

The Interstellar Queen of Scavengers

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Nutrient Solution

Lying there like a salted fish, Ji You felt both hungry and the beginnings of a headache after staying motionless for a while. Helpless, she got up, rummaged through her room, and found the only two nutrient solutions she had.

The two nutrient solutions in Ji You's hand were of the lowest quality, produced and sold by Hua Tai Company, the largest food conglomerate in the Alliance. Hua Tai's distribution channels covered every corner of the Alliance, making purchases extremely convenient. The price was also very low, at only 2 credit points each, and they were the main food on the tables of most of the Alliance's impoverished citizens.

The appearance of the nutrient solution was somewhat similar to 21st-century popsicles, but once opened, it revealed a white paste. Eating just one was equivalent to consuming two large bowls of rice, quite filling. Ordinary people only needed to eat three a day to maintain their daily activities.

The nutrient solution came in several grades: low-level, Intermediate, High-level... They were generally categorized by the materials used and the taste. An Intermediate nutrient solution cost 50 credit points each. As for the High-level ones, it was said that they were made entirely of natural food, and a basic Tomato Egg flavor High-level nutrient solution cost at least 500 credit points. The rarer the food ingredients, the more expensive the High-level nutrient solutions were.

Of course—

Whether it was Intermediate or High-level, both were luxuries far beyond Ji You's reach, only to be longed for.

Sigh~

Having been here for half a year, Ji You's diet consisted solely of low-level nutrition, and her neighbors were no exception, almost entirely consuming the same. Hence, she had yet to witness firsthand any difference between these expensive nutrient solutions and the affordable ones.

Life was incredibly tough, but one must not let it lack pomp.

Ji You brought over a chair, set up a table made of alloy Material, meticulously placed bowls and chopsticks on it, and finally, adorned it with a plastic rose as a decoration, completing the pre-meal ceremony.

Ji You sarcastically berated herself as a way of finding amusement in her misery:
"Ah~~~ my accursed, unsettled sense of artistry~~~"

Then—

Ji You snapped a nutrient solution in half with her hand, using only one half and carefully sealing the remaining half to save it for breakfast the next morning.

That's right.

It was all about saving like this.

Indeed!

The poor can concoct all kinds of harsh methods to scrimp and save.

However, she soon frowned, her fair and delicate face crumpling like a bun.

This!

This!

This damn nutrient solution! No matter how many times she consumed it, or how much she ate, the bitter, fishy, and pasty taste was just as hard to swallow.

How can there be such disgustingly inedible things like nutrient solutions in this world?

Who exactly?

Which culinary dark art genius invented this?

It was simply an inhumane, catastrophic invention!

Ji You dumped the half piece of nutrient solution into her mouth, gulping it down in one go, and promptly, immediately, quickly picked up the water cup and emptied it in a single gulp.

One cup, then another, drinking three big cups of water in succession, the strange taste in her mouth finally somewhat diminished.

In fact, there's a reason why the low-level nutrition tastes so indescribably bad. Because this product is positioned to be cheap, claiming to be affordable even for street vagrants, its price initially was 0.5 credit points. Throughout the centuries, despite inflation, it had only risen from 0.5 to 2 credit points. To achieve this goal, food companies had to ensure the nutrient content within the solution remained, while drastically reducing costs, sacrificing taste in the process.

In fact, after years of exploration, the taste of the current low-level nutrient solution has significantly improved compared to the original product. The original version was genuinely nightmarish cuisine.

Regarding this, being able to fill their stomachs at such a low price, ensuring that their whole families wouldn't starve on the streets, many impoverished citizens of the Alliance expressed, what more could they possibly ask for?

Taste?

It doesn't exist.

It would be great if the price were lower, and certainly better if it were even lower.

However, within the interstellar alliance, there were quite a few small and large food companies producing low-level nutrition solutions, among which three large companies—Huatai, Zhengxing, and Meiwei Jia—held the major market share. Their competition ensured that, while maintaining the premise of nutrition and cost, the taste of low-level nutrition solutions was continuously improved; at least they no longer had the bitterness and fishiness of today—

However—

Ever since Huatai Company formed connections with a high-ranking official of the Alliance fifty years ago and completely monopolized the market for low-level nutrition solutions, the taste of these solutions has never been improved again.

The era of blossoming diversity ended.

Zhengxing Food disappeared and became a company researching Mecha Materials.

Meiwei Jia still exists, but it now only dedicates itself to researching Intermediate and High-level nutrient solutions, completely abandoning the low-level market.

Other small companies? They were buried who knows where a long time ago.

Alliance citizens have a love-hate relationship with the food industry giant Huatai Company.

Love?

Because many of its products are cheap, just a small amount of money could sustain a family's expenses.

Hate?

Of course, because it lacks progress, for decades, its flagship product 'low-level nutrient solution' hasn't had any improvement in taste, and even worse, in order to reduce costs, it chose even poorer Materials, making the taste increasingly unbearable.

As a giant, Huatai owns the entire market for low-level nutrient solutions, and its style is extremely arrogant, self-important, completely disregarding the public's suggestions, stubbornly going its own way—

...

Ji You's brows were tightly knit, having just finished the nutrient solution, she immediately wanted to go to the press—this was probably one of the side effects of dark cuisine.

Hmph~

Then, she logged onto the Star Network and quickly found Huatai's official website, looking at the sparse positive reviews for low-level nutrition under the comments section, along with a host of neutral, negative reviews, and complaints about the bad taste, Ji You's hand that was about to give a bad review suddenly stopped. With a twisted sense of humor, she left a five-star positive review and blew a bit of a rainbow fart: [What kind of divine nutrient solution is this? Right after drinking it, I saw countless little people floating before my eyes, singing and dancing... They were cheering, jumping, celebrating... Did I just ascend to immortality? I want to thank Huatai, it let me experience the pleasure of the taste buds, let me know the value of food, and that it's good to still be alive after consuming low-level nutrient solution~~~]

After writing, Ji You immediately exited. She didn't notice that right after she left, her comment inspired several follow-up posts, and due to her slightly bizarre speech, more and more people joined in, with various sarcastic quotes popping up.

Follow-up post 01: [Xiu'er, is that you Xiu'er?]

Follow-up post 02: [Savage, you're really savage.]

Follow-up post 03: [Huatai: Keep dissing! If I lose from just one glance at you, then so be it!]

Follow-up post 04: [Huatai: That's right~ Our nutrient solution allows you to not only see little people but also become a floating little person after eating it.]

Follow-up post 05: [I just set up my Energy Cannon, damn it! I almost blasted the wrong person! Captain! This is an ally!]

Follow-up post 06: [Police officer: That's her! She's the one! She made me see countless little people dancing nonstop, and I can't even wave them away...]

