as it released Chu Jiaojiao. It gazed at Ji You's eyes burning with rage amidst the smoke, its pair of glowing red compound eyes remained still.

A person and an insect, their gaze clashed in mid-air.

Crackle~

Seeming as if invisible sparks were exploding in the air.

Ji You clenched her teeth tightly, suppressing her shaking body, and head about to explode, forcing herself to hold on and not collapse.

Chu Jiaojiao held her knife again, ready for battle.

second.

seconds.

seconds.

...

Suddenly—

The Black Thorn Bee lightly flapped its wings and then, snap~

The outer layer of Ji You's previous two-layer Protective Shield broke.

Ji You's heart sank.

The Black Thorn Bee didn't move but merely slightly flapped its wings, and then—

Snap~

The second layer of protective shield shattered too.

...

Running?

No escape possible.

This thing wouldn't let Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao have any chance to flee. After breaking two layers of the Protective Shield with its wings, its originally still body suddenly flashed, rushing towards Ji You.

Its target shifted to Ji You.

Ji You's scalp tightened, the gun in her hand was already firing away.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

...

In an instant, ten bullets were fired, but not a single shot hit; Ji You's proud shooting ability seemed like a child playing with a toy water gun when faced with this Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee...

The Black Thorn Bee closed in.

Its mouthparts and stinger simultaneously aimed at Ji You's forehead.

Evasion—

No way to dodge.

Ji You clenched her fists tightly, and in that instant, she shoved Chu Jiaojiao aside. She then swung her hand to grab the Black Thorn Bee in front of her forehead barehanded. But the Black Thorn Bee's mouthparts and stinger had already stabbed down.

"Ji You—" Chu Jiaojiao leaped up, barehanded, trying to catch the Black Thorn Bee, but before her hand could reach out, she was immobilized.

This was Ji You's first taste of death.

Not so wonderful.

Pretty bad.

Quite unpleasant.

Utterly unwilling.

To die like this, she definitely wouldn't rest in peace.

Ji You's Six Spiritual Threads encountered such a strong enemy for the first time, giving their all but still helpless. Now, they knew retreat was no longer an option, so they unanimously decided to go all out and perish together with this terrifying foe!!!

Just then—

Ji You clearly saw the Black Thorn Bee's mouthparts and stinger halt at the moment they'd almost touched her skin.

Stopped?

Ji You was stunned, and Chu Jiaojiao was too.

Thud—

At this moment, a thin figure rolled down from the stone crack. Fu Feng struggled to get up, grabbed Ji You, then pulled Chu Jiaojiao's sleeves, shouting, "Why are you spacing out? Hurry, run."

Woo—

Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao snapped back to reality; without needing Fu Feng's pulling, they sped away, overtaking Fu Feng in the blink of an eye, rushing forward.

Seeing this, Fu Feng stumbled, almost falling.

Then—

Fu Feng's spiritual power was exhausted to the point that he couldn't maintain a high-speed run, his body swayed slightly, and he fell back. Just then, the temporarily immobilized Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee suddenly woke up, fluttering its wings and leaping, attacking Fu Feng's back head. At this point, Chu Jiaojiao, running ahead, turned back and lifted Fu Feng suddenly.

Run!

Ji You led, Chu Jiaojiao slowed a step carrying Fu Feng, the three desperately fled for their lives.

Chapter 1045: Mutual Destruction

The three of them sprinted wildly, while the Red-eyed Black Stinging Bees behind flapped their wings, rapidly pursuing them. Just as it seemed the bees would catch up, Ji You suddenly released Six Spiritual Threads to interfere.

At the brink of life and death, how could the Six Spiritual Threads afford to hold back? Even the Fourth, known for always being lazy, exerted all efforts to resist the palm-sized Black Thorn Bee. Despite the threads going all out, they could only distract it for 1 second.

In the race against death, that second was crucial. Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao ran with such crazed intensity that Ji You even felt for a moment her organs were going to spill out.

After a second, the Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee immediately resumed its chase.

It seemed to have some way to track Ji You and the others; no matter how fast they ran, what obstacles surrounded them, or how many pungent substances they smeared on themselves, it could precisely locate them.

Seeing it about to charge forward, Liu Fufeng, lying seemingly lifeless on Chu Jiaojiao's shoulder, suddenly yelled in terror, "You wretched ghost, get lost! Hurry, scam... don't scare me, I'm not one to be scared easily."

Ji You, Chu Jiaojiao: "..."

The terrified shout had no effect on the Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee, it neither paused nor showed any fright, with a clear target, it headed straight for Liu Fufeng's round back of the head. Seeing this, Liu Fufeng hurriedly reached into the Space Button to pull out a stack of paper figures: "Disperse! Disperse! Disperse!"

The folded stack of paper figures was thrown by Liu Fufeng.

Swoosh—

Without exception, none hit Red-eye.

Red-eye was indeed startled by Liu Fufeng's ridiculous action; it halted slightly, eyed the scattered paper figures with a bit of bewilderment: "Buzz???"

Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao quickly turned to run.

Ji You, while running, asked Liu Fufeng, "Your ghost talisman, who would've thought it could be useful."

Chu Jiaojiao replied, "Who would've thought, who would've thought..."

Then both said in unison, "Do you have more? Can you give us some for self-defense?"

Liu Fufeng weakly responded, "Does it... does it cost money?"

Ji You, Chu Jiaojiao: "..."

Liu Fufeng took out two more stacks, handing them over. Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao were unexpectedly delighted to see there really was so much, but then heard Liu Fufeng speak sincerely, "But I wouldn't suggest you use them."

Chu Jiaojiao: "Why?"

Liu Fufeng replied, "Because they are just ordinary paper and somewhat useless. Ahem... their biggest purpose might be giving you some psychological comfort?"

Ji You, Chu Jiaojiao: "..."

Before they could retort, the relentless Red-eyed once again approached them; this time growing weary of playing games with these three insects, it barely paused before charging directly at Liu Fufeng's head.

Liu Fufeng's pupils shrank—

At that moment, an extremely violent aura surged from all directions, freezing the air of the entire Underworld. Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao noticeably felt a stifled breath, pressed so much that they couldn't breathe.

Even the Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee paused at this moment, the oppressive, dull, violent aura indiscriminately wreaking havoc everywhere...

Its wings, lightly fluttered...

Sweat poured from Chu Jiaojiao's forehead, and her face paled like paper.

Ji You also felt terrible, her spiritual power was already severely depleted, and she was still able to maintain a high-speed escape, only by sheer will to survive. Now, her steps faltered, on the verge of collapse—

In the Spiritual World, the droopy Six Spiritual Threads almost succumbed to the terrifying aura, nearly choked to death. Originally capable of filling the entire Spiritual World with their corpulent fibers, now they shrank to the size of pinholes...

At this point, Ji You realized that Little Golden Dragon was right about Liu Fufeng's spiritual power being terrifying, cautioning to stay away. These words... were proven to be true after all.

And—

Liu Fufeng, who unleashed such a mighty commotion, rolled his eyes and fainted.

He truly fainted.

Ji You bit her lip hard, tasted the salty blood seeping into her mouth, only then realizing her lips were bitten through.

Wh—

What to do?

She wanted to say something, but as she opened her mouth, she spat out blood.

Splat—

At this moment, the pale-faced Chu Jiaojiao suddenly shouted loudly, grabbed Ji You by the collar, swung her onto her shoulder, and then started sprinting madly once again!

Splat—

Splat—

Splat—

Chu Jiaojiao ran while spewing blood, ran while spewing blood stubbornly.

...

After Liu Fufeng fainted, although the violent, frenzied aura did not weaken, it didn't intensify either... Interfered by the aura, the briefly stopped Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee continued unhurt, resuming its pursuit.

This time, Liu Fufeng was severely injured.

Ji You was severely injured.

Chu Jiaojiao was severely injured.

Lacking enough strength to interfere, Red-eye progressed without hindrance, catching up with the stumbling, anytime-could-fall Chu Jiaojiao...

At this time, nearing the passage opening to the surface, a hint of weak light streamed in, starlike flickers brought a semblance of warmth to the dark, dank Underworld, yet plunged Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao's hearts to the depths.

It's over.

...

After Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee caught up, it didn't immediately savor its prey. Instead, it suddenly raised its head, emitting a high-pitched cry: "Buzz—"

In the blink of an eye, countless Black Thorn Bees, big and small, swarmed from all around, surrounding the narrow passage tightly.

Ji You: "..."

In Chu Jiaojiao's eyes flickered a trace of helpless sadness, she said, "If I die like this, my grandma surely wouldn't arrange my burial. Then... I'd be the most worthless dead in the Chu Family, my grandma would certainly think of me as a disgrace."

Ji You didn't speak, she glanced at Liu Fufeng beside her, seeing him unconscious like a dead pig, for a moment she almost envied—dying unknowingly seemed somewhat better than watching oneself die like Chu Jiaojiao and herself?

Sh... Should she knock herself out?

Ji You contemplated the feasibility.

Despite the Underworld's persistent stench, many Black Thorn Bees rushing in from the surface were dazed by the fumes, though many retained some semblance of sanity to heed their queen's command.

Red-eyed Black Stinging Bee, that is, the Bee Queen surveyed its subjects, an angry aura abruptly released, intimidating the entire Black Stinging Bee Swarm, then it turned to bore into Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao.

Ji You quietly clutched the High-level Energy Box in her palm, her heart hardened:

Knock herself out, kneel, and wait to die?

Damn it.

I'll take it down with me!

Chapter 1046: An Old Man

Ji You clenched her fists as the Bee Queen approached her, Chu Jiaojiao, and Liu Fufeng. She found the distance to the Bee Queen insufficiently close; closer, a little closer...

Ji You stayed silent while Chu Jiaojiao felt the sudden stiffness in Ji You's muscles against her shoulder. She, too, held her breath and grasped the bomb in her palm tightly alongside Ji You.

Closer.

A little closer.

...

The two simultaneously murmured in their hearts.

The Bee Queen's pair of scarlet compound eyes locked onto them intensely. It seemed to lose interest in toying with Ji You and her companions, leapt with a flap, and charged toward Liu Fufeng's head—

Apparently, it considered Liu Fufeng a greater threat, intending to eliminate this 'insect' first.

At this moment, Liu Fufeng regained consciousness and, upon opening his eyes, saw the enlarged Bee Queen in front of him, screamed in fright, and clung to Ji You's elbow: "Help!!!"

The sudden pull on Ji You caused Chu Jiaojiao to lose her balance and fall, and Ji You also slipped from Chu Jiaojiao's back, just as Liu Fufeng did...

The Bee Queen's attack missed, and it angrily beat its wings furiously, throwing away Liu Fufeng and directly charging at the seemingly weak and defenseless Ji You nearby.

At that moment, a faint whooshing sound suddenly came from afar.

Whoosh—

An arrow shot toward the Bee Queen but deftly dodged it, narrowly scraping past Ji You's nose.

Whoosh—

The second arrow.

Whoosh—

The third arrow.

In an instant, three arrows were released simultaneously, yet, unfortunately, each one was effortlessly evaded by the Bee Queen.

Sheng Qingyan on the ground frowned deeply, his fingers, legs, and teeth all trembling, yet he stubbornly drew the bow, using the roughly repaired underground monitoring system, painstakingly fixed by Shen Changqing, Yue Qiyuan, and Yue Qiguang, to locate Ji You and her companions. Spotting the danger immediately, Sheng Qingyan calmly drew and shot.

But!

Failed.

Failed again.

And still failed.

Sheng Qingyan bit his lip fiercely, hands shaking, attempting once more. However, in the next second, the Bee Queen was upon Ji You's head, its sharp proboscis and tail stinger stabbing down!

Sheng Qingyan suddenly punched the ground.

Boom—

The ground trembled violently!

The exhausted Yue Qiguang, Shen Changqing, and Yue Qiyuan were staring at the monitoring screen, their eyes filled with rage!!!

Ji You, with her eyes slightly closed, suddenly felt a sense of calm as this moment approached. She even felt like the world seemed to slow down, and all the Black Thorn Bees around her seemed frozen in place. She could clearly see the Bee Queen's incredibly fast movement trajectory; it was getting closer, closer.

It landed on her head.

In a brief glance, Ji You still had the mind to notice that this Bee Queen wasn't entirely azure blue. Besides its gold-trimmed wings and scarlet compound eyes, its six legs had tiny black spots that were so subtle they seemed almost nonexistent.

Ji You gripped the energy box in her hand, just about to pull and ignite it—

At this moment—

The ground trembled.

Rumble—

A clap of thunder in broad daylight exploded in everyone's ears, causing Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao to pause their actions as they heard a voice: "Retreat!"

Amidst the densely packed Black Stinging Bee Swarm that blocked the entire space, at this aged, yet loudly intimidating voice, suddenly clambered to escape outside in panic...

The Red-eyed Bee Queen's proboscis and tail stinger froze right above Ji You's scalp, unmoving.

Ji You could distinctly feel the Bee Queen's agitation; it was unsettled, extremely so.

Who?

In the next second.

A pair of hands extended from midair, directly grasping the Bee Queen on Ji You's head, Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao's pupils widened as they saw an elderly man standing before them.

As the elderly man descended to the ground, his long arms reached out, fingers slightly curled, pinching the Bee Queen between his fingers.

Initially, the Bee Queen attempted to struggle and escape, but a cold gleam in the elder's eyes and a pinch of his fingers led to—

Click—

The Bee Queen's indestructible shell visibly cracked.

Ji You, Chu Jiaojiao, and Liu Fufeng all gaped wide-mouthed.

The elder squinted his eyes and applied force once more.

Click—

The Bee Queen's body snapped in half.

Ji You, Chu Jiaojiao, Liu Fufeng: "!!!"

So strong!

A Bee Queen of an unknown level! A foe that rendered spiritual power mutants like Liu Fufeng and the physically powerful Chu Jiaojiao helpless was effortlessly subdued by this elder with a mere pinch. This... This was simply indescribably formidable!

Who is this?

Ji You looked closely and, as her gaze tightened, suddenly fell silent.

The elder pocketed the Bee Queen's corpse and turned to Ji You and the others, a hint of a smile full of admiration flashing in his wise eyes as he said, "Children, you've done very well. Now, go out and reunite with your comrades."

The elder's face was full of wrinkles. The lines were deep, and his face, neck, and hands were peppered with variously sized age spots and pimples...

He stood with his hands behind his back, his waist bent, back hunched, yet his eyes gleamed with sharp determination.

The unstable Chu Jiaojiao took a deep breath, reaching out to support Ji You, who was on the verge of collapse, and Liu Fufeng, whose steps faltered and coughed blood incessantly, saying, "W-We should go."

Ji You daringly asked, "Senior, are you the Marshal himself?"

His appearance, height, demeanor, and the specific number of wrinkles on his face were exactly like the reclusive Alliance Marshal—He Chuan—that Ji You recalled, who only publicly appeared on significant occasions in the Alliance.

The old man glanced at the still tightly enclosed Black Bee Swarm, turning to Ji You, his usual stern expression softened, revealing a gentle and kind smile, "Yes, I am."

Ji You: "!!!"

Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao both felt dizzy, slightly overwhelmed by the bewildering situation!

At this moment, Marshal He Chuan drew a knife, suddenly bent his leg, and then tossed the knife forward. Instantly, the densely packed Black Thorn Bee Swarm couldn't dodge in time, and their heads were severed.

Thud, thud...

The Black Thorn Bee's bodies fell like rain, thundering down. Listening to this sound, Ji You, Chu Jiaojiao, and Liu Fufeng were utterly shocked, their mouths agape wide enough to fit a duck egg!

No!

An ostrich egg!

Then, before Ji You and the others could process their shock, He Chuan suddenly waved his hand, and Ji You felt a slight, gentle thrust, propelling her, Chu Jiaojiao, and Liu Fufeng up to the surface.

Chapter 1047: Even Tough Guys Cry

As Ji You, Chu Jiaojiao, and Liu Fufeng returned to the surface feeling dizzy, they looked around. The expressions on all three faces were dazed and puzzled:

Who am I?

Where am I?

What am I doing?

...

Philosophical questions that can't explain the current situation of the three, because Ji You feels this is beyond comprehension; it's a fantasy problem.

With a wave of the hand, sending a group of three to the surface?

If this isn't fantasy, what is it?

...

At the ground passage entrance, Sheng Qingyan and four others endured intense pain, rushing to the entrance. Upon truly seeing Ji You and the others return safely and intact, Sheng Qingyan and the four were instantly red-eyed, none more exaggerated than Yue Qiguang.

Yue Qiguang let out a loud shout: "Damn! Dad thought you were dead!"

"Holy crap!"

"Dad truly thought you were dead."

As Yue Qiguang spoke, a few crystal-clear drops fell from his red eyes, then he quickly wiped them away. Upon finishing, he found Ji You and the others staring at him with strange eyes, so Yue Qiguang furrowed his brows and said, "What are you staring at? Never seen a macho man cry?"

"Cough cough... "

"Cough cough... "

"Cough cough... "

Immediately, a bout of intense coughing, both Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao wiped the bloodstains from their mouths, Chu Jiaojiao chuckled: "I've never seen a macho man cry before, really rare!"

Ji You said slightly ashamed: "Sorry, I, Mr. Ji, pride myself on being knowledgeable, yet now I find my experience was indeed limited. This macho version of crying, I've never seen before. Honestly, it's kind of nice."

Yue Qiguang dark-faced, said: "Scram, Dad can't be bothered with you."

Finished speaking.

Yue Qiguang, dragging a broken arm, turned and walked to the monitor.

Sheng Qingyan carefully glanced at Chu Jiaojiao, then intently observed Ji You, and finally turned to glance at Liu Fufeng, then, without saying anything, turned and left.

Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao found it a bit odd.

Ji You said: "Is this really spicy eye?"

Chu Jiaojiao: "Maybe? Maybe not?"

"..." Ji You: "Maybe you just said nonsense."

Chu Jiaojiao laughingly said: "Ah! It's great to be alive."

Finished speaking.

Barely a second later, Chu Jiaojiao staggered forward, collapsing to the ground. Beside her, Shen Changqing and Yue Qiyuan each held a hand, catching her as she completely fainted, Ji You lifted one of her eyelids but couldn't open it.

Shen Changqing whispered: "She must be exhausted from running."

Yue Qiyuan said with some feeling: "Only a beast could hang on without fainting."

Ji You's situation was as dire as Chu Jiaojiao's; her mental exhaustion was enormous. Still, she managed to stay upright, leaning crookedly against the fortress wall, pressing her temple hard with her index finger, asking: "Did you fix the monitor? Or was it the Lord Marshal who had it repaired?"

"What's happening outside?"

"What about Senior Ye?"

...

Once Ji You spoke, a stream of questions shot out like a machine gun, Yue Qiyuan rolled his eyes and sat next to her on the floor, back against the wall, using it for support and said: "Worry about yourself first, I bet you'll faint in 5 seconds."

Ji You ignored him and turned to Shen Changqing.

After laying the unconscious Chu Jiaojiao on the floor, Shen Changqing sat down beside her, leaning against the wall, answering: "The monitor was repaired by Ah Guang, Ayuan, and me, but not fully fixed, just roughly a bit. We estimated the three most probable positions you might appear, only restored the

monitoring system for those three places. The battle outside isn't going well, six warriors are severely injured."

"Senior Ye was hurt too."

"Thankfully, the Marshal arrived in time, saving a few, otherwise—" He didn't finish the last sentence, but Ji You heard enough to understand how perilous the situation was.

Shen Changqing said: "The fortress was about to be breached, fortunate the Lord Marshal arrived timely, otherwise, we...we might not have seen you again."

Ji You fell silent.

The battlefield, it's just so harsh.

Even though Ji You knew in advance the battlefield would be brutal, harsh to a point she might someday find unacceptable, still—really reaching this step, having just one foot slightly crossing into it, not truly touching the battlefield, Ji You felt a suffocating weight.

The three were still talking when a silhouette slowly walked out from the underground passage.

—It was Marshal He Chuan.

No one fails to recognize him.

If Admiral Bai Ji is the War God of the Alliance, victorious everywhere. Then He Chuan is the Guardian God of the Alliance; with him around, akin to a stabilizer, whether it's the Alliance upper echelon or regular civilians, they feel reassured.

But!

He Chuan's figure isn't tall and mighty; instead, his physique is quite emaciated and thin. Since Shen Changqing and the younger generation have memory, he's always hunched over, seemingly ready to collapse at any moment.

He Chuan emerged from the underground passage, limping, moving so slowly as if the short few meters could take forever, the feeling that season Yi and Shen Changqing among others couldn't stop wanting to stand up and rush to support him the moment, suddenly he appeared before season Yi among others, kind eyes and a gentle smile.

Ji You, Shen Changqing, Yue Qiyuan, Sheng Qingyan, Yue Qiguang, all five straighten their chests and loudly said: "Greetings, Marshal!"

He Chuan gazed at the children, kindly said: "Hello to you all."

Finished speaking, He Chuan looked with affection at Shen Changqing, smiling: "Little Stupid is here too."

"..." Shen Changqing blushed slightly and said: "Grandpa He..."

He Chuan laughed heartily, next, he turned to Liu Fufeng, saying: "Hello, Mr. Fufeng." He did not address Liu Fufeng as Crown Prince, nor did he directly speak his title of Prince Ji now, only calling Liu Fufeng's name, not overly disrespectful nor with an intention to kick when down.

Liu Fufeng lifted his face, looking at him, smiled faintly, politely said: "Hello, Mr. He Chuan."

A Alliance Marshal and a neighboring former Crown Prince, their attitudes weren't overly warm, but not cold either. After exchanging pleasantries briefly, their conversation paused.

Next, He Chuan lowered his gaze toward the ground where Chu Jiaojiao lay. Ji You, Shen Changqing, and the lots were tense watching him, sensing the children's unease, He Chuan smiled and said: "Luckily, just some internal injuries with physical strength exhaustion."

Finished speaking.

He Chuan took out a treatment cabin, addressing the group of injured, He Chuan pointed at Chu Jiaojiao saying: "She first."

The rumble outside never stopped.

After talking, He Chuan directly turned and exited through the fortress door—

Chapter 1048: Shattering Worldviews

When He Chuan stepped outside and stopped in the open space at the dock, looking up at the battle above the sky, Ji You and the others realized there was no accompanying entourage for the Marshal.

Front, back, left, right...

Ji You and the others looked all around and truly found only the Marshal alone.

The Bee Queen was dead, and the giant Black Thorn Beasts outside were in complete chaos, each fighting independently without the previous order and discipline. Ye Liqiang and the other warriors who still had combat power chose to unite and eliminate them one by one.

But the scattered swarm of Black Thorn Bees also posed a great threat and danger. They were all at level 4 or higher, with some even at level 6. Ants can bite an elephant to death, especially when these ants are the size of elephants. Ye Liqiang and the others found it slow to kill the giant Black Thorn Bees; it took about half an hour to defeat one. Plus, other Black Thorn Bees nearby could always join in for disruption or sneak attacks...

Ye Liqiang already felt exhausted, panting heavily, thinking about how to unexpectedly give the Star Beast in front of him a fatal blow. Suddenly—

"Everyone retreat!"

With a single command, the entire battlefield of giant Black Thorn Bees abruptly stopped in their tracks.

Ye Liqiang breathed a sigh of relief and looked at the gaunt figure standing on the ground, his eyes misting slightly.

—It was the Marshal.

Lord Marshal is back.

Ye Liqiang immediately led the warriors, all driving their mechas, to retreat to the ground. As they withdrew, the surrounding Black Thorn Bees, whether mutated giant bees or normal-sized ones, showed no reaction and let Ye Liqiang and the others retreat safely.

Once Ye Liqiang and the others landed on the ground, He Chuan suddenly waved his hand lightly—

Thus—

All the Black Thorn Bees present, whether giant or ordinary, suddenly went crazy, attacking and biting each other...

Crunch~

Crunch~

Crunch~

Ji You and the others all widened their eyes: "!!!"

So... so strong!

But—

That wasn't enough. Right when Ji You, Shen Changqing, Yue Qiguang, and... a few others stared unblinkingly, He Chuan waved his hand again, and suddenly, a terrifying aura that made Ji You's Spiritual Silk tremble filled the entire Dock 1.

Then—

Under this terrifying aura, all the Black Thorn Bees present started to fall, dropping down as they turned to ashes.

Yes.

Ashes.

Ji You clearly smelled a burnt scent, but it was only momentary and then disappeared.

This—

What kind of terrifying power is this?

In a mere gesture, the giant Black Thorn Bee swarm that Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao couldn't defeat even with their full efforts turned to dust, even the Black Thorn Bee swarm that formidable seniors like Ye Liqiang could only fend off but couldn't guarantee to eliminate... just... disappeared.

Ji You stared wide-eyed, mouth agape.

This scene was too impactful.

Indeed.

Ji You couldn't fully comprehend this—

This isn't the interstellar era; it's the era of magic and cultivation!

Shen Changqing, Sheng Qingyan... though they were also greatly astonished, so much that they trembled all over, they seemed to have always been aware of the Marshal's power, shocked but not surprised. Completely unlike someone like Ji You, whose entire worldview was overturned.

For a long time.

For a long time.

...

There was no sound at the scene.

Ji You, Shen Changqing, Sheng Qingyan... all several just stood there blankly, eyes fixed on Marshal He Chuan's gaunt back. After doing all this, He Chuan didn't turn around or talk to anyone else. He simply lifted his head slightly, eyes gazing at a certain point in the sky, hands behind his back, standing still...

For a long time.

He Chuan suddenly turned around, nodded to Ye Liqiang and the warriors, then took out a jet-black mecha from the Space Button and flew towards the sky in a blink.

second.

seconds.

seconds.

...

Neither the people in the fortress like Ji You nor the warriors like Ye Liqiang on the open ground at the dock made a sound. The air held a quiet atmosphere, seemingly capable of remaining silent for eternity.

Then—

Ji You suddenly said, "Ahem... I originally thought Lord Marshal would wave his hand and ride the wind, stepping on the air."

Sheng Qingyan and others: "..."

Ji You looked slightly embarrassed and said, "Ahem... Didn't you think so too?"

For Lord Marshal who can kill a mass of Star Beasts with a flick of his finger, riding on air to fly upwards, what's strange about that?

Sheng Qingyan glared at Ji You, slightly discontented: "Poor dead, this is Lord Marshal, I forbid you to joke around."

Ji You: "...I wasn't joking... I was serious." In fact, her entire worldview, outlook on life, value system... had all been violently shaken and she hadn't recovered yet.

Beside her, Shen Changqing explained, "Marshal can't climb walls, nor does he have wings, naturally he can't fly to the sky, he definitely needs the mecha. Also—the Marshal used Spiritual Power Strangulation earlier."

Ji You: "???"

Although He Chuan had disappeared without a trace, Shen Changqing still stared at the sky, a burning light flickering in his dark eyes: "Theoretically speaking, spiritual power strong enough to a certain realm can completely annihilate a creature from spirit to body together. My grandpa can do that now too."

Ji You: "!!!"

Ji You stared: "Our grandpa can too?"

Shen Changqing's mouth twitched, then his face flushed slightly, saying, "One day, I too will be able to do it." His goal has always been to catch up with grandpa and surpass grandpa.

Thinking for a moment, Shen Changqing then softly explained, "But my grandpa's spiritual power strength isn't as strong as Grandpa Marshal. Grandpa Marshal can already directly annihilate a vast number of Star Beasts."

"So... so strong!" It was only then that Yue Qiyuan came to his senses.

"This has completely surpassed the realm of human cognition, right?" Yue Qiguang couldn't help but exclaim, then immediately clenched his fist, loudly said, "Someday, my strength will definitely not lose to Lord Marshal!"

Ji You couldn't help but retort, "Wasn't it just recently that you swore to defeat Admiral Bai Ji, and now, you dare aim high to defeat Lord Marshal?" Then Ji You suddenly changed her tone, loudly said, "I am different; my goal is to defeat all strong opponents in the Universe and stand on the Peak of the Universe!"

Yue Qiguang: "..."

Yue Qiguang didn't even want to pay attention to her anymore. He looked towards Shen Changqing and others, asking, "Hey... What should we do now?"

What to do?

Of course, it's time to go back to heal.

Yue Qiyuan pointed at the treatment cabin on the ground, where Chu Jiaojiao still hadn't woken up, and said, "We must go back immediately, we can't delay anymore."

Right then, Ye Liqiang led a group of warriors towards the fortress where Ji You and the others were staying—

Chapter 1049: Cleaning Up the Battlefield

Ji You, Shen Changqing, Sheng Qingyan... all stood up straight and neat, saluting to Ye Liqiang and the other warriors: "Seniors!"

Ye Liqiang and the others paused for a moment, seeing this group of energetic kids, Ye Liqiang smiled and said: "Originally, I thought you would all be limping, but you're all fine."

As he spoke.

Ye Liqiang stepped forward and gave Ji You, Shen Changqing, Sheng Qingyan... a hard pat on the shoulder, laughing: "Good!"

"Very good!"

"Worthy successors of our Alliance!"

"The new wave!"

1, 2, 3... a total of 17, not one less, not one more, exactly right. As Senior Ye Liqiang was speaking, Ji You quietly counted the number of warriors again, her smile growing even brighter. She said loudly: "Seniors, you better stand firm, don't get knocked over by us new waves onto the beach."

Ye Liqiang: "..."

This kid, truly cheeky, truly needs a good smack.

Ye Liqiang said: "The Black Thorn Bee disturbance here has been resolved. We will prepare to return. Kids, do you want to return to Jiao Space Station with us, or return directly to Lanyue Star?"

Ji You looked at Sheng Qingyan and the others, who said, "It's up to you."

Then, Ji You said loudly: "We will go back with the seniors."

The group had some injured, some fainted, some disabled... Ji You was afraid that if anything went wrong on the way back to Lanyue Star, it would be terrible. It was better to recuperate both body and mind before returning to Lanyue Star.

Ye Liqiang said gently: "My suggestion is also to rest before returning."

Ji You, Shen Changqing... all said in unison: "We'll follow the seniors' arrangement."

Returning to Jiao Space Station cannot happen immediately. More than half of the warriors led by Ye Liqiang were severely injured and incapacitated, and the rest were also quite hurt.

They fought on the ground, 17 people against more than a hundred Level 4-6 Black Thorn Bees. Each person faced 5 or 6 bees, the pressure and danger were imaginable. Fortunately, the warriors were experienced enough to hold on until the Marshal arrived. If the Marshal had been half an hour late, this team would definitely have faced casualties. If they had confronted the Bee Queen, there might have been a total wipeout.

Fortunately.

Ye Liqiang arranged for all the severely injured to be placed in the repair cabin, while the mildly injured or those with remaining strength went out to clean up the battlefield.

Ji You lay in the repair cabin, slightly mending her internal injuries. Feeling she had the strength to move, she thought for a moment and offered to help Senior Ye Liqiang clean and clear the battlefield.

Ye Liqiang thought for a moment and agreed.

Then.

Sheng Qingyan, Shen Changqing, Yue Qiguang, Yue Qiyuan, and others all followed Ji You out of the fortress.

Outside the fortress, it was a mess.

Everywhere the eyes could see were large and small craters and some severed limbs of Black Thorn Bees.

Ji You's eyes lit up at the sight.

Sheng Qingyan saw Ji You's expression and said disdainfully, "I don't pick up trash."

"..." Ji You scowled and said, "Does my face say I'm going to pick up trash?"

In the next second.

Ji You shouted, "Yes, I'm going to pick up trash."

Sheng Qingyan snorted, "Well, I don't pick up trash. Do whatever you want."

After speaking, Sheng Qingyan voluntarily followed behind Senior Xiao Liu and the others, wanting to work with them. Unexpectedly, Senior Xiao Liu and a few others were using pliers to pry Black Thorn Bee legs from the cracks in the broken walls.

Then.

Senior Xiao Liu turned around, his face lit up with a warm smile: "Sorry, we're picking up trash too."

Sheng Qingyan: "..."

Sheng Qingyan staggered: "Are you really just cleaning the battlefield? Nothing else?"

Xiao Liu shook his head: "No."

"..." Sheng Qingyan didn't believe it. He shook his head and said: "Shouldn't you be finding out more of the truth? Like why did the Black Thorn Bees suddenly erupt? How did they quietly breed and grow so many Level 4 and 5 without your stationed troops noticing? How did they escape your monitoring?"

"..."

"So many, so many? Isn't that more interesting and meaningful than picking up trash?" Sheng Qingyan tried hard to stay calm and seriously voiced his concerns.

Xiao Liu smiled: "These matters have been reported by the Captain and Marshal, and the Marshal already understands the cause of the anomaly. Later, there will be a detailed report to the higher-ups. These aren't concerns for ordinary warriors like us. We only have to take care of what's in front of us."

What's in front is, of course, picking up trash.

Saying that, Xiao Liu bent down and pried a Black Thorn Bee leg from the brick cracks, then pried a pair of intact wings. Another warrior admired Xiao Liu's find and said enviously: "Vice Captain, you are really lucky."

These materials can not only be traded for credit points, but more importantly, can be exchanged for Legion supplies or even Legion points.

Xiao Liu smiled and stored them in the Space Button. Then, the group continued searching.

Originally, the vast Southern Hemisphere of Bee Head Star was filled with a Black Thorn Bee army, but suddenly not a single one could be found. Marshal He Chuan almost single-handedly wiped out the entire Black Thorn Bee clan on Bee Head Star.

Truly admirable.

Ji You bent down, searching for Black Thorn Bee remnants while observing carefully. She found that these remnants were all left from the battle between Ye Liqiang's warriors and the Black Thorn Bee swarm. As for those killed by the Lord Marshal, they were truly turned to ashes with a wave of the hand. The scattered ashes on the ground mixed with dirt; if you didn't know beforehand, you couldn't even tell they were the corpses of Black Thorn Bees.

Strong.

Truly strong.

Ji You's heart was still in immense shock. She felt a little dizzy, her world view was shattered, and her previous knowledge needed to be refreshed.

After sweeping the open space outside the fortress, Ji You had decent findings, but they were all remnants, not a single complete piece, leaving Ji You and her companions a bit regretful.

Then——

Ji You suddenly said: "Guys, listen to me, let's dig holes together."

Everyone: "..."

Ji You said: "What are you doing standing there? Dig holes to pick up trash."

Sheng Qingyan huffed, "You guys go, I'm not going."

Ji You squinted and said, "There are many giant Black Thorn Bees me and Jiaojiao killed underground, all intact, and we haven't had the time to pick them yet. Whoever finds them, keeps them."

Sheng Qingyan said: "I'm going, no one is allowed to stop me."

Chapter 1050: Speculation

Ji You, Sheng Qingyan, Shen Changqing... ran faster than anyone else, disappearing from the surface in the blink of an eye. Everything underground remained pitch black because most of the surveillance and lighting systems had been damaged. The originally labyrinthine tunnels were occasionally blocked, so the group's pace was not very fast. By the time Ji You collected over a dozen corpses, Sheng Qingyan and Shen Changqing hadn't gained much either.

The group picked up Black Thorn Bee corpses as they continued their exploration.

When they reached the place where Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao, Liu Fufeng encountered the Bee Queen and got lost, their footsteps paused, and then Shen Changqing, Sheng Qingyan, and others instinctively began to meticulously examine this narrow space.

After they finished viewing it.

The expressions of Shen Changqing, Sheng Qingyan, and Yue Qiyuan weren't good. Sheng Qingyan said indignantly, "I've checked it out, and there really isn't anything special."

Ji You frowned, saying, "But Jiaojiao, Student Fufeng, and I were definitely going in circles and couldn't find the way. I was following the marks I left behind, but still, I couldn't leave this narrow area."

With a calm face, Shen Changqing pondered for a moment and said, "There are no traces at the scene, it doesn't look like something was preemptively arranged. The only possibility is that this Bee Queen interfered with you using spiritual power."

Not only humans, but Star Beasts like Black Thorn Bees, and other ordinary creatures in the universe, such as rabbits, pigs, and ducks without the Star Beast X virus, all possess spiritual power. The difference is that the spiritual power fluctuations of these ordinary creatures are very weak. For example, the fluctuations of ordinary plants' spiritual power can be virtually ignored.

However, humans and Star Beasts have very strong spiritual power fluctuations. Someone as strong as Lord Marshal can easily crush an entire swarm of giant Black Thorn Bees with both body and spirit using just spiritual power.

And what about the Bee Queen?

This Bee Queen with red eyes, gold edges, and black spots, its spiritual power was strong enough to affect the judgment of Ji You, Chu Jiaojiao, and Liu Fufeng regarding their surroundings. It directly interfered with them, causing them to have a misguided understanding of the environment around them, making them circle around the same place repeatedly without realizing it.

Undoubtedly, it was very strong.

Compared to Ji You and the others, it was so strong it could completely overpower them.

But!

When it met Marshal He Chuan, undoubtedly, it was very weak.

In fact, it didn't even have a chance or time to counterattack before the Marshal effortlessly crushed it.

...

How high the Marshal's spiritual power is remains a secret, never disclosed by the Alliance, and none of Ji You and the others know it. Comparing it with this Bee Queen of the Black Thorn Bee highlights the Marshal's spiritual strength even more.

Shen Changqing said, "I didn't experience it personally, but based on the surveillance footage, I can roughly estimate that this Bee Queen is at least Level 10."

Ji You and others: "!!!"

Ji You exclaimed, "Is it really that high?"

Shen Changqing frowned, saying, "That's just my conservative estimate; I even suspect it reached a level beyond 10. Is it Level 11? Or Level 12? Or even..."

Ji You opened her mouth, "Isn't Level 10 the highest?"

Shen Changqing gently shook his head, "Level 10 is an average of the strength of all Star Beasts, categorized by this standard. On the surface, Level 10 is the highest and most dangerous Star Beast level. But, there are some Star Beasts whose strength clearly exceeds Level 10. However, these types of Star Beasts are extremely rare, so for various considerations, the Alliance officially established only ten levels."

After listening to Shen Changqing, Ji You's mouth was agape enough to stuff in an ostrich egg, but soon she suddenly slapped her thigh and laughed loudly: "Hahaha..."

"Hahaha..."

"I, Ji You, truly am the king standing at the Peak of the Universe, with Level 11 and 12 Star Beasts all defeated under my hand; I am simply unbeatable..."

"Just thinking about it is so thrilling."

"I've once severely beaten a Level 12 Star Beast!!!"

"Hahaha..."

Everyone: "..."

Sheng Qingyan rolled her eyes, saying, "Did you forget about Lord Marshal? Wasn't it the Marshal who killed the Bee Queen?"

"Ahem..." Ji You straightened her face and said seriously, "Anyway, escaping from such a terrifying Bee Queen is an undeniable fact! No one can negate that about me!"

"If it were you, could you have escaped?" Ji You asked in return.

Sheng Qingyan was speechless and closed her mouth.

Yue Qiyuan said, "Stop interrupting, we came underground to investigate the abnormal behavior of the Black Thorn Bees, so let's be serious and examine it carefully."

What exactly caused the abnormal behavior of the Black Thorn Bees? Senior Ye Liqiang and other warriors, due to unknown concerns or military orders, never publicly explained it to Ji You and the others, but Ji You and her partners hinted once and found that they could search for the truth themselves, so why hesitate?

The group immediately rushed into the underground world.

Yue Qiguang asked, "Fools, after all your arguments, do you know where the Bee Queen came from? From which direction did it emerge?"

This question stumped Ji You and the others temporarily.

Ji You turned to Yue Qiyuan and asked, "Can your S-level spiritual power still sense the traces left by the Bee Queen?"

Yue Qiyuan shook his head and said, "No. In fact, as soon as I came in earlier, I was probing and pondering over this problem, but there really isn't any trace. I released my spiritual power fully but still couldn't sense the Bee Queen's remaining presence."

Shen Changqing also shook his head, saying, "I can't feel it either."

Both are S-level spiritual talent possessors, extremely sensitive to spiritual perception, yet they both can't feel anything. Yue Qiyuan and Ji You, along with other men, believe it's because Lord Marshal annihilated this Black Thorn Bee completely, from beginning to end, from its presence to its soul, leaving no residue at all.

Strong.

Once again, Ji You realized Lord Marshal's might.

Suddenly, Shen Changqing asked back, "Ji You, how about you? Can you sense the Bee Queen's presence?"

Ji You shook her head, saying, "Neither can I."

Her Six Strands of spiritual silk have completely wilted; it may take some time to fully recover. Without the help of the Six Strands, Ji You couldn't trace the Black Thorn Bee.

"This Bee Queen is very strong, conservatively estimated to be Level 11 or Level 12," Shen Changqing murmured as he spoke, "But they couldn't have suddenly grown to such a high level in a short time, which means—"

In other words—whether it's the Bee Queen or other giant Black Thorn Bees, they are all modified experimental products.

Time trickles away bit by bit...