

Scavengers 281

Chapter 281: Chicken Flavor, Extra Crunchy

This night, Ji You stayed awake until dawn.

When she heard the wake-up call, she suddenly rolled out of bed, pushed open the door, and heard a thump outside as if something had collapsed.

Ji You was startled and stepped out of her room.

Turning her head, she saw an unidentifiable object outside her door, which turned out to be Chu Jiaojiao. Chu Jiaojiao, clad in pajamas, was curled up by the door, rubbing her head, "Ji... Ji You, good morning."

Ji You frowned, "Jiaojiao, what are you doing lying by my door?"

Chu Jiaojiao was still rubbing her head, a silly expression on her face. In fact, there was a large dark bruise under her eyes, severe enough to pass for a panda...

Ji You: "..."

Ji You suddenly had a guess, stayed silent for a moment, then said, "So, you've been squatting outside my door all night?"

Chu Jiaojiao hesitated, "That... um..."

Ji You sternly asked, "Is that so?"

Chu Jiaojiao immediately said, "Yes."

Ji You: "..."

Chu Jiaojiao rubbed her head and hurriedly explained, "Just... couldn't sleep... I originally wanted to chat with Ji You, but feared you were asleep and didn't want to disturb you, so..."

Ji You's brow twitched, "So, you decided to squat outside my door all night?"

In this dorm, which was a large dorm, there were actually Shen Changqing, Yue Qiguang, Yue Qiyuan, Sheng Qingyan, four male students, but each person had their own space, and there was a boundary between males and females. In reality, it was just Ji You and Chu Jiaojiao sharing one space.

Chu Jiaojiao opened her mouth, "Ji You..."

Ji You glanced at her, scolded fiercely, "Are you stupid? Can't you just knock on my door? If that's not possible, can't you just go back to your room to lie down? In your current state, how are you supposed to go through a whole day of training?"

Chu Jiaojiao mumbled, "I..."

Ji You couldn't help but curse, "Idiot!"

Chu Jiaojiao pursed her lips, "I..."

Her voice was unconsciously tinged with a hint of grievance. From a young age, Chu Jiaojiao had always been a dominant and arrogant figure, undefeated against her peers, commanding respect from all of them. She truly had never before shown such weakness in front of a girl smaller and weaker than herself...

But—

She just felt wronged.

Not only felt wronged, but also, being criticized, she didn't have the slightest impulse to fight back. She was even—willing to let this petite girl continue scolding her endlessly...

Because—

She was so pretty.

Because—

Her voice was so pleasant.

Alas!

Chu Jiaojiao rubbed her swollen eyes pitifully, her bright eyes almost obscured by the swelling...

Seeing this, Ji You's brow kept twitching, and she couldn't help but rub her forehead, saying, "Now, there's half an hour until the assembly time. Go to sleep right now, sleep for 20 minutes, and I'll wake you in 20 minutes."

Chu Jiaojiao opened her mouth, "But... I can't sleep."

Ji You sternly said, with an unprecedented harsh tone, "If you can't sleep, just close your eyes!"

Chu Jiaojiao: "...Okay."

She turned around, looking back with every step, slowly heading to her dormitory.

Ji You clenched her teeth, "Hurry up! I'm watching you!"

Chu Jiaojiao immediately quickened her pace and reached her dormitory in the blink of an eye, lying down on her bed.

Ji You, feeling a bit worried, walked over and entered her room, saw that Chu Jiaojiao was indeed obediently lying on the bed, and then she felt relieved.

After silently waiting a few seconds, confirming Chu Jiaojiao was being obedient, Ji You then left.

Just stepped out, Chu Jiaojiao secretly cracked open her eyes, and Ji You instantly turned back: "I knew you couldn't be trusted! Right now, this instant! Close your eyes and sleep properly!"

Chu Jiaojiao: "..."

Chu Jiaojiao sniffled: "Classmate Ji You...you...you're so fierce..."

Ji You glared at her: "Do you want to see not only how fierce, but also how brutal I can be?" She said this with the pressure of Spiritual Silk.

Chu Jiaojiao shuddered: "No...I don't want to."

Ji You said: "I'm going to wash up and buy breakfast."

Chu Jiaojiao: "Okay."

Ji You left the dormitory, and when she entered the living room, she found that her four roommates Shen Changqing, Sheng Qingyan, Yue Qiguang, and Yue Qiyuan were all up, looking rather languid, Ji You's mouth twitched: "You guys... didn't sleep last night?"

Sheng Qingyan glanced at her, yawned, and said: "Poor dead spoke as if you were asleep..."

Ji You: "..."

Shen Changqing suddenly pointed at the dining table and said: "Classmate Ji You, I've already picked up breakfast, come and eat now."

Yue Qiguang sat beside the dining table, silent, gulping down nutrient solutions. Realizing Ji You sat next to him, Yue Qiguang didn't lift his head and continued staring at the nutrient solution in his hand, battling it fiercely.

Ji You looked at the nutrient solutions in front of her, which seemed like dark cuisine, and really couldn't eat any, hence she just sat there, untouched.

Shen Changqing softly said: "Eat, you should at least have one. Our training tasks today are heavy, and the schedule will be tight." Neither the school, teacher Mu Jianling, nor the students themselves would allow them to stop training.

Even though —

They had experienced such a heart-wrenching scene yesterday.

Hearing Shen Changqing's words, Ji You understood his logic, but looking at those nutrient solutions, and the heaviness lodged in her heart, she truly couldn't swallow...

Suddenly —

A nutrient solution was extended from the side.

Ji You looked up and saw it was Yue Qiyuan, who, since entering the living room, hadn't spoken or dived into eating.

Yue Qiyuan softly said: "This is chicken flavor, it's crunchy, give it a try."

Ji You took it, pursing her lips: "Thank you."

Sheng Qingyan watched Ji You received it and was about to tear the packaging when he couldn't resist saying: "Poor dead, do you want to try this one? This one is barbecue flavor... definitely tastier than the chicken flavor... personal experience..."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You paused, looked up, somewhat skeptical at Sheng Qingyan's face: "Are you sure you're not fooling me?"

Sheng Qingyan glared: "I'd trick a ghost but not you..."

Saying so, he handed over the barbecue flavored one, gesturing for Ji You to take it.

Ji You was skeptical...

Yue Qiyuan darkened his face, said: "Don't believe him, that one's the worst."

Sheng Qingyan forcefully pushed it over, rolling his eyes at Yue Qiyuan, said: "Ayuan, just because your taste is off, don't lie to others, that chicken flavor is clearly mustard... You're the liar... This Little Cutie never lies..."

Yue Qiyuan spread his hands, looked at Ji You, with an indifferent face said: "Believe it or not, up to you."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You thought about it, still decided to trust Yue Qiyuan, so she tossed Sheng Qingyan's back to him.

Sheng Qingyan jumped up angry: "Poor dead, you will regret this!"

His pretense became even more evident.

Ji You wasn't fooled, immediately opened Yue Qiyuan's, and gulped it down.

Pfft —

Ji You spit it out: "Yue Qiyuan, you tricked me!"

Yue Qiyuan shrugged: "Blame me?"

Chapter 282: Pranks

Mustard-flavored nutrient solution, with a spicy and pungent taste that made Ji You's tears choke out instantly, while Yue Qiyuan still played innocent, saying, "It's your own stupidity, blame me?"

Ji You was so angry she wanted to hit someone, Sheng Qingyan on the side fanned the flames: "You poor dead ghost, told you you'd regret it... Now feel regret, huh? I always say I never lie..."

With that, Sheng Qingyan reached out and handed over the nutrient solution she was holding, then continued, "Here you go..."

Ji You was full of suspicion: "I don't believe it."

Sheng Qingyan, angered until her cheeks puffed up, said, "I swear on my cuteness value... absolutely not lying..."

Just as Ji You was hesitantly reaching out to take it, Sheng Qingyan seemed to suddenly have second thoughts. Just as Ji You's hand was about to make contact, she snatched the nutrient solution back and said, "It's none of my business whether you eat it or not... Don't feel like giving it to you now..."

Ji You: "..."

Out of her aversion to the mustard taste and to strike at Sheng Qingyan's attitude, Ji You quickly stood up, rushed over, and snatched the nutrient solution from his hand and walked away.

Sheng Qingyan immediately cursed: "Robbery... you're a bandit..."

Ji You rolled her eyes at him and cursed, "I'm robbing you because you're asking for it!"

With that, she immediately started to unwrap it.

Suddenly—

Shen Changqing in a clear voice: "Cough cough..."

Ji You stopped: "What's up?"

Shen Changqing averted his gaze, "Nothing, just a tickle in my throat."

Thinking it over, Ji You took a closer look at the nutrient solution's packaging and found that it did indeed claim to be barbecue-flavor, and judging by its color alone, it seemed to be barbecue-flavored, completely different from the fake chicken-flavored one Yue Qiyuan gave her.

Feeling a bit hungry, Ji You debated and decided to trust Sheng Qingyan once, after all, he touted himself as the Universe's Number One Little Cutie, with cuteness value off the charts, and he was willing to guarantee with his cuteness value, he probably wouldn't lie.

So Ji You opened it and took a direct sip.

After sipping—

"Cough cough cough..." Ji You nearly choked, standing on tiptoes and cursing: "What the hell? You scammers! Why is it mustard flavor again?"

Sheng Qingyan covered her mouth and snickered.

Shen Changqing stayed silent.

Yue Qiyuan smiled faintly.

Only Yue Qiguang still acted like a person. He raised his hand, patted Ji You's back, and said with raised eyebrows sarcastically, "You fool! Thought you were so smart? You've been tricked several times... Let me tell you the truth, all the nutrient solutions here are mustard flavor."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You, coughing badly, Yue Qiguang handed her a glass of water, saying, "You're coughing so ugly, here—"

Ji You took it, seeing the water clear and clean, and because the taste in her mouth was too pungent, she drank it in one gulp.

After drinking.

Her face instantly turned black: "Yue Qiguang, are you asking to die?!!!! This is mustard-flavored water!!!!!!!"

Pfft—

Yue Qiguang slapped his thigh forcefully, laughing hard: "Dad knew it! I knew it! This idiot would definitely fall for it!! Hahaha..."

Their teasing successful, Sheng Qingyan and Yue Qiyuan both followed with laughter, only Shen Changqing looked a bit uncomfortable: "Aren't we going too far with this?"

Yue Qiyuan shook his head nonchalantly and said, "Play a prank? We don't [play pranks], she'll fall into the trap anyway."

Ji You was about to explode in anger, "What the heck are you guys doing? If you're so idle, come and fight! I'll beat you all flat!"

"Cough..." Shen Changqing looked a bit embarrassed, and explained, "Fellow student Ji You, it's not just you who got tricked, actually, we all got tricked. The nutrient solution and drinking water provided by the canteen this morning... it all tasted like mustard... We've all tried, and there were no exceptions."

Ji You: "..."

"Bullshit!" Ji You didn't believe it, and she pouted, "Is the canteen really that bored?"

Shen Changqing: "Cough cough..."

Yue Qiyuan glanced at her: "Vulgar language."

Ji You huffed, "What do you know? Vulgar language is the most sincere emotion!"

It is said that the canteen's chefs particularly enjoyed tinkering and coming up with all kinds of bizarre things, like 'chicken flavored' or 'barbecue flavored' nutrient solutions which were all actually mustard flavored.

There was also mustard flavored drinking water, chili flavored beer, and foul-smelling chicken droppings flavored beverages...

In short, there's nothing that the Taoyuan Space Station's canteen can't do that you can't imagine. The canteen gave a very righteous justification, saying it was to improve the dull lives of the warriors at the space station base by adding a bit of fun...

Therefore, there's a saying that's popular in the Space Station: "Eating at the canteen is like gambling." It's not called eating, it's 'gamble-dining'. If you're lucky, you get to taste something fantastic; if not, it's simply inedible.

Shen Changqing, Sheng Qingyan, and a few others had already given up on the canteen's breakfast, and each took out their own snacks to fill up with pure water. At this point, Yue Qiguang couldn't help but sigh, "After seeing the canteen's antics, dad finally understands why those old warriors would actually come to blows over a bag of snacks."

As soon as he said that, Yue Qiguang's mouth twitched.

The others, too, fell into a moment of silence.

The bustling scene with the old warriors scrambling for snacks from the students remains fresh in memory, but—some of them have now permanently disappeared from this world.

Shen Changqing swallowed the last bite of his cookie, and softly said, "I'm full."

Sheng Qingyan patted the cookie crumbs in his hand, and said, "Me too, I'm full."

Yue Qiguang and Yue Qiyuan stood up one after another, saying, "Let's get ready for today's training."

Ji You looked at everyone, and then again at the dreadful nutrient solution on the table, feeling incredibly torn. She was still hungry, and all her classmates were heartless—they wouldn't even lend her any snacks to eat.

Suddenly—

As Sheng Qingyan started to walk away, he tossed a pack of cookies to Ji You, covering his mouth with a corner of a smile, "Oh dear... You're so pitiful... Little Cutie will be merciful and sell it to you for 500 credit points..."

Ji You was shocked: "500 credit points? Are you robbing me?"

Sheng Qingyan: "Take it or leave it..."

Ji You tore open the cookies and started to munch on them contentedly, saying, "I'm broke, put it on my tab."

Sheng Qingyan: "..."

Knowing she wouldn't pay back, she decided to let it slide, considering it like giving alms to a beggar.

Ji You had her fill of food and drink and called Chu Jiaojiao over.

Then—

She did exactly the same thing and successfully played a prank on Chu Jiaojiao. Watching Chu Jiaojiao jump around and hold back her frustration, she suddenly felt that living in such tranquil and carefree times, full of playful bickering, was extremely beautiful.

Soon, it was time for the assembly. All the students gathered, and Mu Jianling looked at the state of the students with a slightly furrowed brow.

Chapter 283: As Weak as You

Mu Jianling frowned and loudly said, "From the moment you entered the school, you became a Reserve Soldier, and you could be sent to the frontline at any time. Look at yourselves, lackluster and listless, what kind of appearance is that?"

The students collectively fell silent.

Mu Jianling continued, "A qualified, excellent warrior must be able to quickly adjust their mindset at any time. Do you think you are up to standard now? Do you think you are an excellent warrior?"

The students remained silent.

Mu Jianling ordered, "Everyone, carry a 20-pound weight and run 10 laps around the field. Finish by 12 o'clock noon. Those who don't complete will continue in the afternoon with an additional penalty of 20 laps."

The students: "!!!"

Ji You thought for a moment and hesitantly raised her hand: "Teacher... isn't this a bit inhumane?"

Mu Jianling's gaze was sharp: "Inhumane? What kind of 'humane' treatment do you want?"

Ji You: "..."

Ji You dared not make any more suggestions.

Oh my gosh~

Terrifying.

Too terrifying.

Mu Jianling said, "Those who want their teacher to be 'humane' can now go back to the dormitory and sleep soundly. Rest assured, I will not stop you, nor will I deduct points or rewards for this. Now, I'll count to 3 seconds. Those who leave within 3 seconds will not be punished. Those who don't leave within 3 seconds are agreeing to all my harsh terms."

"3!"

Among the 100 people in the team, everyone remained frozen in place. Mu Jianling looked at this scene and felt very gratified.

"2!"

Suddenly—

There was a slight commotion in the team. Mu Jianling looked up and saw that it was Sheng Qingyan. Her eyes turned cold in a flash, and her entire demeanor resembled a cold, bone-chilling sharp sword.

Sheng Qingyan withdrew the hand that was scratching his neck, cursing inwardly: Look at that, just for scratching his neck, he's already being threatened—sure enough, he knew these words from the old woman were deceiving.

The team was quiet; no one moved an inch. Mu Jianling was very pleased and nodded.

"1!"

Mu Jianling declared, "Teacher is very happy. You are all brave, striving, struggling, and not afraid of hardship, excellent young people! Now—let's start the weighted run."

Everyone quickly put on the weights and began running laps around the walking track of the Space Station.

Mu Jianling said, "I will come back on time at 12. Meanwhile, your performance will be fully recorded by the Light Computer, so don't think about shirking your duties."

The students: "..."

No one wanted to shirk anyway!

After dropping these words, Mu Jianling quickly left.

Carrying a 20-pound weight was still bearable for Ji You at present. She maintained a steady pace, running slowly while pondering: Why did Teacher Mu suddenly have them do this pure physical training?

Logically, physical strength training could also be done in school. There was no need to travel tens of light-years to the Space Station for it.

So—

What was the reason?

Obviously, not only Ji You but others were also contemplating this question.

Shen Changqing suddenly said, "Teacher Mu doesn't have time to look after us right now and also doesn't trust us to go out alone. Is that why she arranged this training for us?"

Hmm?

Ji You furrowed her brow and said, "I think so too."

Yue Qiyuan commented, "That's probably it."

Sheng Qingyan ran while still yawning widely, but he said with a very serious tone: "Don't underestimate this old lady—her combat power is formidable. She can at least bring a few hundred miles around the space station under her protection. So, before the reinforcements at the front lines arrive, this old lady should be temporarily taking over the task of guarding the base of the space station. Of course, that means she won't have time to bother with us."

Ji You was surprised: "Really? We will have reinforcements here?"

Continuing with an elegant roll of his eyes, Sheng Qingyan said: "The Erathia Triangle Asteroid Belt is adjacent to the Seventh and Eighth Star Systems and is a crucial strategic area for the Alliance. If the Alliance's higher-ups aren't stupid, they absolutely won't give up on this place. Therefore, reinforcements will definitely be sent. It's just a matter of whether they arrive sooner or later."

The recent battles have been dire, resulting in a large number of Alliance Soldiers sacrificing themselves on the front lines, including elite soldiers like Yang Bin and Lu Zhen. It could be said to have inflicted crippling damage to the entire force stationed in the Erathia Triangular Zone.

Personnel replenishment was inevitable.

Shen Changqing also agreed with this, saying: "Reinforcements are certain. And—I suspect our special training will end early." The initially planned 15 days of special training had only just passed less than 5 days...

"Huh?"

"What do you mean?" Someone who didn't understand couldn't help but ask.

Shen Changqing explained: "If reinforcements are coming, it means there are going to be big battles upcoming. Unless we stay inside the space station all the time, outer space will be unsafe for us."

Yue Qiguang burst out angrily: "Does that mean we can only be cooped up like lab rabbits? Can't we set foot on the front lines and fight together? Only real combat is the strongest training!"

Shen Changqing looked at him, his tone unusually stern: "You're too weak, not qualified."

Yue Qiguang: "You!!!"

Shen Changqing lowered his gaze: "I am too weak as well, not qualified."

This—was also the first time that Shen Changqing realized his own weakness.

He was indeed weak.

So weak that he wasn't even qualified to set foot on the front lines.

Silence.

Only the heavy footsteps and the silent panting sounds remained around them.

If this had been said in the past, Ji You wouldn't have cared. She thought that with her current strength, piloting a Mecha, she should at least be able to move sideways around the periphery of Waste #101, right? As long as she didn't encounter a Star Beast of level 4 or higher, as long as she didn't encounter a horde of Star Beasts, she would be totally fine.

However—

The Star Beasts that could step into space were at least level 4.

That day, during their outer space training, several of them cooperated and barely managed to kill a level 4 Star Beast.

Ji You clenched her teeth and said: "I am too weak as well, not qualified."

Admitting one's weakness is not shameful.

Thus, knowing one's weakness, one should work hard to compensate for it.

Ji You didn't say anymore and focused all her body and mind on running laps.

Beside her—

Chu Jiaojiao also lowered her gaze, speaking softly: "I am too weak as well, not qualified. But—this is only temporary, I believe in myself."

Suddenly, Ji You smiled, unable to resist saying: "Jiaojiao, it's the first time I realized you're also pretty."

Scratching her face, Chu Jiaojiao said with a chuckle: "But—nowhere near one in ten million parts of you, Student Ji You."

Ji You: "..."

Despite the compliment, there was not the slightest sense of happiness.

Ah!

So complicated.

After realizing their own weaknesses, none of the students slacked off anymore. They all ran earnestly and, after running for more than four hours, suddenly—the usually quiet space station rarely blared a horn sound, and all the students were startled, stopping their jogging in unison. They looked at each other while question marks popped up in their minds:

"What's happening?"

Chapter 284: Admiral Bai Ji

When the horn sounded, all personnel stationed at the space station instantly formed ranks according to their respective organizations, neatly arrayed...

The students: "???"

While appearing bewildered, a bad premonition flashed through the students' minds:

Could it be that there's trouble at the front lines? Is a major battle about to break out?

Or, has the space station been attacked, and everyone is preparing to meet the enemy?

But—

No.

The expressions on the faces of the space station's personnel, whether soldiers or logistics staff, didn't seem like they were facing a formidable enemy. Instead, there was an indescribable excitement on their faces.

Huh?

What's going on?

Shen Changqing, who comes from a military family, was the first to say, "The sound of this horn is off. It's not the signal for war-starting; rather, it sounds more like..."

Ji You asked, "Like what?"

After pondering for a moment, Shen Changqing said, "It should be to welcome some important person. This is a formation for a welcome!"

As soon as Shen Changqing's words came out, everyone widened their eyes, with someone asking, "Who could it be? Could it be a general who has come? Who might it be?" The legion stationed in the Sixth Star System is the Sixth Legion under the command of Admiral Bai Ji. The well-known generals under him include Chen Yan, Bai Dai, Li Yong, Xu Fenghua... Could it be one of them?

The students instantly became expectant...

Shen Changqing said, "I will ask Teacher Mu to see if we need to coordinate, or should we continue training as usual?"

There was still half an hour until 12 o'clock. The fastest runners, such as Chu Jiaojiao and Yue Qiguang, had already run nine and a half laps, needing only half a lap more to complete their task. Slow runners, like Ji You, had only run eight and a half laps, still needing a lap and a half.

This was troublesome.

Shen Changqing explained the situation, and Mu Jianling replied, "Carry on. You all carry on with your training."

Shen Changqing conveyed Teacher Mu Jianling's response to everyone.

Upon hearing this, everyone's spirits deflated.

Oh!

They thought they could all go to welcome the Great General and witness the elegance of the generals. Unexpectedly, they still had to continue training.

Of course, their enthusiasm for training remained undiminished, and they continued to run hard.

Only half an hour remained, and Ji You had been keeping a steady pace for the previous eight and a half laps, never speeding up. By this time, Chu Jiaojiao had taken the lead and completed her training, with Yue Qiguang closely following.

Following them, Shen Changqing, Yue Qiyuan, Sheng Qingyan, Lou, Lance, and others also finished one by one.

Medium runners like Xuzhou and Jiang Fang had also run nine and a half laps, with only half a lap left.

Ji You, unaffected, still maintained her rhythm and slowly finished another half lap. With only one lap to go, she suddenly sped up—

meters.

meters.

meters.

...

With a burst of effort, Ji You even caught up with Xuzhou. Xuzhou, taken aback and a bit astonished, suddenly saw a slender figure flash by like the wind, wondering if he was seeing things.

A flicker of doubt crossed Xuzhou's mind: "Is this really Ji You? Could it be she's possessed?"

Beside him, those who originally wanted to mock Ji You, like Yue Qiguang, were also clicking their tongues in admiration. Yue Qiguang exclaimed in surprise, "Is she cheating or what? She was lagging all along; I thought she wouldn't be able to finish."

Shen Changqing quietly said, "Classmate Ji You has always known how to use her strengths and avoid her weaknesses. From the time she started running, I never doubted her ability to complete the task, and indeed it is so."

Chu Jiaojiao covered her face: "I always had faith in Classmate Ji You too! She is the most beautiful and the best."

At this time, Ji You had only 500 meters left.

meters.

meters.

meters.

...

Boom—

The Finish Line.

Ji You stopped and glanced behind her, only to see that Xuzhou, Jiang Fang and a few others had not yet crossed the finish line. She smiled in satisfaction; every regular training session was a form of self-breakthrough.

Soon, Xuzhou also crossed the finish line. He looked up at Ji You, his lips moved slightly, but he said nothing.

Ji You laughed heartily, "Little Zhouzhou, you must be thinking I'm really amazing, right? That's correct, I am that strong!"

Xuzhou: "..."

This guy never knew the meaning of low-profile.

What an—

Asking for a beating.

When the clock struck 12, all 100 students had completed their training goals on time. It was at this moment that Mu Jianling suddenly sent a collective message: [All troops, assemble at the square.]

Huh?

Was he inviting the students to join the excitement?

Everyone was thrilled.

One by one, they all lined up neatly in their squads and headed toward the square. Upon arrival, the square was extremely disciplined and ordered, with everyone's posture straight and faces carrying a sense of solemnity. The students entered the square and took their arranged places.

All around was silence.

No one spoke.

No one stirred.

Suddenly, a gigantic starship docked at the space station port, and its gangway was directly lowered into the center of the space station square. Before long, figures began descending from the starship.

Who could it be?

Though silent, curiosity rose in the hearts of the students—

Soon, the tall and commanding figure became clear.

Everyone's eyes widened instantly: "!!!"

Holy crap!

It was—

ADMIRAL BAI JI!!!

Oh my God!!!

The students nearly all had their mouths wide open, their eyes wide with shock and excitement, and they almost let out a shrill scream, but they managed to bite their teeth and hold back.

Seeing Admiral Bai Ji through the Light Computer was not that thrilling, but seeing him in person, even Ji You was so excited that she felt like smoke was about to come out of her throat: Oh my God, it's Admiral Bai Ji! The legend of the Alliance ahhh!!!

Compared to what was seen in the news, the real Admiral Bai Ji was even more elegant, with a more slender figure, and carried an indescribably majestic aura. Even as he calmly stepped forward, it was impossible for anyone to overlook him.

Nobody even dared to raise their eyes to meet his gaze.

Heart-pounding.

Truly.

His aura was strong, beyond what can simply be described as thrilling.

Among the powerful spiritual practitioners Ji You had encountered, such as Teacher Mu Jianling and Principal Hong, their externalized spiritual power was already terrifying, but it still paled in comparison to that of Admiral Bai Ji.

Is this the innate power of a mutant? Is this what a person with a natural 50% Spiritual Silk Cleaning Rate is like?

So strong!

Truly strong.

Ji You didn't dare raise her head to look at Admiral Bai Ji, feeling almost overwhelmed by his imposing aura, as if she could hardly breathe. The six foolish Spiritual Silks in her own Spiritual World were also instantly as timid as chickens, unwilling to move an inch—

After Admiral Bai Ji descended from the space station, he remained silent. He glanced up, gently looking at the building holding the spirits of the fallen, and deeply bowed his head. Those warriors behind him also followed suit in homage.

Then—

Soft yet heroic music began to play, and a procession of warriors, bearing the spirits of the departed, slowly emerged.

Admiral Bai Ji stood still, and together with everyone else, they bid farewell to the spirits of the fallen as they left the space station to return to their respective homes.

As the starship was about to close its hatch, Admiral Bai Ji suddenly said, "The menace of the Star Beasts shall one day be eradicated!"

Chapter 285: Big Goals

Admiral Bai Ji's voice was soft, not loud, but incredibly compelling, igniting a fire in the hearts of everyone present in an instant...

There must be an end to this!

There must!

Everyone joined in the chant: "The threat of the Star Beasts will one day be eradicated!"

The students were especially emotional, shouting until their faces turned red with excitement.

If anyone in the Alliance had the right to say those words, it had to be Admiral Bai Ji! The invincible Admiral Bai Ji!

The solemn and austere farewell ceremony, though makeshift, was imbued with confidence and courage for everyone at Taoyuan Space Station with the arrival of Admiral Bai Ji.

After paying tribute to the heroic spirits, Admiral Bai Ji spoke only a few simple words before the assembly dispersed, returning to their posts, and the students, under good discipline, orderly left the square.

The space station's cafeteria finally served a normal meal for lunch, two dishes and a soup. The taste wasn't great, but it was palatable.

After lunch, Ji You and the others quickly returned to their dormitory.

It was only back in the dormitory that everyone dared to speak. Xuzhou was the first to express his excitement: "I actually saw Admiral Bai Ji! Admiral Bai Ji! Admiral Bai Ji!"

He used the name Admiral Bai Ji three times to convey his excitement.

Seeing this, Ji You felt both surprised and moved.

Oh my!

My child's idol is Admiral Bai Ji!

Firstly, my child's taste is truly impeccable!

But, given how formidable my child's idol is, it seems a bit difficult to outdo him.

Such a worry!

Balding!

But—since she aimed to become the most impressive person in her child's eyes, she couldn't back down, couldn't lose courage; she must not retreat. Thus, Ji You decided from then on, her goal was to be Admiral Bai Ji!

Defeat him!

She must!

As Ji You silently vowed, Yue Qiguang suddenly clenched his fist, saying: "One day, I'll beat him!"

Lou: "Him?"

Lance: "Him?"

Yue Qiguang glared at the two irritably and said: "I will defeat Admiral Bai Ji! Definitely!"

Dropping that statement, Yue Qiguang entered the dormitory's equipped training room and started intensifying his training.

Chu Jiaojiao rolled her eyes at the training room, saying scornfully: "He thinks he can defeat Admiral Bai Ji? Beat me, Chu Jiaojiao, first! I'll be the one who defeats Admiral Bai Ji someday!"

Sheng Qingyan scoffed: "Just you guys? Ten of you wouldn't be enough for Admiral Bai Ji... Quit dreaming, might as well go wash up and head to bed..."

"Right!" Xuzhou said passionately, "When Admiral Bai Ji was your age, he was already capable of holding his own, single-handedly repelling several rampaging Star Beasts and saving the passengers of a tourist spaceship! My parents and I were among the people he rescued that day."

"No way you can defeat Admiral Bai Ji that easily!"

"He will never be defeated!" Xuzhou clenched his fist and glared fiercely at Chu Jiaojiao, saying, "My goal is to train hard and join the Sixth Legion! To follow Admiral Bai Ji and quell the Star Beast threat!"

Hearing this, Ji You fell silent. She had intended to declare her ambitions in front of everyone, but—

She held it in.

Records are made to be broken, and an undefeated myth needs challengers!

So—

Ji You bravely set herself the goal to challenge Admiral Bai Ji, unwavering in her resolve.

Yue Qiyuan suddenly stood up and said, "No time to chat with you guys, I'm going to train as well."

Shen Changqing's clenched fist loosened a bit. He looked towards his classmates crowded in the dormitory and said, "I'm going to train too."

Chu Jiaojiao said, "No time to chat, from now on it's about training every minute and second."

After saying that, she went training too.

Ji You followed suit, standing up and saying, "I'm going to train too."

Lou, Lance, and others also expressed one after another that they were going to train.

Then—

In less than a minute, the crowded dormitory was completely empty.

**

After lunchtime was over, everyone reappeared because Admiral Bai Ji had personally arrived at the Space Station. At this moment, it wasn't known whether he was still here or had already gone directly to the front lines. But—everyone was still looking forward to it, maybe they would get to see Admiral Bai Ji again?

Just then, all the students received a message from Teacher Mu Jianling: [Everyone pack your bags, gather at the plaza at 2:30, ready to return to school.]

Huh?

Everyone was baffled.

Ji You was even more surprised as she looked at Shen Changqing and said, "Classmate Shen Changqing, your prediction was really accurate; we're indeed about to return to school right away."

Shen Changqing's brows furrowed slightly as he said, "Admiral Bai Ji has come in person, presumably the strategic deployment has been readjusted, and we shouldn't stay here."

Yue Qiguang was a bit disappointed, violently scratched his hair, and said, "Dad would so much like to go to the battlefield right now and leave no stone unturned." But—his strength was too weak; he didn't qualify to join the group at all.

Yue Qiguang clenched his fists tightly:

Admiral Bai Ji at 18 could already kill a Level 6 Star Beast alone. What about himself?

He couldn't even handle Level 4, so—

Become stronger!

He must become stronger!

Ji You pursed her lips and said, "Let's believe in our teacher and just pack up now." She didn't have any luggage, just bringing herself was enough, while others had Space Buttons, just tossing their things into the Space Button would be settled.

Only those without Space Buttons and carrying large and small packages needed to pack up.

Ji You had been coveting Xuzhou's beef jerky for a long time. Seeing Xuzhou packing up, she couldn't help but say, "Little Zhouzhou, do you need me to carry some for you?"

Xuzhou glanced at her and said, "No need, I only brought my personal luggage, and I have entrusted the AI to give all the snacks to the warrior seniors at the Space Station."

Although there were unexpected events these few days, the warriors who stayed behind at the Space Station still taught the students many combat skills, and everyone benefited greatly.

Hearing this, Ji You gave up on the idea of getting some beef jerky.

The students were quick; in less than 10 minutes, they had all gathered at the plaza. Upon arrival, they found that besides Teacher Mu Jianling, there was another unexpected figure at the plaza—Admiral Bai Ji.

From a distance, everyone saw Admiral Bai Ji talking with Teacher Mu Jianling. As the students approached, Mu Jianling stopped talking and waved at them, saying, "Find your own places and sit down on the spaceship."

Admiral Bai Ji at that moment was devoid of any menacing aura, looking just like the boy next door, with a clean, warm, and gentle temperament. He looked at the students with a smile and softly said, "Are these the new students that the teacher has brought in? All very good."

Mu Jianling said, "They'll just barely do."

Admiral Bai Ji heard this, raised his eyes to take another look at the 100 students, shook his head with a smile, and said, "The teacher's 'barely do' is quite different from others."

Mu Jianling didn't make a sound.

Admiral Bai Ji wasn't the least bit offended or annoyed; instead, he continued to watch the students boarding the spaceship with a tender gaze.

After saluting Admiral Bai Ji, the students earnestly boarded the spaceship one by one. Fans of Admiral Bai Ji like Xuzhou and Jiang Fang, even stiffened their bodies and became clumsy when passing by Admiral Bai Ji.

Ji You displayed a calm demeanor; at least she didn't embarrass herself by becoming clumsy or blushing to the point of losing her composure. However, just when she was saluting and passing by Admiral Bai Ji, she suddenly found her head patted by him as he said, "Teacher—this kid seems a bit short, eh?"

Ji You: "..."

Chapter 286: A Blessed Head

Ji You: "..."

Ji You didn't know how she boarded the spaceship, but as soon as she entered the ship's cabin, she was immediately surrounded by everyone:

"Stand still!"

"Don't move!"

"Behave yourself!"

A group of students glared at Ji You menacingly, leaving her completely baffled: "What... what's wrong with you all? Have you taken the wrong medication?"

Chu Jiaojiao jumped out first, stroking her fists with an evil grin on her face: "I'm the strongest in the entire department! I'll go first!"

The crowd glared at her, but dared not speak out against her formidable strength.

Chu Jiaojiao took a step, then another step, towards Ji You.

As Chu Jiaojiao approached step by step, Ji You felt a gust of wind blowing towards her, filled with endless murderous intent. Ji You opened her mouth: "What... what are you going to do?"

Chu Jiaojiao grinned and let out a hee-hee: "Don't be scared, Ji You, it'll be over in just a moment."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You was on full alert, stepping back and preparing to counterattack any moment. Just then, Chu Jiaojiao lunged at her with the speed of the wind and, in the blink of an eye, reached out her hand to give Ji You's head a vigorous rub.

Ji You: "..."

Having succeeded in her attack, Chu Jiaojiao immediately jumped away, giggling as she went: "Hahaha... with these hands, I've indirectly shaken hands with Admiral Bai Ji! Hahaha..."

Ji You: "..."

Watching the triumphant Chu Jiaojiao, everyone was eager to try, and Yue Qiguang forcefully pushed his way forward, declaring: "Daddy's turn! Whoever dares to stop me will be my sworn enemy from this day forth."

Ji You's eyelid twitched in anger: "Yue Qiguang, if you dare touch my head today, I swear we will be sworn enemies!"

Yue Qiguang smirked at her words, not at all afraid of Ji You's empty threats. However, as he focused on Ji You's face, he suddenly looked away, exclaiming: "Teacher's here!"

"Huh?"

"So soon?"

"Where?"

Ji You also looked up in the instant, only to feel another rough palm fiercely rubbing the top of her head.

Ji You: "..."

"Hahaha..." Yue Qiguang held his belly and laughed riotously: "Daddy touched her! Finally got the touch, carrying the lingering aura of my future subordinate, Bai Ji's defeat! Hahahahaha..."

Everyone: "..."

Who is this guy?

Can we throw him off the spaceship?

Admiral Bai Ji is still at the spaceship's boarding gate right now, with such a short distance, given Admiral Bai Ji's formidable powers, couldn't he hear if he wanted to eavesdrop?

So—

Being in a team, in a class, with such an idiot is really embarrassing.

While everyone was speechless, Ji You suddenly felt a breeze and was about to dodge when someone casually rubbed the top of her head again. She glared: "Shen Changqing, YOU!!!!"

Shen Changqing tried to maintain a very serious and stern face, but the faint blush that crept onto his cheeks and earlobes betrayed his inner feelings. He looked at Ji You's astonished expression and pursed his lips: "I... just wanted to join in the fun."

Ji You glared again: "Even you want to join in the fun???"

Realizing perhaps how absurd his excuse sounded, Shen Changqing's face quickly reddened, and he hurriedly walked away, avoiding eye contact with Ji You.

At this time—

While everyone was earnestly debating who should rub Ji You's head next and couldn't reach a consensus, Sheng Qingyan strutted out and said directly: "Oh poor dead, let someone touch your head."

Ji You choked up and rolled her eyes: "Get lost!"

Sheng Qingyan said, "500 credit points, oh!"

Ji You: "!!!"

Ji You glared, "Am I someone who would bend over for just 500 credit points? Get the hell away from me, don't even think about touching me without offering 1000 credit points!"

"Deal, oh!" Sheng Qingyan agreed immediately, and while Ji You was still a bit flustered, seized the opportunity to leap over and pat her.

A successful hit.

Immediate retreat.

Sheng Qingyan curled her lips into a smile: "Putting it on your tab, oh!"

Ji You: "..."

Ji You gritted her teeth: "Sheng Qingyan, you're seeking death, oh! You are so dead!"

Ji You was seething with anger when she heard others haggling: "Isn't 1000 a bit expensive? Even touched by the divine, it wouldn't cost that much, right? We're all classmates, how about a friendly price, will 500 credit points do?"

"If that works, I'll transfer it to you right now, oh."

Ji You: "..."

What's going on today?

Did all her classmates' IQs get chewed up by dogs?

Suddenly—

A towering shadow loomed over her, Ji You looked up and saw it was Xuzhou, her eyelid twitched and she said with a twitching smile, "Little Zhouzhou, even you want to touch me?"

Xuzhou: "..."

Xuzhou exhaled and said, "I've transferred it."

Ji You quickly checked her account and sure enough, there was a transfer for exactly 1000 credit points. Looking at the money, Ji You didn't know how to describe the mix of feelings in her heart.

Xuzhou said, "Cash on delivery."

Ji You couldn't hold back any longer and cursed, "1 second! Dare to go one second longer, and I'll break your damn legs!"

Xuzhou stepped forward and tentatively stretched out his hand, hesitating—

Then, his admiration for Admiral Bai Ji overpowered the shame he felt inside, and Xuzhou summoned up his courage to reach out and touch.

Mmm—

The moment Xuzhou's hand touched the top of Ji You's head, he felt a shiver in his heart, a thrill of horror washed over him, and he didn't dare to linger, quickly retracting his hand.

As soon as his hand was withdrawn, that sense of danger instantly disappeared.

The spiritual power of number 4444 suddenly became so... so terrifying.

Xuzhou let out a quiet sigh.

After Xuzhou stepped back, other students, some with money to spare, figured it was only 1000 credit points; they could just skip eating braised pork for a couple of meals to save that much. So, suddenly, quite a few were ready to transfer to Ji You.

Watching this disgraceful scene unfold, Ji You no longer cared to calculate how much she could earn from 1000 credit points per person, 10,000 from 10 people, or even more from 100. Seeing how each of these people eagerly rubbed their hands and walked toward Ji You, her temples throbbing, she couldn't help but roar, "Don't come any closer!!! I'm not selling this head anymore!"

Everyone: "How can you be like that?"

Ji You angrily said: "I'm telling you, if Admiral Bai Ji knew he had a bunch of idiotic fans like you, he would feel so ashamed he wouldn't know where to hide! You're not adding to his glory, you're bringing him shame!"

Everyone: "..."

Ji You said, "I feel ashamed for you!"

Everyone: "..."

Ji You continued to scold: "Get away! Get away! Anyone who dares touch my head again, I swear it's not over!"

Everyone: "Stingy, forget it then."

Chapter 287: Fallen-Out-of-Favor Xiao You

Outside the spaceship.

Mu Jianling said, "Thank you."

Bai Ji smiled and replied, "It's my pleasure to be of assistance, Teacher. If you need more help later, feel free to contact me at any time."

Mu Jianling nodded and said, "It's getting late. I have to take my students back to school now, so this is goodbye."

Hearing this, Bai Ji softly said, "Please take care, Teacher."

Mu Jianling paused, turned back suddenly, and said, "You should take care of yourself as well."

Bai Ji responded, "Don't worry, Teacher."

Inside the spaceship, there were still those who wouldn't give up their attempts to touch Ji You's head. Then, suddenly, Mu Jianling walked in and, seeing a crowd surrounding Ji You, couldn't help frowning and scolded, "What are you all crowding here for? Get back to your seats!"

Huh?

The teacher really came.

In just an instant, everyone shrank their necks and obediently returned to their own seats.

Ji You sprang out and spilled all the things people had done to her just now to Teacher Mu Jianling like pouring beans from a bamboo tube.

After hearing this, Mu Jianling frowned deeply and said, "Enough nonsense! Extra training for everyone when we return!"

Everyone: "..."

That's harsh.

Ji You gave everyone a smug look: Humph! She must let everyone know—the head of the future universe's strongest isn't so easily touched.

After preparations, the spaceship quickly broke through the artificial atmosphere and headed into outer space. Before leaving, Ji You looked back at the artificial Oasis Space Station through the window and silently prayed in her heart:

I hope everything goes smoothly.

I hope there are no casualties.

...

Mu Jianling piloted the spaceship smoothly; after traversing multiple Jump Points and crossing half of the Sixth Star System, the spaceship safely arrived at its destination—the Lanyue Star Military Academy.

When they arrived, it was just noon, and after disembarking, Mu Jianling said, "Regular classes will resume this afternoon."

The students replied, "Yes!"

After parking the spaceship, Mu Jianling summoned a Floating Car and left.

The 100 students, after Teacher Mu Jianling left, swarmed towards the cafeteria—

Ji You grabbed Sheng Qingyan and sneered, "Free driver, hurry up and find a car, or else—"

Sheng Qingyan: "..."

Sheng Qingyan pulled back his sleeve disdainfully and said, "If finding a car is what it takes, then sure. But let go first— I really don't want a poor dead guy touching me..."

Ji You clenched her teeth angrily and said, "If you dare to call me a poor dead ghost again, you'll regret it!"

Sheng Qingyan: "Poor dead ghost..."

Ji You's heart, full of anger, suddenly thought of something and instantly calmed down. Looking at Sheng Qingyan's beautiful face, she sighed and said, "...Foolish humans, you're done for... You have no idea whom you've just offended."

—Originally, she had wanted to cheat for him, to give him the opportunity to buy one of her Soul Devices. But now?

Humph...

Even if she threw it away or fed it to a dog, she would not give half a piece to Sheng Qingyan!

Sheng Qingyan pouted, his face indifferent, "It's just a poor dead ghost..."

Huh——

Another 10,000 points added to the sin counter!

Ji You could no longer bear to look at Sheng Qingyan's ignorant, foolish face. She turned her head, a look of sorrow on her face as she watched the students swarm out of their classes and rush toward the cafeteria. This scene was so familiar and serene.

But—

Who could understand the sorrow in her heart?

Taking the free bus, Ji You and Sheng Qingyan quickly arrived at the cafeteria. Ji You hurriedly dashed to the braised pork ribs counter, but to her disappointment, she didn't see Senior Shi Ya. Ji You couldn't figure out why, but a sense of loss flickered through her heart.

...

He Bi, holding the serving spoon with a speechless expression, said: "Student, are you going to get food or not? If not, please let someone else have the space."

Ji You glared at He Bi and said, "Yes! I'll have a serving of braised pork ribs, and please add a little more soup."

He Bi paused with his finger and smiled: "Sorry, student, we don't accept special requests."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You watched as He Bi shook and flipped the spoon, shook and flipped... In the end, exactly 10 pieces of pork rib landed on her plate.

He Bi handed the plate to Ji You.

Ji You took it, unable to hold back, she said: "Senior He Bi, it's been a while since I've seen you, and you've become such a refined scumbag! Truly, the world's number one scumbag!"

He Bi: "..."

He Bi smiled: "Thank you for the compliment, I will keep it up."

Ying~

Without Senior Shi Ya's affection, I really am just a blade of grass.

Ying~

Ji You, filled with gloom, found an empty seat at random and sat down immediately. She originally wanted to ask Senior He Bi for news about Senior Shi Ya, but thinking of He Bi's stingy face, she restrained herself.

I've got Senior Shi Ya's contact anyway, why would I need to go through scumbag He Bi to find out?

Why not ask by myself?

Hehe——

No sooner thought than done, Ji You immediately sent a message to Senior Shi Ya: [Senior! Senior! Senior! I've finished the special training early and am back at school. Are you on campus? I'd love to treat you to a meal, how about that?]

As for—what to eat? Ji You had already decided: she wanted to take Senior Shi Ya to a hot pot restaurant on the commercial street and also check on Mengmeng, having not visited the little one for so long, she wondered if it was throwing a tantrum.

After sending the message, it was like a stone sinking into the ocean, with no reply even after Ji You had finished her meal.

Ji You felt a bit uncomfortable. During her meal, she also sent the news of her return to school to Brother Qiong, Sister Lea, and Sister Lingzhi. The three of them replied quickly. Brother Qiong had taken on a mission and was out again.

Sister Lea had entered a senior's Mecha lab for research and was too busy to meet Ji You.

And Sister Lingzhi? Sister Lingzhi also took on a group mission and was going to study a space tracking technology with her mentor.

So—

No one was free to pay attention to Ji You.

After finishing her meal, Ji You picked up her tray, ready to place it in the recycling bin and then go find Sheng Qingyan to take the free bus, when suddenly there was a commotion in the originally quiet cafeteria. Following everyone's gaze, the large screen was broadcasting news:

[Recently, Admiral Bai Ji formally stationed his forces at Taoyuan Space Station in the Sixth Star System and led officers in paying respect to the departed spirits. Thereafter, Admiral Bai Ji decided to make Taoyuan Space Station the central point for clearing all nearby Star Beasts and to expel all interstellar pirate groups within a 10-light-year radius of Taoyuan Space Station and the Erathia Triangular Zone.]

Next, was the holographic image of Admiral Bai Ji and his officers paying their respects to the fallen spirits—

The cafeteria instantly fell silent.

Everyone put down their chopsticks and spoons, stood up of their own accord, and faced towards the screen to salute solemnly.

Chapter 288: I Believe You

After seeing off the heroic spirits, the cafeteria quieted down for a while before bustling again. At this point, many people started gossiping:

"Hey, did you see it? It wasn't just my eyes playing tricks, right? Did I see our school's students in the team?"

"You're not alone."

"Your eyes didn't deceive you! I saw it too!"

"It's those first-year kids!"

"Shen Changqing, Chu Jiaojiao, Yue Qiguang, those ones!"

"Damn! These little brats are too lucky, right? To actually meet Admiral Bai Ji!"

"What kind of dog's luck is this?"

"It's said that these little brats have already come back, we can't let it slide, got to find a chance to beat them up!"

"Count me in!"

"You must count me in."

"Me me me..."

...

Hearing this, Ji You threw down her tray, silently turned around, and strode away. Fortunately, she wasn't too famous among the first-year students, nor was she an eye-catching figure like Shen Changqing, Chu Jiaojiao, or Yue Qiguang.

She figured no one would bother her.

Ji You walked out of the cafeteria very calmly, not attracting anyone's attention on the way.

Suddenly—

A faint voice came from behind: "Number 4444, you, lost in the big crowd, are really hard to spot. If Xuzhou hadn't pointed you out to me, I would have thought you weren't there."

Ji You: "..."

She turned her head and saw it was Zhang Ye, standing next to Xuzhou.

Ji You couldn't help saying: "Even if I'm short, you can't ignore the fact that I'm stronger than you! At least I was there, but you—"

Zhang Ye: "..."

Zhang Ye clutched his chest and said: "Enough, stop with the heart-piercing words, can't you let me have a moment's satisfaction?"

Ji You: "No."

Zhang Ye cursed: "Stingy."

After speaking, he pulled Xuzhou beside him and said: "Let's go, Little Zhouzhou."

Ji You glanced at Zhang Ye askance, then looked at Xuzhou, her expression immediately softened, squeezing out a smile, she said: "Little Zhouzhou, see you in class."

Xuzhou stayed silent.

Here, Ji You met up with Sheng Qingyan and hitched a ride, heading straight to the Combat Department's training room.

All afternoon, all the students were holding their breath, training hard.

After class, Ji You suddenly received a message from Senior Shi Ya. Ji You had set a special ringtone for her: "Immortal senior has sent you a message, open it up! Open it up!"

Ji You's heart skipped a beat, and she immediately opened it, only to see a short line of text: [Thanks for the invite, out and unable to contact.]

Hmm~

Although it was just a few words, Ji You was still ecstatic to receive a reply from Senior Shi Ya. At the very least, it showed that the senior was willing to pay attention to her.

Ji You originally intended to type just a few words in response, but as she wrote, she couldn't help but ramble on: [Senior, senior, senior, I have to tell you, I met a VIP on my trip this time. Guess who it is? You'll never guess, so let me tell you—it was Admiral Bai Ji! Oh my goodness, I discovered for the first time just how young Admiral Bai Ji looks. He seems to be only a few years older than us, and he doesn't look serious at all. He even dared to pat my head and said I was short... Ahhh... I'm really upset!! I would have never imagined, him, an admiral, to be so informal! But that's no excuse for him to mock my height! Hmph! I've decided, I'm going to defeat him! Let him see what I'm capable of...]

Blah blah blah—a long message was typed out. Seeing she had sent so much and accidentally revealed her high ambitions to Senior Shi Ya, Ji You felt a bit embarrassed and shy. She thought about deleting part of it but accidentally sent the message with a slip of the hand.

Ji You: "!!!"

That's the end.

Senior Shi Ya would probably think she's too talkative after seeing this.

Definitely.

Ji You paced anxiously, about to recall the message, when suddenly, she heard a notification sound. It was a reply from Senior Shi Ya: [I believe you.]

Huh?

Ji You widened her eyes and, feeling a bit embarrassed, couldn't help but ask: [Senior, what do you believe me about?]

Senior Shi Ya: [I believe you can defeat him.]

Seeing the message, Ji You was already so happy she was beside herself.

It turns out—

Senior Shi Ya has so much faith in her.

Unexpectedly, a new sense of ambition surged in Ji You's heart: Since Senior Shi Ya believes in her, Xiao You believes in herself, she believes in herself, then—she will definitely be able to do it.

Ji You happily replied to the message and casually asked: [Senior, when will you be returning to school? Can you tell me the exact day?]

Far away on a planet, inside a sealed laboratory, Shi Ya looked at Ji You's message with an unnoticeable gentleness on her face, and her smile continued to rise, though she was oblivious to it herself.

At that moment, Shi Ya was slightly startled and couldn't help thinking, did she talk too much to her today? To the point that she found it hard to cut off the conversation.

Silence.

After about five minutes, Shi Ya revised her message and eventually kept it to two words: [Unknown.]

Ji You saw this and was somewhat disappointed, so she could only reply: [Okay, when you have a confirmed time, be sure to tell me. I'll treat you to a meal then. Let me tell you, I have a special friend. Its name is Mengmeng, the mascot of the hot pot restaurant on the commercial street. It's super cute. I'll introduce you when you're back, and the food there is also very delicious. Of course, I think that the braised pork rice is the best!]

Lastly, Ji You didn't forget to add a flattering remark naturally.

After a while.

Shi Ya replied with a single word: [Okay.]

Ji You thought for a bit and hurriedly said: [Senior, I won't disturb you anymore. I missed several classes from the Material Department during the special training, and I need to catch up fast, or that nitpicky professor might fail me, which would be disastrous...]

After sending the message, Ji You waited and waited but never received a reply from Senior Shi Ya. She thought that the senior must be too busy to reply to her.

Then.

Ji You immediately spent points to download the lectures of Professor Ye Hong and planned to catch up on all the missed classes.

She had just sat down for a short while, maybe around fifteen minutes, when she suddenly received a notification. It was a message from Senior Shi Ya: [Okay.]

A brilliant smile instantly blossomed on Ji You's face.

As expected—

Senior Shi Ya may seem aloof on the surface, but inside she's such a gentle person.

On the other end, as Shi Ya looked at the word 'Okay,' she couldn't help but clench her fingers tightly.

—She had no intention of replying, but the thought of her waiting on the other side just made her unable to resist, didn't it?

Chapter 289: Grumpy Old Man

Ji You began to listen to the lecture, and as she did, she felt something odd about it. For instance, when Professor Ye Hong said this: "The discipline of Materials is foundational. It appears simple, but becoming an expert in this field requires more than just a casual effort. Some people in our department study Materials, then move on to study Mechanical Manufacturing and Mecha Battle... They want to grasp everything, learn everything, thinking they're a jack-of-all-trades, but in reality, they're nothing but mediocre—mediocre and foolishly unaware of it!"

"Our ancestors had a wise saying, 'Biting off more than one can chew,' which perfectly describes such people! Therefore, I hope that whether you are present here or watching the downloaded videos on your screen, you all grasp this concept. Cut your losses in time, turning back is the way forward!"

Ji You: "..."

Although it felt strange, it definitely wasn't about her.

So, she continued listening.

Then—

Professor Ye Hong glanced at the screen and suddenly added, "Here, let me clarify one thing, because some mediocre people think they are omniscient and aren't attending the lecture in person, I can't guarantee they will hear everything I say, listen attentively. But as a professor, whose role is to impart knowledge, resolve doubts, and guide, I still have to say: I review every assignment submitted by the students, I personally check them, and the feedback I give to each one is fair and just, without any hidden agendas! Therefore, I hope all my students listen carefully and complete their assignments with diligence—because—I do not wish to receive any more assignments that are devoid of any highlights and yet the author is self-congratulatory!"

"Let's continue with the lecture."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You smacked her lips, convinced that she was overthinking it. The student that Professor Ye Hong was seriously criticizing couldn't possibly be her.

Absolutely.

Definitely.

Certainly.

NOT!!!

Then, Ji You continued to focus on the lecture. This time, Professor Ye Hong's teaching was devoid of any emotional outburst, meticulous and thorough, yet also simple and easy to understand...

After catching up on all the lessons, Ji You checked and found that she was missing some materials for her assignment, mainly because she spent the past few days off training, and several assignments required fresh materials, so Ji You hadn't placed an order.

She placed a new complete order, shut down her Light Computer, and was about to take more study notes when she suddenly glanced at her inbox and saw an unread email lying there.

Eh?

When did this happen?

She hadn't even noticed.

Then—

Ji You clicked to check and discovered it was an email from Professor Ye Hong. Thinking of this solemn, old-school professor made Ji You's heart inexplicably skip a beat. She looked at the time the email was sent, just 4 days ago.

Initially, Ji You didn't think much of it.

But then, as if possessed, she looked at the lecture that Professor Ye Hong had just given, calling some students 'mediocre.' She found that it was also from 4 days ago, and coincidentally, the time Professor Ye Hong had sent the email was just less than 10 minutes after the lecture ended.

So—

Ji You shivered all over.

She was a little afraid to open and read it.

But still braving up, she clicked open, and after a single glance, Ji You felt her breath catch, nearly suffocating.

Professor Ye Hong: [Utterly lackluster, so conceited!]

Ji You: "!!!"

Ji You opened her mouth, feeling that she needed to cool off for a moment.

So, she walked around the dormitory once, then another time, before she slightly calmed down.

So—

Was it her that the old professor harshly criticized as a 'mediocre talent' in front of all the students during class?

Ji You: "..."

Ji You's mouth twitched, feeling somewhat wronged. Wasn't it just that she bravely sent an email to Professor Ye Hong, asking where her assignment was flawed? But the old professor didn't converse properly and instead just criticized and belittled her!

Sigh!

A bit sad.

But the sadness was only momentary; Ji You quickly recovered, clenched her fists tightly, and said with force: "Since you think I'm mediocre, I won't act according to your wishes. Just you wait and see! I hope it won't be too resounding when I prove you wrong!"

Hmph!

Ji You immediately contacted Xiao You within the Iron Plate, and said with force: "Xiao You, we mustn't let others look down on us! Both of us need to work harder! We must show our true capabilities so that all those voices of doubt will be silenced."

Xiao You smiled sweetly, and said softly, "Mhm. Sister! Let's work hard together!"

Ji You couldn't help but say: "This old man, really, acting all high and noble in class, saying he has no bias. But look at how much he has! Talking about biting off more than one can chew, studying Mechanical Manufacturing, Mecha Battle, and even Material Department, he might as well directly point out that he's talking about number 4444, Ji You! What's more infuriating is, I reckon this old man suspects we don't understand the hints, and sent us a message less than 10 minutes after class, blatantly criticizing our assignment as lackluster and conceited!"

"It's so infuriating!"

"How can he be like this?"

"Ah! I can't take it anymore, I want to give him a punch right now!"

Listening to her sister's complaints, Xiao You couldn't help but laugh out, although she should feel the same animosity. She quickly held back her laughter and said: "Sister... we can't hit the teacher, if it's discovered, at best we'll get demerit points, at worst be expelled."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You stroked her chin, and said seriously: "What if I wear a sack over my head and beat him up sneakily, do you think that's doable?"

Xiao You: "..."

Afraid that her sister was serious, Xiao You quickly and sweetly tried to persuade her: "Sister, that's not good, let's not do that. Regarding that poorly graded assignment, I've reconsidered it these past few days, and have a new plan. How about we try it again later?"

Ji You's eyes lit up, and she praised with a smile: "Xiao You is truly deserving of being the future tycoon in the material field! So awesome, definitely extraordinary! For this assignment, I really couldn't think of any other way to improve it. Once the materials are ready tomorrow, let's give it a go."

Xiao You blushed slightly, and said in a low voice: "It's... it's not that amazing. I've been pondering over it for the past few days, constantly thinking about it, so I came up with some different methods, but I also can't guarantee they will work." Locked in this confined space with nothing else to do, she could only turn over these thoughts in her mind, over and over... constantly focusing on one thing seriously, so that even a fool, given enough practice, could get the hang of it.

Xiao You is naturally shy and modest, but Ji You is different. Ji You is also modest, but she definitely lacks no self-esteem. She laughed heartily: "I believe in you! Xiao You! This time, we're definitely going to produce an assignment that will surprise that grumpy old man!"

Ji You's encouragement gave Xiao You confidence, her face flushed with a nod: "Mhm."

Chapter 290: Biting Off More Than You Can Chew

Lanyue Star Military Academy, Professor Ye Hong's laboratory.

Professor Ye Hong personally corrected all of today's homework. Then, he began meticulously inspecting his work instruments and equipment.

Beside him stood a tall and handsome young man, next to him was a tall and sweet-looking girl. As the two watched the scene, they hurried to help, but Professor Ye Hong stopped them with a wave of his hand, saying, "Just sit aside for now, I am used to taking care of my own equipment. Only in this way can I always understand the condition of the equipments and know if it will have an adverse effect on material processing."

The young man looked on admiringly and said, "We all have much to learn from the teacher's spirit."

Ye Hong glanced at him and said, "You young people are all too dependent on machines, on artificial intelligence, not realizing that only hands-on effort can cultivate meticulous craftsmanship and research truly good materials."

The girl, hearing these words, hurriedly searched for compliments to offer, and with a face full of extreme admiration and respect, she said, "Professor embodies the true spirit of craftsmanship."

Ye Hong looked at the two and almost imperceptibly sighed, saying, "I hope you're not just paying lip service, but truly aspire to have the spirit of craftsmen."

Talking is easy, isn't it? The tongue rolls, and words come out with ease.

But how difficult is doing it? Fewer and fewer people nowadays can truly settle down and refine their skills with a calm mind, without pride or impatience, like they have been diligently focused on their research for decades.

Sigh~

With Professor Ye Hong's words, both the young man and girl nodded their heads repeatedly and agreed, "Yes! We will take the teacher's/professor's teachings to heart."

It was then Professor Ye Hong asked, "Nolan, what did you want to see me about?"

A trace of discomfort flashed across the handsome face of Nolan Augustine, but he still voiced his request, saying, "Teacher... I have encountered some problems in my recent research, several puzzles that I cannot solve no matter how much I ponder. I have heard that you are acquainted with Master Kong Zhe, thus I wish to ask for your help in making an introduction." As he spoke, Nolan Augustine kept an eye on Professor Ye Hong's expression. Noticing his teacher's mood shift at his words, he nevertheless pressed on, "If it's inconvenient for you, or if Master Kong Zhe is unavailable to meet, that is also fine. I have left a copy of the problems I've encountered here, hoping only that Master Kong Zhe would be willing to take a glance and resolve my doubts."

Professor Ye Hong had a stern face and remained silent.

The atmosphere was a bit tense.

Xu Siyu, standing to the side, was getting a bit anxious, thought for a moment, and quickly started explaining to Senior Nolan, "Professor... Senior Nolan has been dedicated to the study of Soul Device Manufacturing recently, and he nearly succeeded several times, but failed at the last step. Actually... Whether in producing materials or researching Soul Device Manufacturing, Senior Nolan has been extremely diligent, not neglecting any coursework. Moreover, we've found that Soul Device Manufacturing also requires material processing, even more advanced techniques. So... I think Senior Nolan's study of Soul Device Manufacturing does enhance the material techniques he has."

Xu Siyu finished speaking, feeling slightly uneasy herself.

Professor Ye Hong's temperament was actually quite easy to figure out; he liked students who are focused, serious, and creative! What he despised most were those who dabble in everything but master nothing. After Xu Siyu enrolled, she specifically acted according to Professor Ye Hong's preferences, thus she greatly won his appreciation and heavy regard, which also made her thrive at school...

But Xu Siyu knew that, no matter how capable or skilled she was, the best path in the future would be to join a prestigious laboratory as a specialist in material processing. When Mechanical Manufacturing Masters and Mechanical Manufacturers create a world-renowned product, the biggest beneficiaries are those Artifact Makers, not the little assistants responsible for material processing...

Therefore—

Material processing as a career, simply doesn't have great prospects.

She wanted to become famous.

She longed for the world's attention, longed for a life of luxury... Thus, she had no fondness for a profession steeped in obscurity.

Being able to cling to Nolan Augustine was an unexpected joy.

Xu Siyu was unwilling to let go of the connection with Senior Nolan; if he could become a soul artifact maker, then—it would be more beneficial for her future. So she was even more anxious than Nolan Augustine himself about this matter.

The urgency in Xu Siyu's heart was not reflected on her face as she looked at Professor Ye Hong and, in order to persuade this stubborn old man, she mustered her courage to say, "Professor... During this time, I have seen Senior Nolan making progress in both learning soul artifact manufacturing and in the field of material technology. Look—here are some materials I secretly brought over."

A flash of surprise passed across Nolan's face: "Si Yu, how did you bring these materials here?"

Xu Siyu blushed slightly and said softly, "It was Si Yu who decided on her own; I hope Senior Nolan won't blame me."

Nolan was good-tempered, showing no sign of anger.

Professor Ye Hong's face, however, turned from dark to darker. Before taking the materials from Xu Siyu, he scolded, "Biting off more than one can chew! How many times do I have to say it before you understand?" Nolan Augustine was a student he had always placed great hope in.

Xu Siyu was a rising star, and both were considered outstanding prospects by Professor Ye Hong, but what happened?

These two had actually chosen a fringe path, intending to cross the lone bridge of soul artifact manufacturing?

Little did they know, was soul artifact manufacturing that easy?

"Ridiculous!"

"Absolutely ridiculous!"

Professor Ye Hong cursed under his breath, but he still took the materials and examined them closely. As he looked, the anger in his eyes diminished slightly, but his tone remained very stern. "It looks improved, but it's only been refined, and the actual application is not ideal. Do you really think your ideas are very advanced and creative? Let me tell you the truth, hundreds of years ago, people already

linked material processing with soul artifact manufacturing, but why has no one really done it until now? They failed! There are countless cases of failure, and that is how our current manufacturing system came to be!"

"Naive!"

He was so angry, he nearly blew his beard and stared.

Hearing this, both Nolan and Xu Siyu's faces flashed with embarrassment.

Professor Ye Hong glanced at the two and scolded them violently for a while. Both listened obediently, without daring to be disrespectful or fervently refute. After a good amount of scolding, Professor Ye Hong felt tired and couldn't help but sigh, waving his hand, "Forget it, since you won't be convinced until you're facing the Yellow River's end, I'll indulge you. List the problems for me, and I'll send them to Master Kong Zhe."

Both of them rejoiced at the news.

Xu Siyu was especially grateful and quickly said, "Thank you, Professor. With your help in making introductions, Senior Nolan's research will definitely break through quickly."

Professor Ye Hong snorted lightly: "Hmph."