

Scavengers 481

Chapter 481: Evenly Matched

Perhaps truly affected by defeat, Chu Jiaojiao insisted on trying to snatch a Soul Device to boost her spiritual power. Shen Changqing advised, "Ayan said the preview is three days away. At the earliest, the fight for it won't start until the night after tomorrow. Going now is useless."

Chu Jiaojiao replied, "I've never been there before. I want to go check it out first."

Shen Changqing and Yue Qiyuan had not yet made it to the finals, both were somewhat hesitant. Yue Qiguang, who had been long eliminated, brazenly said, "If that's the case, I'll tag along for the fun."

Yue Qiguang believed he could match Chu Jiaojiao in terms of hand speed.

Upon hearing this, Shen Changqing and Yue Qiyuan looked at each other and then nodded in agreement.

The group decided to temporarily stop competing and first check out Green Glaze Master's shop. Chu Jiaojiao turned her head and eagerly invited the Rag Queen by her side, "Queen, do you want to come with us?"

Ji You had no interest whatsoever and shook her head, "I'm not going. You guys go ahead."

What could she do in an empty shop?

Stand packed together staring with big eyes at small eyes? Or, like Sheng Qingyan, go ahead of time to occupy a spot on the shop floor?

Ji You would not stoop so low to do such things.

Hearing Ji You's refusal, Shen Changqing couldn't help but ask, "Who are you planning to challenge next?"

After a moment's thought, Ji You said, "Little Shengsheng."

Shen Changqing was taken aback and said, "You can't beat her."

A trace of a smile played on Ji You's lips, "How will I know if I don't try?"

Shen Changqing looked at her, then suddenly turned to Chu Jiaojiao, Yue Qiguang, and the others, "I'm not going. I want to watch her battle with Little Shengsheng."

Chu Jiaojiao, Yue Qiguang, and the rest: "..."

Ji You was a bit puzzled and asked with a smile, "Why are you so interested in my competition?"

Shen Changqing pursed his lips, his face serious, "I think watching your competitions is very insightful. I can learn a lot from them."

Ji You: "..."

Facing such an earnest kid, Ji You thought for a moment and solemnly said, "Xiaoqing, I'm glad and honored to provide you with references and help. Also, I believe to make it to the finals, relying only on an antique mech might be a bit difficult. Our human ancestors have a saying, 'A tree dies when it's uprooted, but a person thrives when they move.' For each battle, we should adopt different strategies. It's only by adjusting our policies appropriately that we can make progress." So—replace your antique mech as soon as possible, or you're going to fall out of the top 20.

Upon hearing this, Shen Changqing was visibly shocked, then nodded solemnly, "I understand what you are saying. In the upcoming matches, I will make adjustments and won't attempt to mimic your fighting style any longer. I'll use my own strategies as much as possible."

Ji You: "???"

Uh?

Bro, get it together. What I meant was for you to ditch the antique mech, don't be so stubborn...

Shen Changqing looked at Ji You, whose expression was a bit odd, and suddenly felt a bit embarrassed. In a low voice, he said, "I've watched your combat videos many times over this period, so I unintentionally adopted some of your moves during my own battles."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You opened her mouth, "I... No! You... Sigh!"

She stomped her foot, feeling a significant communication barrier between them.

"Forget it."

"I'm off to compete." Ji You said to Shen Changqing, "Xiaoqing, you are truly excellent and very opinionated. You might feel that sticking with the antique mech is greatly beneficial to your improvement. In that case—you keep at it."

Her goal in joining the online competition was to win! To secure a place in the Alliance's top ten.

But—Shen Changqing's goal might be different from hers. Perhaps he simply wanted to make progress in his battles. If continuing to use the antique mech indeed helped him improve, then Ji You had no reason to keep discouraging him.

Chu Jiaojiao and Yue Qiguang decided to visit Qingyou Master's shop, while Shen Changqing and Yue Qiyuan chose to stay and watch Ji You's battle with Little Shengsheng. Thus, the group went their separate ways.

Ji You didn't delay and immediately issued a challenge to Little Shengsheng.

Just finished a match and about to log off, Little Shengsheng hesitated for a second upon seeing the message from Rag Queen, then chose to accept.

Soon after, the system broadcasted a public announcement.

The number one player of the East District, Little Shengsheng, was starting another match so soon. Many people from the previous fight were still craving more, and now, they rushed to join...

Shen Changqing and Yue Qiyuan instantly chose to spectate the moment the system announcement went out. Thanks to seizing the initiative, both of them squeezed into the spectator seats without any trouble.

In less than a second, there were no seats left.

"Little Shengsheng!"

"Little Shengsheng!"

"Little Shengsheng!"

...

In the stands, waves of enthusiastic cheering could be heard. Within the crowd, the occasional chants for Rag Queen were quickly drowned out by the frenzied shouts of Little Shengsheng's fans the moment they emerged.

Ji You watched and couldn't help but marvel, saying, "Little Shengsheng, you really have a lot of fans."

In the arena, Little Shengsheng stood at one end. Her face showed little emotion in response to the audience's enthusiastic cheers, and it was unclear whether it was due to her nature of being sparing with words or just not being good at speaking. She simply nodded: "Hmm."

Ji You looked at her opponent and said solemnly, "Please enlighten me."

Little Shengsheng pursed her lips: "Hmm."

Immediately—

Two silver mechas appeared before the audience—

"Blade!"

"Blade!"

"There goes Rag Queen, haven't seen her use the old rusty mech in a while, really brings back memories."

"When it comes to top pilots of Blade, it's none other than Little Shengsheng. Rag Queen using Blade against her kind of feels like playing the lute to a cow."

...

The spectator seats were abuzz with discussions...

Ji You turned a deaf ear to all these, her expression solemn, her entire attention focused on the upcoming bout. As soon as the countdown ended, she charged at Little Shengsheng, piloting the Blade aggressively...

Having improved her spiritual power to Grade B, Ji You felt a distinct disappearance of her previous plight of powerlessness when piloting Blade again.

Even with few Spiritual Silks, she opted for simplicity over complexity, discarding the other intricate operating commands. Focusing on just a few key commands, Ji You experienced no hesitation. Now piloting the Blade, she felt a sense of exhilaration akin to swimming like a fish in water.

Seeing Ji You dive towards her, Little Shengsheng was far from panicked. Instead, her dark eyes gleamed with a light. Drawing out a Big Chopper, she marched towards Ji You.

Boom—

In a flash, the two Big Choppers collided and with a crackling sound, exploded into fragments.

The audience saw—

Both blades, broken cleanly in half.

Audience: "Holy shit!!!"

Among the freshmen in the East District this year, when it comes to Strength, Drunk Lying on the Beauty's Knee ranked third, Lord Mo tenth, and Little Shengsheng first... all of them stood out as the best of the best.

But the audience never imagined that one day, Rag Queen, who became famous for her shabbiness, could actually go head-to-head with Little Shengsheng in terms of strength and even come to a draw.

Chapter 482: A Close Contest

At the start of the match, Rag Queen and Little Shengsheng, two seemingly frail girls, fiercely clashed with all their strength, yet no clear winner could be discerned.

For a moment, the audience sat up straight, craning their necks to stare intently at the arena...

After the Big Chopper broke, Ji You discarded the handle, and so did Little Shengsheng. Almost without any thought, they switched their weapons; Ji You now wielded a sharp Horse-cutting Saber, while Little Shengsheng had a Longsword.

A Longsword?

Ji You raised an eyebrow: "Let's see whether your Longsword is more effective, or my Horse-cutting Saber chops heads faster!"

Upon hearing this, Little Shengsheng pursed her lips: "Mine."

Oh?

Always sparing with words and outwardly calm and steady, it seems Little Shengsheng harbors a confident spirit.

Smirking, Ji You raised the Horse-cutting Saber with one hand and chopped directly at Little Shengsheng's Mecha Cabin.

The two were in close proximity; in such situations, using high-energy thermal weapons could easily harm oneself as much as the enemy, so they both opted for close combat.

Ji You attacked ferociously, and Little Shengsheng was not to be outdone. As Ji You's Horse-cutting Saber came chopping down, Little Shengsheng lightly waved her Longsword, which instantly entwined the Saber like a breeze carrying willow catkins. Little Shengsheng raised her wrist and pulled hard...

With a ripping sound—

She couldn't pull it free.

Little Shengsheng appeared surprised for a moment, before trying again with strength. But how would Ji You give her the chance? In the blink of an eye, knowing that the Horse-cutting Saber entangled by the

Longsword couldn't be pulled back, Ji You simply surged forward, continuing the strike toward Little Shengsheng's Mecha...

Click~

A slight crackle reminded Little Shengsheng, who slightly furrowed her brows at that instant. She extended countless mechanical arms, each wielding a sword aiming at Ji You.

Ji You exclaimed: "Damn!!!"

arm.

arms.

arms.

...

Too many to count!

This is a tentacle monster!

Clearly, this is a mechanical arm feature Little Shengsheng added to her Mecha 'Blade,' and managing so many arms at once indicates her impressive Spiritual Silk Cleaning Rate.

Only managing six Spiritual Threads and also having to monitor other aspects of the Mecha, Ji You yelled, "Can't mess with this! I'm out!"

Audience: "..."

Audience A: "If you're going to dodge, just dodge; why shout it out?"

Audience B: "Isn't that just telling your opponent to hurry up and beat you?"

Audience C was just about to speak when they saw Rag Queen, who was shouting about not being able to mess and quickly dodging, not only not dodging but charging more fiercely at Little Shengsheng.

Audience C: "What kind of move is this?"

Audience D: "Hmm... online suicide?"

Whether it was suicide or not, Ji You was clear in her heart. Caught slightly off-guard, Little Shengsheng, in that instant, manipulated countless Longswords to ruthlessly strike at Ji You's Blade...

Ji You's eyes hardened, and as Little Shengsheng made her move, she suddenly exerted great strength to fiercely retract her Horse-cutting Saber, and then, it whirred as it chopped towards the countless swords...

It was as if autumn winds swept leaves, and relentless rains washed away sand, the audience only heard a series of clashing noises. Under the wild sweep of Ji You's Horse-cutting Saber, a large part of the Longswords in Little Shengsheng's hands were chopped to the ground...

The audience gaped in astonishment: "Is this the Rag Queen? So fierce!"

Inside the cabin, Little Shengsheng's face grew pale. Despite Ji You's extraordinary performance and the audience's surprise, she remained calm amidst danger and in less than a second, she replenished her supply of countless Longswords.

This time, Little Shengsheng's assault was even more intense.

Ji You gasped, cursing non-stop: "That's cheating! You're hacking!" How can someone whose Spiritual Connection was just interrupted replenish so fast?

Unperturbed by Ji You's words, Little Shengsheng continued her relentless attack; for a moment, everyone felt blades flickering and moving like lightning, sparks flying everywhere...

To an outsider, Ji You's tussle with Little Shengsheng might only appear as a clash between a Horse-cutting Saber and countless Longswords, but only those who are deeply immersed in the vortex of battle know that this is a direct confrontation of spiritual power. Why was Ji You able to break half of Little Shengsheng's Longswords? It was because she had deployed her Spiritual Net, sweeping away half of his Spiritual Silk...

Normally, if someone's Spiritual Silk is defeated, they would be devastated and unable to recover.

But Little Shengsheng?

Indeed—

He truly deserving of being number one, the number one beast of the East District!

Little Shengsheng's Spiritual Silk, seemed to not require any repair or recuperation, as countless new threads extended in an instant...

Regarding this, Ji You truly felt envious, jealous, and resentful.

So sour!

She needs to eat a lemon!

Look at others, then look at herself.

Spiritual World.

Boss who had a satisfying bout with the opponent: [Master! Give me another Candy Bean, I'll flip them over!]

Second, who controls the energy: [Master! I request to fight!]

Third, who controls speed: [Master! I request to join the battle!]

Fourth, Old Five, and Sixth were also restless: [Master, give me a Candy Bean, I can go fight too!]

Ji You gritted her teeth: "Shut up! Boss, continue!"

Boss: [But...]

Ji You: "No Candy Beans!" Not even one! Why don't you just reach the Sky?

Boss's head instantly drooped down: [Understood!]

Communicating with the Spiritual Silk did not prevent Ji You from keeping an eye on everything on the battlefield. As Little Shengsheng's attacks grew fiercer, Ji You clenched her teeth and yelled fiercely, "You forced me, I'm unleashing my Big Move!"

The audience, upon hearing this, immediately craned their necks—

Then—

Everyone saw, the Rag Queen driving the Blade, and she bolted in the blink of an eye...

Audience: "..."

That's your Big Move?

Escaping?

That's the so-called Big Move?

Just as the audience was speechless, the Rag Queen already, driving the Blade, dashed away like a flash, and Little Shengsheng, briefly stunned, chased after her in his Mecha, but, for the time being, couldn't catch up...

For a while, everyone was still speechless...

Down below.

Yue Qiyuan pressed his lips together, suddenly asking, "Aqing, how high do you think your chances of successfully escaping under that circumstance would be?"

Shen Changqing, with a stern face, pondered for a moment and shook his head: "I can't escape."

Yue Qiyuan nodded, saying, "That's right, I wouldn't be able to either. Under the full encirclement of Little Shengsheng's Spiritual Silk, the Rag Queen escaped, and it seemed rather effortless at that."

This—

Is the gap between them and the Rag Queen, Little Shengsheng.

For a moment, Shen Changqing and Yue Qiyuan both fell silent.

Ji You, running swiftly, darted and jumped around the arena like a slippery loach. In a short period of time, Little Shengsheng couldn't do anything to her, leaving the audience with widened eyes, stunned. Considering the ultimate outcome of this battle, no one dared to be so certain anymore.

In the end—

Will it be Little Shengsheng who wins?

Or the Rag Queen?

Chapter 483: Have Mercy, Hero

From the start to now, Rag Queen has unexpectedly fought to a stalemate with the top-ranked Little Shengsheng. For a moment, the audience was stunned, all craning their necks in anticipation of the outcome...

Suddenly—

The Rag Queen, in mid-air, stumbled for some reason. Fortunately, with her quick reaction, she narrowly steadied her figure to avoid plummeting from the sky. It was at this moment that Little Shengsheng, who had been relentlessly pursuing the Rag Queen, dove towards her...

The situation was a bit perilous...

Many in the audience down below squeezed out a sweat for the Rag Queen. However, the Rag Queen, after all, was someone who had fought her way into the top 20 with her strength. Even at this critical moment, she remained composed. First, she steadied her posture, regained control of her mecha, then kept her speed even before suddenly bursting forth with energy, dashing away in a swift move...

Little Shengsheng, who had just caught up, could only continue his fervent pursuit in the face of this scene.

Swoosh—

Swoosh—

Swoosh—

Throughout the entire arena, all one could see were two streaks of silver light constantly flashing by, impossible to discern who was who...

Suddenly—

A swiftly rotating silver-white mecha's body swayed, gradually revealing its shape. Was this—

The Rag Queen?

Audience: "???"

What's going on?

Why is the Rag Queen malfunctioning now and then?

Could it be—

Insufficient spiritual power?

Physical Strength not keeping up?

...

Not only did the audience speculate thus, but even Little Shengsheng, who had been continuously attacking the Rag Queen, harbored doubts at that moment. Could it really be that she was running out of strength?

In the saying, "strike him when he is down," anyone would choose to deliver a killing blow to their opponent at this time. After some consideration, Little Shengsheng had no intention of letting the Rag Queen off the hook.

Therefore—

While pushing the thrusters to their maximum, Little Shengsheng aimed at the energy system on the Rag Queen's mecha and fired a Particle Cannon.

Swoosh—

With the sound of the air being torn, Ji You's forehead was dripping with cold sweat, and she clenched her teeth, dodging as best as she could...

Bang!

The Particle Cannon grazed past the mecha's tail wing...

That was close!

This thrilling and exciting moment made even the spectators unable to help but squeeze a sweat for the Rag Queen, who, in the cockpit, had dodged this fatal attack, and once again picked up speed...

But—

The subsequent Particle Cannon from Little Shengsheng was already on the chase.

Clang—

The tip of the Mechanical Blade shook violently and trembled slightly as it started to fall towards the ground!

The audience exclaimed: "This is perilous!"

Could it be so easy to escape Little Shengsheng's sniper lock-on? Moreover, the Rag Queen seemed to have lost some control over her mecha while fleeing...

Just this? If it were someone else facing Little Shengsheng, they would have already died hundreds or thousands of times, not even aware how many times the grass on their graves had grown. Her ability to still be active at this time was proof of her immense strength...

The two mechas dueled in the sky, one dodging, one attacking, going back and forth several times. Not just the audience in the stands, but even Little Shengsheng, inadvertently caught a glimpse of the pale, sweat-beaded face of Rag Queen in the opposite cockpit!

This pitiable state...

It's over!

Not only did the audience think this way, but Little Shengsheng was also utterly convinced that her next move would surely be lethal. Even if she had misjudged the condition of the Rag Queen at the moment...

Not out of arrogance, this was entirely the intuition of an experienced hunter, who had claimed countless 'preys'!

Boom—

Little Shengsheng activated her Killing Skill: Several High Energy Particle Cannons, locking on to the Rag Queen.

The audience couldn't help but slightly close their eyes...

second.

seconds.

seconds.

...

Huh?

Why is the battlefield as silent as a chicken?

The audience widened their eyes and looked up...

They saw—

Little Shengsheng's High Energy Particle Cannons suddenly stopped midair, and Little Shengsheng's Mecha also shook violently at that moment, looking like it was about to lose balance and fall from the sky...

Audience: "???"

So, was everything just now, an act of feigned death by the Rag Queen?

Before the audience could express their doubts, Ji You suddenly let out a long sigh, her tone melancholy, "I just wanted to keep a low profile, but you all want me to go berserk... No choice then! It's time to reveal my true self!"

Audience: "..."

Ji You bellowed: "Everyone——with me: Rag Queen, the best in the arena!"

Audience: "..."

Such a shameless and brazen line had never been uttered so boldly in front of everyone else in the entire online competition; only the Rag Queen had the audacity to blow her own trumpet like that.

Whether it be Little Shengsheng, who was fully prepared for battle, or the bewildered audience, or even the whole site, there was a strange silence for a few seconds...

After a brief moment of deathly stillness.

Audience A: "Anyone here pee frequently? Come and wake her up!"

Audience B: "Step aside, my pee's Yellow!"

Audience C: "First a spit as a sign of respect!"

Audience D: "Spit may be late, but it never fails to show up, ptooeey!"

...

Ji You: "..."

How thick-skinned was Ji You? Having seen big scenes before, how could she be embarrassed by such a small fry? Her shout was simply to attract everyone's attention, in preparation for a bait-and-switch...

It was also at that moment, taking advantage of the diverted attention, that Ji You suddenly pounced towards Little Shengsheng!

Clang!

Bang bang!

Crack!

...

In that instant, the audience could only see two Mechas entwined, blade flashes and shadow slashes, with countless sparks flying around and loud noises resounding...

"My eyes are dazzled!"

"Truly dazzled."

"Who just got slashed?"

"And who just got punched?"

"The one whose arm got severed, who was it?"

"The one whose head was nearly smashed, who was it?"

...

Fast!

So fast!

The audience dared not be the slightest bit distracted, watching the arena without blinking, yet still unable to discern who was who, or who had the upper hand. They could only feel that the two combatants in the arena were like the center of a raging tornado, stirring up storms wherever they passed...

Then—

"Holy shit!"

A sudden scream echoed through the arena as a Mecha plummeted rapidly...

It was only then that everyone could see clearly that it was Rag Queen's Mecha.

Boom—

A huge roaring explosion bloomed midair.

Rag Queen's Mecha, shattered into countless pieces...

Audience: "..."

As the audience couldn't bear to look any longer, a human body fell from the sky and landed on the ground.

Alive!

Ji You: "Damn! Missed!"

Audience: "!!!!!!!"

At this moment, Little Shengsheng, piloting his Mechanical Blade, landed gracefully, just in front of the fallen Rag Queen. Without a word, Little Shengsheng raised the sword in his hand...

"Mercy, mighty warrior!" Ji You's eyes widened, she rolled on the spot, narrowly escaping a sword strike, and sprang up, running and howling, "Big sis! I think... we can still talk this over..." Just then, a sky-piercing scream: "Ahhh!!!"

Then, Little Shengsheng's expression stern, unhesitatingly raised the sword in hand, ready to finish it in one move!

Audience: "..."

A moment of silent mourning.

Candles lit.

Incense offered.

...

Chapter 484: Final Circle

System: [This round — Little Shengsheng wins, rating...]

Listening to the system's broadcast, Ji You stared with eyes wide open, unwilling to accept defeat: "We could have still talked it out... we could have still talked it out... we could still have..."

However —

Little Shengsheng, looking at Ji You 'lying dead' on the ground, suddenly spoke: "No talking."

Ji You: "..."

Holding her head, Ji You wailed: "Little Shengsheng, you've changed! You weren't like this before! How could you be like this?"

Little Shengsheng: "..."

Facing the Rag Queen who was throwing a tantrum, completely devoid of her image, Little Shengsheng remained silent for a while before choosing the exit button.

Whoosh—

With a flash, Little Shengsheng was teleported out.

Ji You: "..."

Audience: "..."

Suddenly, the audience burst into waves of laughter: "Hahaha... Rag Queen, you died so miserably! Don't die! Get up and keep the party going!"

Ji You: "..."

Ji You glanced at the audience and inelegantly rolled her eyes: "I can't be bothered with you."

Having said that.

She arrogantly turned her head and clicked the exit button.

Audience reaching out: "Rag Queen! Don't go! We can still laugh at you for a while more."

However —

What was left to the audience was only the elegant back of the Rag Queen as she turned to leave, and the intentional flick of her waterfall-like, bright red hair just before she left...

After leaving the arena, Ji You raised her hand and fiercely grabbed her hair: "A mistake! A mistake! If I had just been a bit more careful, I could have escaped. Why didn't I run?"

"Why did I choose to fight head-on?"

"First run, survive, then think about other things. I could have lived a few more minutes, and who knows who would have won or lost by then?"

During the match, Ji You faked death a few times, finally lowering Little Shengsheng's guard a bit. Taking advantage of a moment of relaxation, Ji You surged forward, planning to deliver a deadly strike.

However—

Little Shengsheng proved to be a tough nut to crack. Ordinary opponents, like Xianting Huailuo and Hero King, when locked by Ji You's spiritual power and facing her full strike, would definitely not be able to withstand it and make mistakes in panic...

But—

But Little Shengsheng, truly a beast among beasts! Just slightly disturbed for a moment, but Ji You couldn't even launch her attack before Little Shengsheng stabilized the situation and began counterattacking...

At that moment, if Ji You had not thought of fighting Little Shengsheng head-on but instead immediately escaped, and then looked for an opportunity to strike, maybe this match wouldn't have ended so quickly.

However, her inherent stubbornness and competitiveness suddenly emerged, wanting to test how she differed from Little Shengsheng...

The experiment resulted in failure.

Ji You frowned.

In reality, this misfortune-turned-fortune increase in spiritual power greatly helped Ji You. Without it, she wouldn't have been able to compete head-on with Little Shengsheng for so long. Also—after a period of expensive 'Medicine Bath' and the Fierce Tiger Body Forging Technique given by Teacher Mu, both Ji You's spiritual power and physical strength had significantly improved...

However, despite this, Ji You's gap with Little Shengsheng was still very clear.

It wasn't just a gap in talent, the experience and tactics during the fight clearly showed Ji You lagged far behind...

Ji You pondered.

Suddenly—

Shen Changqing sent a message: "Rag Queen, your performance, it surprised me, your strength, it has improved again."

Ji You chuckled and replied, "Just so-so, honorable even in defeat. I don't ask for victory or loss, as long as I make a little progress each day, I'm satisfied."

Such balderdash, obviously nonsense at a glance.

Next to Shen Changqing, Yue Qiyuan said, "Don't believe her nonsense. Do you believe that she is now hiding and scratching at some corner after losing?"

Having heard Yue Qiyuan's words, Shen Changqing did not respond. After thinking for a moment, he only sent Ji You a few words: "I'm going to compete."

Ji You was furiously scratching her head and pounding on the wall, unsure whether Shen Changqing believed her or not. But can she admit that she's very unsatisfied with her loss? No! So, it doesn't matter whether Shen Changqing and Yue Qiyuan believe it or not.

Then,

Ji You took a brief rest, replenished her spiritual power, and immediately started the second competition of the evening.

In this match, Ji You played steadily and won.

Following that, she started three more matches, winning each one and improving her personal score, successfully squeezing into the top ten of East District. Moreover, her rank was not even at the very end, she was placed ninth.

Ji You was very happy.

This meant that as long as nothing drastic happened, she could securely get a ticket to the finals.

Ji You thought about fighting another round; just a little more points increase would make her chances of entering the finals even more secure. However, with less than 2 minutes left until the end of the selection match, there was simply not enough time to finish another match.

Then—

The final results finally came out.

Ranked first was still Little Shengsheng.

Second place was Fu Feng.

Third place went to Drunk Lying on the Beauty's Knee.

Fourth place...

...

Ninth place, Rag Queen.

Ji You quickly scanned through the names that weren't hers, not paying much attention, until she saw her own name. Her face lit up with a smile; although placed last, one way or another, she made it into the finals. This meant she now had a chance to break into the top ten of the Alliance.

Then, Ji You's gaze stopped at the last name:

Tenth place, Xiaoqing.

Ji You blinked. Shen Changqing made it through?

But throughout, she didn't see Yue Qiyuan's name, does this mean Yue Qiyuan was eliminated?

Ji You pondered then went to check Yue Qiyuan's recent challenge records. She discovered that his scores in the last few matches were too low, ultimately ranking him only at twelfth place. The eleventh place was King's Expedition, and the eighth -

Hero King!

Ji You widened her eyes.

How is that possible?

How could that guy make it into the finals?

There must be some backstage manipulation going on here!

Absolutely rigged!

Ji You couldn't believe it and hurriedly checked the battle records of Hero King. She found that this guy, in the last dozen or so matches, was ruthlessly using points to pave his way, fully arming his mecha and weapons to the max. Coupled with Hero King's decent skills and top-notch operational level, many opponents couldn't handle him for a while.

The Star Network system has very strict judgment criteria, and such behavior by Hero King doesn't count as cheating. If Ji You had a large amount of points, and was willing to equip her mecha and weapons to an impressive level, it wouldn't breach the rules either. However, Ji You, being such a miser, spending a large amount of points? It's like asking for her life, absolutely impossible.

So—

From another perspective, Hero King also advanced relying on the strength of his points.

Chapter 485: The Wheel of Fortune Turns

Ji You received a message from Chu Jiaojiao while pondering.

Drunk Lying on the Beauty's Knee: [Queen, congratulations on making it to the finals; let's fight another round in the finals.]

Ji You smiled back: [Okay.]

Then,

It was Shen Changqing.

Xiaoqing: [Congratulations on making it to the finals.]

Ji You: [Congratulations to you too.]

Next,

It was a message from Yue Qiyuan.

Dominate the Universe: [Congratulations on making it to the finals.]

Ji You curved her lips slightly, and somewhat mockingly replied: [This queen sincerely invites you to come and cheer me on in the finals, I appoint you as the head of the cheerleading squad!]

Yue Qiyuan: "..."

Yue Qiyuan looked at this nonsensical message, his eyelid twitched, and he complained: "Why do I feel that this Rag Queen is even more annoying than number 4444?"

Hmm?

Shen Changqing was stunned and said: "Their way of speaking is indeed similar, but I don't think it's her."

Yue Qiguang, listening on the side, having listened to his foolish brother speculate, was already going crazy and said: "Impossible! Dad, I couldn't even make it to the finals, how could that idiot number 4444 make it?"

The key point here is, the strength of Rag Queen is visibly evident; after analyzing her battle videos together for so long, if it really were Ji You, we couldn't have overlooked it till now.

So—

Absolutely impossible.

Hearing his own casual remark evoke such a big reaction from his brother, as if stepping on a sore spot, Yue Qiyuan glanced at him and turned to Shen Changqing, saying: "I just meant that this Rag Queen, like Ji You, from a distance, one can smell an unashamed odor wafting."

Yue Qiguang swore and muttered: "Why put it so euphemistically? Just say she has a foul mouth."

Shen Changqing: "Cough cough..."

Yue Qiyuan: "Yeah, indeed her mouth stinks." Made him itch to punch someone.

Shen Changqing: "Cough cough..."

Never mind, he just wouldn't stoop to the level of these two brothers, although, indeed, both Rag Queen and Ji You had kind of venomous tongues...

Cough cough...

Inside, Shen Changqing's thoughts took many turns, but outwardly he remained very serious, looking at everyone, and deliberated before asking: "Now, should we directly message Rag Queen if she wants to join our team, or ask her where she is and talk to her in person?"

Chu Jiaojiao was the first to jump up, saying: "In person! I haven't praised her face-to-face yet. Her last few battles were truly thrilling, they got my blood boiling!"

Yue Qiguang glanced at her and taunted: "I think you've fallen for someone's looks again? Maybe you think the breath-takingly beautiful Rag Queen is actually a foot-scratching, spitting-anywhere rough dude."

Chu Jiaojiao: "Shut up!"

Impossible!

Absolutely impossible!

In her eyes, Rag Queen was nearly as beautiful as Ji You, how could she be a foot-scratching rough dude?

Yue Qiguang muttered: "If not a foot-scratching rough dude, won't be much prettier anyway." Otherwise, with that unabashed sleazy aura that couldn't be masked by several layers of paint, how could she be a beautiful girl?

Chu Jiaojiao, unable to handle the blow, covered her ears: "I'm not listening! I'm not listening! I'm not listening!"

Seeing as these two were unreliable, Shen Changqing turned and looked only at Yue Qiyuan, discussing: "I also think it would be better to talk to her in person, what do you think?"

Yue Qiyuan pondered for a bit, then said: "Let's go! Ask her where she is."

Then, Shen Changqing sent a message to Rag Queen.

Soon after, he received a reply from Ji You.

A few people hurried to the address Ji You had given and arrived in Ji You's area. It turns out that Ji You was in the East District hall, looking at the tall columns in front of her, which displayed a list of advancement rankings.

Tonight, not only the freshmen, but sophomores, juniors, seniors... all the final spots had come out. However, in the online competition, almost everyone was undercover with a pseudonym, rarely using their real names. In reality, you don't know the other person's true identity, their area, which school they represent...

That is—

Ji You glanced at the sophomore's final spots and her gaze stopped at the top of the list, the name there was 'He Bi'.

This name—

Somehow, it made Ji You's mind flash with the scumbag face of Senior He Bi...

It should—

Probably—

Maybe—

Not be, right?

Senior He Bi seems so smart and astute, how could he possibly use such an obviously risky name?

However, if the top-ranked sophomore in the East District really is Senior He Bi, then he's absolutely incredible.

Just think about Little Shengsheng, anyone who can secure the top spot definitely has indisputable strength.

Ji You was pondering this when suddenly a pair of hands reached out from behind, trying to wrap around her svelte waist. Ji You instantly dodged and lifted her foot, stepping down hard!

"Ah!" Chu Jiaojiao screamed, hurriedly stepping back to avoid Ji You's stomp attack: "Queen! Don't panic, I just wanted to say hi."

Ji You kept a straight face: "Talk properly, don't get handsy."

Chu Jiaojiao scratched her head, looking at Ji You with a very naive smile. After smiling, she unapologetically pouted towards Yue Qiguang and said: "Queen's reaction just now, definitely a girl! Totally! Only girls are so sensitive and launch attacks reflexively when someone reaches out to touch them!"

Ji You: "..."

Huh?

What are you saying?

Hearing Chu Jiaojiao's almost provocative words, Yue Qiguang rolled his eyes and said: "Anyone would object to your creepy hands. It really doesn't matter if it's a man or a woman."

Ji You blinked: "What are you talking about?"

Yue Qiguang bluntly asked: "I'm asking you, are you a guy or a girl? In real life do you spit everywhere, litter, and pick your feet while eating? Are you that kind of rugged man?"

Ji You was speechless, almost blurting out 'Yue Qiguang are you looking for a beating?', but she managed to hold it back right at her throat.

Chu Jiaojiao anxiously stared at Ji You, both scared and shocked, asking: "Queen... you're definitely not, right?"

Ji You: "..."

Ji You couldn't be bothered with them.

Nearby, Shen Changqing and Yue Qiyuan were also somewhat speechless. Shen Changqing interrupted them and directly asked: "Rag Queen, we are sincerely inviting you to join our team. Do you agree?"

Ji You: "???"

What's this?

What goes around comes around?

In real life they ignore her, but online they desperately invite her?

For a moment, Ji You looked at the few people in front of her with a complex expression and asked, "Are you sure you want to invite me to join?"

Shen Changqing said: "We are very sincere."

"Ah ha..." Ji You raised an eyebrow, smilingly asked: "Sincerity? I might agree, but it's not impossible..."

Chapter 486: Invitation to Join the Team

"Sincerity? If you want me to agree, it's not impossible..." Ji You smiled with a hooked lip at Yue Qiyuan, Shen Changqing, and the others, intentionally playing coy.

Following her lead, everyone glanced up at her, but Yue Qiyuan always felt something wasn't quite right, so he took the initiative to ask, "What kind of sincerity do you want?"

Ji You chuckled, "First, let me hear you call me 'Daddy' a couple of times."

Yue Qiyuan: "..."

The expressions on the faces of Shen Changqing and the rest froze in an instant, and an awkward silence permeated the air...

Seeing the several people stupefied by her remark, Ji You patted her thigh, unable to contain her mirth: "Just kidding, just kidding..."

Yue Qiyuan and the others were speechless, and Yue Qiguang even loosened his clenched fist: Damn it, he almost couldn't restrain himself from punching someone.

Just as everyone's hearts had barely calmed down for less than a second, they then heard the Rag Queen chuckle and say, "Each of you give me a beating, that's the best sincerity you could show."

Everyone: "..."

The atmosphere on the scene froze once again in an instant, and Yue Qiguang, who had a rather volatile temper, furrowed his brows and clenched his fists, just about to explode with curses—

But then, they saw Ji You holding back her laughter and saying, "I'm also just kidding, just kidding... You young folks really haven't seen much of the world, can't even take a little joke, sigh!"

With that, she heaved a heavy sigh.

Everyone: "..."

Speechless.

Apart from being speechless, what else could they say?

Actually, it's just like Yue Qiguang said, both the Rag Queen and Ji You are just as irritatingly sarcastic, making people speechless yet itching to react.

Shen Changqing put on a stern face and seriously said, "Our team currently has 9 members, the highest ranked being Drunk Lying on the Beauty's Knee, third in the East District, and even our lowest ranked member is within the top 50 of the East District. Furthermore, our team has now entered the top ten of the East District, making it to the finals is a sure thing, these are facts you can verify. This is our strength and the confidence upon which we invite you to join us. Besides that, as long as you join us, we can agree to some conditions within reasonable bounds."

Hesitating on the word 'reasonable', Shen Changqing intentionally stressed it slightly.

The Rag Queen should be able to understand the implication, right?

After finishing, Shen Changqing seriously stared at Ji You.

Hearing this, Ji You narrowed her eyes slightly and said, "Okay! I agree to join you."

Refuse?

What a joke, as a pauper, I don't have the luxury to refuse. Since joining the team competition could earn me some points as a reward for winning, why not join?

Poverty—

Is a sin, alas.

Actually, Ji You had also wanted to discuss with Shen Changqing and the others about joining their team competition, and now that they had taken the initiative to bring it up, she didn't play hard to get and just agreed straight away.

Everyone didn't expect the Rag Queen to agree so easily and were a bit in disbelief for a moment. Chu Jiaojiao leaped over in one bound, staring at the Rag Queen's face, scrutinizing. Not sure what she was thinking, her face suddenly turned red, and she shyly uttered, "If it's you, I can..."

Ji You cupped her ear: "Huh?"

Chu Jiaojiao covered her face: "Accept your unspoken rules."

Ji You: "!!!"

Ji You raised a hand, pointing ahead: "You go."

Others were also left speechless, and Yue Qiguang even clenched his now-relaxed fist once more, only this time his target had changed. Staring at Chu Jiaojiao, he cursed, "Chu Jiaojiao, come here and meet your doom, Daddy's waiting!"

Chu Jiaojiao turned her head, "Yue Qiguang, who's afraid of who?"

Shen Changqing shook his head, sighed with a bit of helplessness, and turned to Ji You, saying with an incredibly sincere tone, "I almost forgot to tell you, outside of the team match time, you can totally ignore them and not take them seriously."

Ji You hooked up the corner of her mouth: "I got it."

Shen Changqing said, "Regarding the sincerity of inviting you to join us, it wasn't just talk. The weapon you use in the team match, the wear and tear on the mecha, the points needed for repairs, and so on, will all be covered by our team. Upon victory, we divide the points equally among the team members. At

that time, you will enjoy the same benefits as other team members. In addition, our team will also give you an extra signing bonus of 10,000 points."

Ji You's eyes widened: "Signing bonus? 10,000 points?"

Shen Changqing nodded: "Yes."

10,000!

It's even more than the points awarded for winning the final of the team match. The key is that I'm so broke right now...

Ji You was excited inside, but she maintained a semblance of composure on the surface and said, "10,000 points... that's just about acceptable."

Observing the Rag Queen's expression, Shen Changqing said, "How much do you think is appropriate?"

There's room for negotiation?

Ji You was shocked, thinking these guys might be even more extravagant than herself. As she pondered how much she should ask for, she heard Shen Changqing add somewhat uncomfortably, "The points are contributed by our team members..."

Yue Qiyuan: "Cough cough..."

Immediately, Shen Changqing stopped talking.

Ji You glanced at the two of them, pondered for a moment, and then understood, realizing that this team wasn't exactly rich in assets. Thinking about it carefully, with Yue Qiguang, Chu Jiaojiao, Sheng Qingyan, these out-of-tune members in the team, it would be strange if they were wealthy. Especially Yue Qiguang, that guy is a points-gobbling machine. Every match he fights, he spends weapons like they're free...

Ji You, still maintaining her composure, said, "10,000 points, I guess that's borderline acceptable."

Shen Changqing and Yue Qiyuan both sighed with relief.

Ji You chuckled, "It's just that your teammates, they don't seem very reliable. How about I beat them up a bit to whip them into shape for you?"

Shen Changqing, Yue Qiyuan: "..."

The atmosphere suddenly became awkward, Ji You completely oblivious to the tension she caused. She asked nonchalantly, "About those 10,000 promised points, how will the payment be handled? Do you pay me now or after the match?"

Yue Qiyuan thought for a moment, wanting to suggest payment in installments, but then Shen Changqing suddenly said, "We'll pay you the full amount now, however, you need to sign a contract with us to ensure that you will give your all during the match and can't quit halfway."

Ji You said with a grin, "Of course."

Seeing Shen Changqing had spoken, Yue Qiyuan didn't raise any objections.

Very soon, Shen Changqing sent Ji You an invitation to join the team, and Ji You promptly chose to join.

Following that...

Shen Changqing sent over a contract.

Ji You glanced at it and didn't spot any loopholes in the contract. After all, these were her classmates, whose characters she was well aware of—how could they scam her? In this regard, Ji You quite trusted them, so she swiftly signed the contract.

Without needing any prompt from Ji You, Shen Changqing immediately transferred the promised points to Ji You.

Ji You glanced at her points balance, and seeing that it no longer showed the pitiful 250, she suddenly felt much more at ease. 10,000 points might not sound like a lot, but thinking about how hard it is to come by such points, if it weren't for her stumbling upon them earlier, it would have been nearly impossible for her to save up that many points in a short period of time.

For a moment, as she looked at Shen Changqing and the others, Ji You felt as if she was looking at generous benefactors, saying with a smile, "Pleasure doing business with you."

Shen Changqing and the others also smiled, "Pleasure doing business."

It's just—

For some reason, looking at the Rag Queen's smile, they felt a little uneasy.

Chapter 487: A Free Sales Clerk

After everything had been settled, Ji You was ready to log off, when suddenly she received a message from Cheng Yu. She was taken aback, wondering if the appraisal results had come out so quickly?

She clicked to accept the request.

Soon, the video connected, and the holographic screen displayed Cheng Yu's counterfeit internet celebrity face.

Looking at that extraordinarily handsome face and thinking about Cheng Yu's real-life reputation, Ji You felt a bit creeped out for a moment.

Cheng Yu's face was filled with immense excitement as he stared at the masked Ji You, his eyes bright and shiny: "Master! I have already appraised the results for you, would you like to see them now?"

Ji You was slightly surprised: "So soon?"

Cheng Yu wished he could get closer to the Master, his face revealing an exceedingly sycophantic smile, saying, "Serving the Master, of course, requires my utmost effort."

Ji You: "..."

Watching Cheng Yu's sycophantic face, Ji You didn't know why, but she always felt this face was extremely familiar. Then, she suddenly smacked her forehead: wasn't this just like her own expression when she used to ask Teacher Mu Jianling for Candy Beans and curry favors?

No wonder it seemed so familiar.

It's just—

Thinking that this was Cheng Yu, Ji You felt uncomfortable: if she were ever exposed, she didn't know whether Cheng Yu would be mortified to death or if she herself would have nowhere to hide.

Must keep the disguise!

Absolutely must keep it!

Thus, Ji You straightened her face, speaking seriously: "Let's talk business."

Cheng Yu: "Ah!"

Speaking, he first sent the results to Ji You, then orally reported: "I have appraised all 7 Soul Devices, based on my analysis, their value is no less than 5 million each."

Ji You's pupils narrowed, but to maintain her aloof Master image, she tried her best to act calm, saying lightly: "5 million?"

Cheng Yu's tone was filled with unconcealable excitement, loudly saying: "Exactly! No less than 5 million! Because—these 7 Soul Devices are low-level, but they are already on the threshold between low-level and Middle-level. In other words, they are just a bit away from reaching the quality of a Mid-level Soul Device."

Here, Cheng Yu's voice also contained a hint of regret, saying: "Just a bit away from being Mid-level Soul Devices."

Ji You: "Oh—"

Her tone still indifferent.

Seeing the Master still so composed, so nonchalant, Cheng Yu thought: That's right! This is the Master! She created these Soul Devices with her own hands, how could she possibly not know the quality of the Soul Devices?

What he said was akin to brandishing a Big Saber in front of the Master, he better hurry up and focus on the main point. Cheng Yu tried to suppress his inner excitement, saying: "Master, there are two more Soul Devices, I suggest you price them at no less than 7 million each. Because, although these haven't reached the standard of Mid-level Soul Devices, their internal structure is particularly stable, they can last for at least 5 years, and their effect on nurturing spiritual power also exceeds that of ordinary Soul Devices by more than 30%."

Upon hearing this, Ji You remained stoic on the outside, but inside, she was incredibly excited.

million each, two would be 14 million!

So much!

So much!

So much!

Ji You's eyes almost lit up, but she still cleared her throat and said, "Oh, not bad."

Not bad?

Indeed—Master is a master for a reason! Only a true master could create soul devices that are both artistic and practical. Cheng Yu admires her so deeply that he's practically prostrate in his mind. His mouth opens to voice his thoughts, but he hesitates...

Ji You asks, "What is it you want to say?"

Cheng Yu opens his mouth, hesitates for a moment, then suddenly gathers up his courage and says, "Master, as a professional bargain hunter and social media influencer, I consider myself quite strong in driving sales. If you trust me, you could hand these soul devices over to me, and I will help you sell them."

Ji You raises an eyebrow, "Hmm?"

Cheng Yu smiles slightly and says, "If I handle the sales, the prices might be about 10 to 20 percent higher than the market rate."

Of course, Cheng Yu isn't entirely sure how much he could actually sell them for.

Moreover, it's clear that the Master isn't lacking money, and probably doesn't care about the extra 10 to 20 percent profit. Cheng Yu wonders if she will agree or reject his proposal, feeling quite anxious inside...

Ji You: "!!!"

Ji You takes a deep breath, "An increase of 10 to 20 percent?"

Cheng Yu carefully replies, "That's a conservative estimate."

Ji You, with a stern face, says, "Okay."

Cheng Yu was just preparing to say other lines to persuade the Master, when suddenly he hears that she has agreed. He almost jumps up in excitement but holds himself back, suppressing his joy, and says, "Master, you can rest assured, I will handle this well."

After thinking it through, Ji You asks, "If you help me with the sales, will the soul devices be kept at your place or at my shop?"

Cheng Yu immediately responds, "Of course, they'll be at your shop, Master. I'll just be a pure salesman, that's all. Though—I hope you could grant me some sales permissions through the shop's backend."

As soon as the words leave his mouth, Cheng Yu starts to worry.

His request will certainly be refused.

Actually, Cheng Yu had his own little scheme when making this request. If the Master agrees to store the soul devices at his place and let him help with the sales, it would seem like he has gained her trust. But this way, his connection with the Master remains one-sided. Whether he can contact the Master again is uncertain.

On the other hand, if he becomes a salesman at Qingyou Master's shop, then he and the Master would have an actual employment relationship. Of course, he would be volunteering and not taking any salary. But—if the Master crafts new soul devices later, wouldn't he be the first to know?

Wouldn't he have the advantage of being close to resources?

Wouldn't he have a perfect excuse to contact the Master?

Maybe, when the Master is free and in a good mood, perhaps she might even customize a soul device just for him?

...

In short, the benefits are just too many.

Cheng Yu almost wishes he could shake the Master's elbow and plead for her to accept him as her modest salesman.

Thinking it over, Ji You nods and agrees, saying, "Okay."

Cheng Yu's eyes widen, "Really?"

Ji You: "Yes."

Cheng Yu can hardly believe his ears, and is so overwhelmed with joy that he almost bursts into tears, but manages to hold back to maintain his image.

Cheng Yu, mouth agape, excitedly stammers, "Ma... Master... you can be assured, Ah Da will work diligently for you. I will never cut corners or harm the interests of the shop."

Ji You: "Hmm."

Cheng Yu anxiously whispers, "Master... can we set it up now?"

Before, Ji You had considered hiring a salesperson for her little shop, but she was too poor to afford one. She hadn't even bought a smart manager. Now, with labor readily available, why would she refuse?

Chapter 488: Employment Contract

"However," Ji You pondered and then replied reservedly, "Sure, but if you work as a sales clerk in my store, you can't do it for free. Now, let's talk about your salary."

Cheng Yu quickly responded, "No need, no need... Being a sales clerk for Master is absolutely my pleasure. Talking about money... that just hurts the relationship."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You really wanted to say that talking about money hurts the relationship, so maybe not pay anything at all.

But—

It's the interstellar era now, how can she be such a skinflint employer? Wanting the horse to run without letting it eat, Ji You dares not, she said with a stern face, "You should be paid."

Cheng Yu, sensing the serious tone of the Master, and fearing to upset the Master, quickly said, "Master, just give me whatever you think is appropriate."

Ji You almost blurted out that any amount was good, but she held it back, asking, "What's your price?"

Cheng Yu chuckled with a naive and honest smile on his face, saying, "My starting fee is now at least 2 million credit points, and of course, if sales are good, the merchant will give a commission."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You twitched the corner of her mouth and said, "100."

Cheng Yu, still wearing his silly smile, "100 million is also fine."

Ji You: "100 credit points."

Cheng Yu's smile froze for a moment, thinking he misheard, "Master, what did you just say?"

credit points?

Master must be joking, right? Has to be, right? Although he hadn't planned on getting a salary from Master, but... but 100 credit points, this price really shocked Cheng Yu.

Being a professional bargain hunter, currently also one of the big influencers in the bargain hunter segment, his starting fee is at least 2 million, not to mention other promotions, endorsements, and so on...

credit points are indeed a bit pitiful.

Ji You, seeing Cheng Yu's reaction, sternly said, "Just kidding, it's 1000 credit points."

Cheng Yu: "..."

credit points, does that even sound serious?

But—

A Master is a Master, even telling a cold joke has its charm, Cheng Yu quickly said, "Whatever amount Master says."

Ji You: "..."

If she had known it would be like this, she would rather have shamelessly said it was only 100 credit points.

Instead, she ended up spending ten times more.

credit points, if it were Ji You scavenging on the garbage planet, it would take her months to earn that much.

Ji You felt the pinch internally, but on the surface, she remained calm and composed, saying, "1000 credit points isn't a monthly salary, it's per occurrence. That is, when I have new stock, you'll come over to help with sales, and I'll give you 1000 credit points for each sale. As for other times, you are free to do as you wish, without being bound by the shop."

Paying per occurrence, both convenient for Cheng Yu, and also saved Ji You a lot of money. Here, Ji You also had her own little schemes, with charging per occurrence, she doesn't need to pay a monthly salary, and if she can't produce any Soul Devices for several months in a row, she won't have to pay Cheng Yu a penny in wages.

Isn't this much more worry-free?

Cheng Yu, hearing the Master talking like this, where was the reason to disagree? He hastily said, "I'll follow whatever Master says. It's my honor to work for the Master." Saying so, he threw a glance at Ji You.

Ji You twitched the corner of her eye, took a deep breath, and asked, "Is there anything else you need?"

Thinking about the fact that he and the Master had officially negotiated labor cooperation, Cheng Yu felt a thrill of excitement, hardly able to prevent jumping three feet high, and hurriedly urged, "Master... Is it convenient to set up a sales clerk position for me now?"

To grant someone a position of sales clerk in a Star Network store, both parties must sign a labor contract; only after the contract takes effect can the setting be done. Cheng Yu was afraid the duck ready to be eaten might fly away and was eager to seal the deal.

Ji You pondered for a moment and felt that setting it up now wouldn't be a waste of time, so she immediately drafted a labor contract. After the Star Network system verified that the contract didn't exploit employees in any aspects, Ji You sent it to Teacher Cheng Yu.

Cheng Yu quickly signed it.

Ji You also signed.

After signing, she immediately gave Cheng Yu a sales position.

Everything settled, Cheng Yu instantly beamed with joy, saying, "Master, you have my contact number and my Star Network account. You can reach out to me anytime if there's anything."

Ji You remained composed and said, "Hmm."

Cheng Yu asked, "Master, are these Soul Devices going on sale tomorrow evening as originally planned?"

Ji You nodded, "Hmm."

Cheng Yu said with a smile, "Rest assured, I will be there on time."

Everything was taken care of.

Ji You immediately went offline.

On his side.

Cheng Yu literally jumped three feet high on the spot, delighted like a two-hundred-ton child. It took him a while to calm his excited heart. Just then, Cheng Yu suddenly received a message.

The message was from Cheng Kun.

Cheng Kun: [My dear brother, I am honored to tell you that I have gained the appreciation of Master Mickey Dodge. The Master has agreed to customize a High-level Soul Device for me. I thought of you first when hearing such wonderful news. You must be happy for me, right?]

Cheng Yu's expression darkened instantly.

High-level Soul Device?

A customized one?

Regardless of whether Mickey Dodge can make it, even the internationally renowned Master Kong Zhe wouldn't guarantee it. Can Master Mickey Dodge really do it?

But—

Cheng Yu also knew that a schemer like Cheng Kun, having mentioned it, must be confident about it.

So, does it mean that once Cheng Kun gets the customized High-level Soul Device, his spiritual power will increase significantly? Even his Spiritual Silk Cleaning Rate would see a significant boost.

...

Cheng Yu's joy was halved instantly, and his face turned utterly grave.

Cheng Yu did not reply.

A few seconds later.

Cheng Kun sent another message: [Brother, you are still part of the Cheng Family. If people knew that a young master of Cheng Family was hiding in some corner being a minor teacher, it wouldn't look good for our parents either. The security uncle at our family business just resigned, and there is a vacancy. Would you consider coming back?]

Cheng Yu pursed his lips and clenched his fists abruptly.

This is too much!

On her side.

After Ji You went offline, thinking about how valuable her Soul Devices were, she couldn't stop grinning. Seven Soul Devices, each worth at least 5 million credit points. By this count, that's at least 35 million credit points. As long as she kept working hard, she could consistently produce several Soul Devices every month—thus, even a debt of 500 million wasn't that daunting.

With this thought, Ji You finally calmed down and slept soundly.

After a dreamless night, the next day Ji You woke up refreshed, put on her tank top, and started jogging with high spirits. Halfway, she encountered Sheng Qingyan, who was also energetically jogging.

Chapter 489: Smug Robot

Sheng Qingyan was also wearing a black tank top, with a pair of white sneakers on his feet. He had already run half a lap, and fine beads of sweat slid down his immaculately white face, making his pretty, androgynous face look even more stunning...

The moment Sheng Qingyan saw Ji You, he opened his mouth and flashed a brilliant smile: "It's Ji You! Good morning..."

Ji You looked up at the sky—it was very blue, with the light of the stars shining down...

The weather hasn't changed.

Seeing Ji You's expression, Sheng Qingyan immediately opened his mouth, not in the best of moods, and said: "Hey poor dead, I'm greeting you here, what are you looking up for? I'm right in front of you..."

Ji You touched his chin and said, "I just wanted to check today's weather."

Indeed—

That's more like Sheng Qingyan's usual tone.

As Sheng Qingyan got closer and turned his head, he realized that Ji You still had that pig face from yesterday. For a moment, the brilliant smile on Sheng Qingyan's face froze, before he disdainfully said, "Can't you fix that wrinkly face of yours? It's really creepy."

Ji You smirked, "No money! Unless you sponsor a few million."

Sheng Qingyan looked up at the sky, "Nice weather today..."

Ji You cursed, "Stingy ghost!"

Pretending not to hear, Sheng Qingyan lifted his feet slightly and gently hopped, looking very cheerful, he said, "Come on, come on... Let's aim for 10 laps this morning..."

Ji You: "..."

Sheng Qingyan took the lead and ran ahead.

Catching up, Ji You curiously asked, "Little Cutie, what's up with you today? You got a fever or something?"

Sheng Qingyan turned his head, gave Ji You a glare, and said, "You're the one with a fever, your whole family has a fever."

Ji You, suppressing the urge to hit him, angrily said, "Spit it out! What good thing happened? If there's a way to pick up some money, don't forget to pull your brother in."

"Hmph!" Sheng Qingyan snorted with his nose and rolled his eyes in an ungainly manner, "Serves you right for being a poor dead! A few days ago, I enthusiastically invited you but you didn't come, sorry, it's too late now..."

Ji You: "???"

Blinking, Ji You asked, "When did you invite me to pick up money?"

Hearing this, Sheng Qingyan, visibly disgruntled and disdainful, said, "I asked you to join me a few days ago to stake out Green Glaze Master's shop, you didn't want to come. Last night Jiaojiao agreed to go with me, I shared one of my spots with Jiaojiao, there's nothing left for you."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You tugged at the corner of his mouth, "This is what's got you so happy?"

"Of course I'm happy." Sheng Qingyan elegantly flipped his hair, pride written all over his face, "Yesterday you ignored me, today I'm out of your league."

Ji You: "..."

Ji You took a deep breath and said, "I'm ready to throw away that kind of social climbing."

Sheng Qingyan snorted heavily, "You're just jealous and envious... Anyway, I'm not taking you with me anymore, when I get the Soul Device from Green Glaze Master, you'll be jealous and envious."

Ji You: "..."

Since it was such an matter, Ji You suddenly lost interest and turned around, running in the opposite direction from Sheng Qingyan.

Sheng Qingyan shouted, "Hey poor dead, where are you running off to?"

Ji You looked back, giving him a sidelong glance, "I'm changing direction to be jealous and envious, otherwise, I fear I might lose my temper and hit someone, or do something rash like rob from the rich to aid the poor."

Sheng Qingyan: "..."

Dropping his words, Ji You sprinted away.

Running to a secluded place, Ji You's tense face finally returned to normal. She had to run because she was afraid she couldn't hold back a laugh on the spot, because—

If Sheng Qingyan knew that she was the Master he was constantly thinking about, she wondered how colorful his expression would be.

However—

Ji You didn't want to show off in front of Little Cutie just yet, she decided not to reveal her identity for the time being, otherwise—

Given Sheng Qingyan's style of doing things, who knew what he would do on the spot...

It could be bad; he might drop a holographic image 2.0 version on her.

To this day, Ji You still had a psychological shadow from the holographic image Sheng Qingyan had sent her.

Ah!

Life is tough for her.

After jogging, she went to classes as usual. That day, Teacher Mu Jianling grouped all the students again. This time, it was divided into three large groups. Ji You thought that since there were three groups, she could at least blend into one, right?

Unexpectedly—

After everyone was divided, Ji You still hadn't heard her name.

After forming the groups, Teacher Mu Jianling immediately sat down on the nearby sofa for resting, opened up her Light Computer, and prepared to watch a melodramatic TV show.

Seeing this scene, Ji You couldn't help herself and loudly asked, "Teacher! Did you perhaps miss a cute student?"

Mu Jianling looked up from beside the Light Computer, glanced at Ji You, and said indifferently, "If I didn't call your name, don't you have a clue?" Saying so, she raised her hand and pointed at the Little Robot next to her, saying, "Go roll over there."

Ji You: "..."

Beside her, the activated Little Robot's mechanical voice timely said, "Student Ji You, your opponent is me. Until you defeat me, please don't get distracted."

Ji You, clutching her chest, howled, "I won't! I refuse!"

The Little Robot sincerely said, "Ji You, sparring with me, you'll only suffer minor physical pain. But if you join the group now, I can guarantee you'll die within 5 seconds."

Ji You: "Impossible!"

Little Robot said, "You've already delayed 1 minute, today's class is extended by 10 minutes."

Ji You: "..."

Without another word, Ji You directly threw a punch, smashing it towards the Little Robot.

The Little Robot didn't dodge, just stood straight.

As Ji You's fist was about to hit, the Little Robot gently lifted its foot and kicked Ji You completely over.

Ji You: "..."

Now, this was embarrassing.

Not giving Ji You a chance to recover, the Little Robot's second attack swiftly came. Its mechanical arm, almost like tender willow branches, wafted over lightly. Ji You could feel and see it, but according to her prediction, she just couldn't dodge...

Just like that kick earlier, she truly thought she could evade it, even changing tactics midway, planning to switch from a punch to a shoulder throw, yet—

The upgraded Little Robot, almost demon-like, had completely predicted all possible moves Ji You could make, calculating them with precision. It was as if it could guess what she was thinking.

But how could this be possible?

The main issue was, frequently getting hit, yet not finding a way to counterattack or even a way to strike, Ji You felt a bit sick.

The morning's class ended, and Ji You's face was even more traumatizing than yesterday.

Ji You herself wasn't bothered much, but Chu Jiaojiao was the first one who couldn't accept it, hence, she nagged non-stop and wailed all afternoon in front of Ji You.

Ji You remained unmoved.

Chapter 490: Pig Face

The chaotic morning class concluded. Without Teacher Mu Jianling calling for the end of class, students dared not move an inch until——

Mu Jianling turned off the melodramatic TV series, looked towards the students, cleared her throat, and said: "What do you all think about your performance today?"

Nobody made a sound.

However——

The victorious students, each with a hint of pride on their faces, eagerly awaited Teacher Mu Jianling's praise.

However——

With a face showing slight disgust, it was unquestionable that Teacher Mu Jianling was far from satisfied.

The students were a bit perplexed, especially the winning group.

Logically speaking, today's random team battle had seen better results compared to yesterday's. At the very least, there were no more incidents of friendly fire, and each of the three groups had swiftly formed their battle lines within the first few minutes, whether in defense or offense, so the students felt they had performed rather well.

But——

Teacher Mu Jianling remained stony-faced, her cool gaze lazily swept over all the students and said: "Look at how smug you all are, you could hang two or three oil pots on those pouted lips. What's there to be so pleased about? With your performance today, you'd last only 30 seconds in a real melee at best."

Students: "..."

Mu Jianling continued coldly, "Dead is dead, whether you lose or win. What's the difference between dying in 1 second or 30 seconds?"

Students: "..."

During the silence, Ji You blinked and whispered, "If I were to join in, I could definitely last 30 minutes before dying."

Unexpectedly, although she just quietly mumbled to herself, Mu Jianling's ears were sharp. In an instant, her attention shifted to Ji You, and Ji You immediately felt a terrifying tingling on her scalp.

Mu Jianling snorted lightly, her tone suddenly becoming very serious: "Of course, I won't rule out the possibility that someone might fake their death from the start and barely hang on until the 30-minute mark before being stepped on by a Star Beast. Such selfish bastards, who only care about themselves and disregard the bigger picture, are a detriment to the battlefield, not a benefit. Do you still feel proud now?"

The students fell silent.

Ji You fell silent as well.

Indeed, she had considered the feasibility of faking her death, but—how did Teacher Mu Jianling guess her thoughts?

That was beyond eerie.

Also——

After a few seconds of silence, Ji You looked up and loudly said: "Reporting to the teacher! Faking death is nothing to be proud of, and neither is surviving to the end by such means. However, all is fair in war, and faking death is a tactic, just one that requires the right circumstances, timing, and situation... So I disagree with a certain point in what the teacher said."

Whoosh——

The entire room was shocked.

The students turned their heads one by one to glimpse at Ji You's face: Is she courting death?

Daring to pluck feathers from Teacher Mu Jianling's head?

This——

Admirable!

At this moment, that was the only thought everyone had.

The students shrank their heads, all waiting for Teacher Mu Jianling's next reaction, however——

At this time, Teacher Mu Jianling actually slowly curled her lips into a smile.

She smiled.

Students: "???"

Mu Jianling said: "Good."

Ji You felt her scalp numb...

Ruined.

That chilly feeling invaded Ji You's whole body, giving her the delusion that her end was nigh.

Suddenly——

Mu Jianling frowned and scolded, "Why are you all staring at me like that? Am I some kind of man-eating monster that can't tolerate a different opinion? I think Ji You's comment makes sense."

The students remained silent.

Mu Jianling suddenly changed her tone and said, "But victories achieved through little clever tricks and scheming are like a high-rise built on unstable foundations, bound to collapse one day. Therefore, I hope you all, while keeping your heads sharp, must constantly enhance your own strength! Strength is the King's way! In combat with Star Beasts, all schemes and tricks are nothing but illusory in front of them. Only strength is the key to survival!"

The students listened with serious expressions, and Ji You also put aside other thoughts, listening attentively and humbly.

Mu Jianling continued, "After the group melee is over, I will take you to fight simulated Star Beasts. Then, you'll see that getting blasted to death? These little tricks are useless against Star Beasts, which is why I've always emphasized strength." After saying this, she paused for a moment, waved her hand and announced, "Alright! Class dismissed!"

The students didn't move.

Mu Jianling cursed, "Hurry up and scram, class is over. It's my rest time now, I don't want to see your annoying faces anymore."

The students: "..."

Then, someone took the lead, one by one, two by two, three by three... Gradually, everyone slowly left the training room.

Ji You also followed the crowd out.

Only—

Her emotions started to fall, hearing Teacher Mu Jianling's words, combined with today's crushing defeat against Little Robot, it was just like a harsh slap to Ji You who had recently improved her spiritual power and physical strength.

What does that mean?

It means that the strength she took pride in was really not worth mentioning.

On the way to the cafeteria, Ji You kept quiet, and so did everyone else.

Approaching the cafeteria entrance, Chu Jiaojiao, covering her eyes and almost on the verge of tears, pleaded, "Ji You, I beg you, can we get your face treated first?"

"No!" Ji You refused, "What's the point of a good face when my great cause is not yet accomplished!"

Chu Jiaojiao, utterly heartbroken, exclaimed, "I can't go on living."

Whining, she ran into the cafeteria.

Ji You: "..."

Yue Qiyuan passed in front of Ji You, entering the cafeteria doors ahead of her, and casually shook his head, leaving the remark, "Try to act human."

Yue Qiguang swaggered past Ji You, pretending to shiver all over as he hopped into the cafeteria, "I thought I saw a monkey just now and got the scare of my life, but on a closer look, it was just a pig face."

Ji You: "..."

Sheng Qingyan didn't have any exaggerated body language but said to Ji You as they brushed past each other, "This is bad karma... it's unsettling."

Ji You: "..."

Shen Changqing was different from the others, honest and well-mannered. He gave Ji You a look with quite complex emotions, and in the end, he moved his mouth but chose to not make a sound.

Ji You's eyelid twitched, and she couldn't help but say, "Shen Changqing, stop right there! What's the meaning of that look? And that expression like you're holding back words, what are you trying to say? Explain yourself."

Shen Changqing stopped.

Then, Shen Changqing sincerely said, "Ji You, I also think that your face is... a bit frightening."

Ji You: "..."

Suddenly—

A deep sigh came from behind her, "Isn't it nice to be alive? Why ask so many questions?"

Ji You turned around and saw that it was Senior He Bi; she managed to squeeze out a smile and said, "Senior He Bi, aren't you here for a meal today?"

He Bi glanced at Ji You.

Afterward, he shook his head and walked away.

Walked away.

Walked away.

Ji You: "..."