

# The Interstellar Queen of Scavengers

*Chapter 7: Chapter 7: Interview Failure*

Grandma Jenny had just sold the energy box she picked up last night to a second-hand shop, earning some credit points, and then went to the small store run by the neighboring Smith family to buy some synthetic apples. She planned to make some apple pies and send them to her scavenging companions from the night before. Grandma Jenny was a very wise old lady. At her advanced age, her physical strength simply couldn't withstand long periods of scavenging. It was only through the care of her companions that she could make any gains and retreat safely. Therefore, she was extremely grateful.

Although her companions from last night had all refused her, Grandma Jenny wouldn't forget about it. She planned to deliver the apple pies to them directly after making them.

Ji You didn't know any of these thoughts of Grandma Jenny. Suddenly catching sight of the large, bright red apples in Grandma Jenny's basket, Ji You couldn't help but salivate.

These were apples!

Since Ji You had traveled to this time, she hadn't eaten an apple!

Even though these were synthetic apples, shaped like apples but actually made from various artificially synthesized nutrients, the taste was somewhat hard to describe. But it was still fruit!

To bite into it would be to taste juiciness filling the mouth!

Perhaps noticing Ji You's covert gaze, Grandma Jenny cheerfully selected a shiny red apple from her basket and gave it to Ji You, saying, "Take it and eat it."

"No, no, no..." Ji You hurriedly refused.

Although artificial, the apples were very pricey for Ji You. She estimated that just one like the one in Grandma Jenny's hand would cost at least 5 credit points.

credit points; Ji You would have to do nearly three hours of hard labor to afford a single apple!

How could she have the nerve to accept something so expensive?

Moreover, there were only three apples in Grandma Jenny's basket altogether. If she were to take one, would that even be proper?

Ji You was around the same age as Grandma Jenny's granddaughter, Lea, even a year younger. This child, orphaned at a young age and without relatives to care for her, had struggled to survive on her own for many years. Thinking of this, a wave of pity rose in Grandma Jenny's heart, and she said with a smile, "Take it and eat! I have these two left for the apple pie."

No matter what, Ji You just couldn't accept it. Catching the hovering bus arriving from the corner of her eye, she hurriedly placed the apple back into Grandma Jenny's basket and dashed onto the bus.

Grandma Jenny watched her running figure with a mix of helplessness and amusement.

Once on the bus, Ji You swallowed down the saliva she couldn't help but produce, telling herself not to feel regret. If she succeeded in the job interview this time, she would reward herself with a synthetic apple. No! How could one be enough?

Get two!

And with that, she made a cheerful decision.

The hovering bus quickly passed each stop, never staying for more than 2 minutes at each. Ji You's interview was scheduled for 2:30 PM. According to the speed of the hovering bus, she could arrive at the interview location by 2 PM.

Every time she rode the hovering bus, Ji You would sincerely marvel at the science and technology level of the interstellar era. The distance between District 10 and District 6, using Earth as a reference point, Ji You estimated could be as far as from the north to the south side of the Earth. However, the hovering bus could reach it in less than an hour.

Sitting on the hovering bus, smooth and stable without feeling a single jolt, the experience was very good.

Ji You wondered what it would feel like to ride high-tech transports like airships, spaceships, starships... A sense of anticipation rose within her. She quietly told herself to work hard, to earn money, and to aspire to take an interstellar trip someday!

With a mix of anticipation and nervousness, Ji You finally rushed to the interview location at the mall. When she arrived, she found that nearly five hundred people had already gathered in the mall's underground hall, all interviewees, and the mall was recruiting fewer than 50 people for various positions, large and small.

Seeing this, Ji You couldn't help feeling disheartened: there was no doubt that her chance of being selected was less than one percent.

Although it was the interstellar era, the recruitment process still followed the old traditions: filling out forms, that is, personal resumes, then receiving a number plate, and taking turns entering the interview room according to the number plate.

Ji You received number plate 366. It would be a little while before her turn, so she sat in the interview hall and mentally rehearsed the questions the interviewer might ask.

For example:

Can you introduce yourself?

What do you know about our mall?

Why do you want to work at the mall?

...

Questions like these, Ji You had simulated them all and thought about how to answer them.

Lost in thought, she didn't notice the time passing, and suddenly the robot called out her number, 366. Ji You quickly stood up, tidied up her attire and makeup, and hurriedly knocked on the door to enter.

Ji You had anticipated many questions, prepared numerous answers, and braced herself for the worst. However, as soon as she stepped into the interview room and saw the three interviewers seated before her, even before she had time to get nervous, she heard a middle-aged man across from her ask, "What is your Spiritual Level?"

Ji You was startled, but responded calmly: "Hello, the position I'm interviewing for is a warehouse keeper—" she had heard that this position didn't place much emphasis on spiritual power or Physical Strength, which was why she decided to give it a try.

The man said impatiently, "Tell me your Spiritual Level."

Ji You knew this was bad, but she couldn't lie about it, so she answered honestly, "Level F. But I'm very diligent—"

The man interrupted her, continuing to ask, "What is your Physical Strength Level?"

Ji You managed a bitter smile and said, "Level E. I'm quite strong..."

However—

As soon as she said this, the faces of the three interviewers across turned somewhat grim. The middle-aged man, maintaining basic courtesy, said, "I'm sorry, Miss Ji You, you do not meet our mall's requirements. Please leave."

Ji You tightly pursed her lips, struggling to control herself, to keep from showing a crestfallen expression.

Evidently—

She had misjudged again. Countless failed interview experiences had already taught Ji You that in the interstellar era, even a janitor had requirements for Physical Strength and spiritual power, and with her useless physical constitution, no company would hire her.

Seeing Ji You looking very downcast yet trying hard to hold back, her pretense of strength was a pitiable sight. One of the female interviewers felt somewhat sympathetic and advised her, "Although our store only recruits regular clerks, both Physical Strength and Spiritual Level need to be at least Level D. Given Miss Ji You's situation, you are not suited for this job. I suggest you look for a job on the Star Network that has lower requirements for Physical Strength and spiritual power, like a Star Network laborer—that would be a very good choice."

*Chapter 8: Chapter 8: Expensive Natural Food*

The female interviewer didn't mean any offense when she said this. The marketplace of the interstellar era, although like the 21st century where Ji You was from in that they both sell products, the difference is still very huge. First off, jobs that are essential in shopping venues such as stocking, cash register operation, security, maintenance... such positions have all been delegated to robots and do not require human intervention.

Furthermore, slightly more complex tasks that require human labor, like specialized customer service and after-sales service for certain products—if one's physical strength and spiritual power don't meet the standards, they wouldn't be able to pilot a Floating Car when providing point-to-point after-sales service to the customers. And if they can't reach a D-level in spiritual power, how can they possibly offer home visits for after-sales service? Besides, many products require a D-level or higher in spiritual power to operate.

Also, the job of a warehouse clerk is not as simple as Ji You had imagined. Aside from storing goods, they must also perform maintenance, such as regular servicing and maintenance for Mechas... For these tasks, a certain level of physical strength is required.

Therefore—

It's understandable that the shopping venue rejected Ji You.

Moreover, the other party's suggestion for Ji You to find a manual labor job on the Star Network can be said to be very sincere. This manual labor job on the Star Network is specifically designed and introduced by the Alliance Government for citizens who lack Physical Strength and spiritual power. It has no requirements for spiritual power or physical strength, nor does it involve any technological skills. One only needs to invest time to earn credit points, though—the credit points earned are very low indeed.

Ji You consistently works 10 hours of manual labor every day, only making 20-22 credit points a day. Without taking any days off, she would only earn 660 credit points a month, while a warehouse clerk's basic monthly salary at the shopping venue is 1500 credits, plus commission and bonuses, with weekends off and annual leave... How can manual labor on the Star Network compare with a formal job?

That's why Ji You wracked her brain to find herself a formal job.

However—

Sigh~

With a heart full of disappointment and while maintaining her politeness, she said, "Thank you for your advice. If—your store ever requires someone like me, please make sure to contact me."

Leaving the interview hall filled with immense disappointment and dejection, she couldn't stop fretting inside. If she had known it would be a failure, she wouldn't have come to the interview—incurring a 4 credit points expense for the round trip on public transport.

Sigh~

Yet, she also understood that even if she anticipated failure, she would still have come to try. After all, without trying, how could she know it was indeed a failure? Often, it's not until you hit a wall and bleed from the knocks that you learn whether you can actually succeed.

In her past life, in order to read more and learn more, she had already tasted the bitterness and failure. But as it turned out, as long as she didn't give up, she had succeeded in the end, right?

So, as long as she maintained her firm belief and didn't give up, she would surely survive in this interstellar era!

Suppressing the bitterness in her heart, Ji You clenched her fists and reminded herself to never give up.

...

Presently, garbage planet number 101 is divided into 10 regions, for the entire planet is covered with protective barriers built by the Alliance Government. These barriers effectively block out Star Beasts, cosmic radiation, pollution, and the extreme weather conditions. Since the environment outside is too harsh for humans to live in long term, all human inhabitants reside within the protected areas. However, these protected areas also vary in quality. Regions 5 and 6, right at the center, are undoubtedly the safest with the best environment and the most bustling commerce.

Next are regions 3, 4, 7, 8; they are relatively less safe and have worse environmental conditions.

Following them are regions 1, 2, 9, 10—as these are the most remote and fringes of the planet, they often suffer from assaults by Star Beasts, storms, and sand... The protective barriers are thinnest here. Hence, regions 1-2 and 9-10, these edge areas, are the most barren parts of the planet and anyone with somewhat better familial financial conditions would certainly think about moving and would not want to stay there for long.

The Ji Family are natives of garbage planet 101. Before her parents passed away, they had already saved a sum of money. Mr. Ji had plans to move with his wife and daughter to region 6 to live. Unfortunately, disaster struck and shattered this warm family to pieces. After Mr. Ji and Ji's mother passed away, Uncle Ji used the excuse of taking care of Ji You to sweep away all of her family's fortune, and afterward, it was Uncle Ji who moved with his wife and children to region 6.

In any era, wealth is always the biggest test of human nature.

Standing in the spacious, bright, and clean shopping venue, faced with the myriad, strange, and dazzling array of products, Ji You couldn't help feeling moved. A longing flashed through her eyes—if she had money, she would buy this place...

Ah!

But there are no ifs; she should quickly head back home.

However, before leaving Zone 6, Ji You went to the section of the mall dedicated to selling nutrient solutions, spending 20 credit points to buy 10 low-level nutrient solutions. The commercial area in Zone 6 was the most prosperous, offering nutrient solutions with the freshest expiration dates, unlike those bought at Mrs. Smith's store in Zone 10, which always had a shelf life of only half a year — Ji You was quite suspicious about the suppliers Mrs. Smith's family used.

Now that she was in Zone 6 after much difficulty, Ji You naturally wanted to stock up on some rations for herself. After buying the lowest level nutrient solutions, Ji You glanced at the middle and high-level ones on the shelf, then quickly averted her gaze.

Can't afford them~

Can't afford them~

Can't afford them~

Better not to covet.

Ji You didn't dare linger in the mall, as the dazzling array of goods nearly blinded her, all of them tugging at her heartstrings. Yet virtually each one was something she couldn't afford.

As Ji You lifted her foot to leave, suddenly, she saw several opulently dressed people heading hurriedly toward another window separated from the nutrient solutions and synthetic food by just a wall, as if they were rushing to snap up something.

Driven by curiosity, Ji You followed.

Upon entering, she couldn't help but widen her eyes, feeling as if she'd been struck to the core. It turned out to be a place selling natural food. The entire setup and display here were just like the fruit and vegetable stores from the 21st century, with rows of shelves filled with fresh peppers, eggplants, lettuce, potatoes, corn, tomatoes...

In addition to vegetables, there were shiny, moist apples, bananas exuding a rich fragrance, plump grapes, and bright orange oranges...

The variety was vast, far beyond Ji You's imagination. The moment she stepped onto this land, saliva involuntarily began to secrete.

So—

So—

So long since she last ate, just the sight of them was enough to make her mouth water uncontrollably.

But—

As soon as she glimpsed the prices attached, Ji You's eyes bulged and she felt like bursting into tears.

Too expensive!

These fresh, delicious natural foods were simply too costly, outrageously expensive, even maddening. What made Ji You even more distressed was that many of the fruits and vegetables here were sold per item, like apples, bananas, grapes, tomatoes,

potatoes, etc. Even within the same type, they would vary in price based on origin, size, color, plumpness, and the concentration of the nutrients they contained.

For example, among the 6 apples placed on the same shelf, they all had different origins and prices. The largest one among them displayed:

Origin: Barnes Star - Beikena Mountain Range.

Weight: 239g.

Nutrient content: Calories 136 (kcal), Dietary fiber 2.2, Vitamins...

Radiation level: 0.039% (To clarify, in the interstellar era, natural foods are defined by having a radiation level below 1%. Foods exceeding 1% radiation cannot be directly consumed.)

Price: 810 credit points each.