

Wow 471

Chapter 471 'Capture'_2

...

Tired... so tired...

Meditation could only restore Spiritual Energy to a certain extent, but it was thorough rest that could completely rejuvenate the spirit.

Pansen, nearly overcome with sleepiness, still focused all his attention on manipulating Spiritual Energy, while Bai E, who had been keeping watch at his side, felt he had finally found his opportunity.

He himself was not without fatigue, but he insisted on staying vigilant, waiting for such a moment.

The weakening of will left Pansen no extra strength to pay attention to other information around him while "capturing"—this was the perfect chance for Bai E to learn by stealth.

Bai E approached Pansen, his sensory perception flared out, observing the Spiritual Energy that was casting a net towards the virtual world.

Unlike "scouting," "capturing" was more restrained and detailed.

If the "scouting" attribute of Spiritual Energy took the form of blocks each imprinted with unique glyphs, then the first impression of "capturing" attribute Spiritual Energy for Bai E was that of chains inscribed with runes.

Interwoven and entangled, they extended forward.

Even coming from the same "Heavenly Eye" attribute of Spiritual Energy, the forms they took when fulfilling different functions were starkly different.

If not for the mimicry of the original owner, Bai E would struggle his entire life to develop more uses for the "Heavenly Eye."

[You are paying with combat experience to assist the definition of your Spiritual Energy attribute...]

[Current definition completion: 0.3%]

...

"Pfft~"

The "rope" that spread like a swift serpent ultimately hit the edges of the black mirror.

"Failed again..." Pansen sighed in disappointment, his whole person as if deflated and on the verge of collapse.

The depletion of Spiritual Energy weakened his will just as much, the perseverance and confidence he held within drained away as the Spiritual Energy emptied from his body.

"I need to rest..."

'If only someone could chase after the virtual world while I am resting...'

No one knew whether the Computing Power Resources collected by the virtual world each time were for "feeding" or for "storing" to bring about greater changes.

Humans knew nothing about the virtual world, and could only cautiously make all kinds of possible presets.

It was based on these assumptions that Pansen did not wish to continue the drain with the virtual world indefinitely.

And now, after overexerting his Spiritual Energy, he had finally reached the limits of his abilities.

During the time he would rest, he did not know what changes might occur.

The self-suggestion of the Spiritual Energy made him look towards Bai E.

'If only he truly had a talent for Spiritual Energy...'

"What's the matter, sir?"

"Nothing... Don't help me, I'll go back by myself."

Watching Pansen leaning on the wall with his stooped figure, Aryan covered her mouth with her small hand, "Is the sir drained?"

"Pretty much..." Bai E nodded lightly, his voice full of wistfulness, "Indeed..."

Inside, however, he was somewhat elated—finally, it was his turn.

But before that, he needed to master the essence of "capturing" first.

"Let's go back."

Following behind Bai E with a trot, Aryan asked, "Huh? You're not going to rest?"

"No, I'm wide awake."

It was now seven in the evening.

Pansen's attempts were not entirely useless, and Bai E, a spectator, had a clearer mind than anyone else.

Today, the virtual world appeared several times in not-too-distant intervals, which was a noticeable change from the stable frequency of appearing once a day after stabilization.

Was it due to some unknown change?

Or was it the influence of Pansen's chasing actions on the virtual world?

Bai E leaned towards the latter.

If one attributed all the possibilities of everything to the unknown, then one would completely lose the ability to judge and speculate.

The virtual world appeared several times today because its "feeding" was interrupted.

In Pansen's attempts throughout the day, he abandoned precision for the sake of speed, leading most attempts to fail very quickly.

As a result, each time the virtual world appeared, the Computing Power Resources it absorbed were insufficient.

Following that thought, couldn't one deliberately interrupt each time, forcing the virtual world to keep appearing, and even push it to "energy loss," thereby extending the time it needed to absorb Computing Power Resources after its appearance and buying time for meticulousness during capture?

During Pansen's later attempts, his thinking had nearly become rigid, and he had not the slightest ability to analyze and summarize the results of his experiments.

Aryan and Minister Eric arrived late and lacked sufficient sensitivity toward Spiritual Energy, and likewise had no such ideas for the time being.

This was his unique advantage for the time being!

But it was only for now...

"Beep beep beep~"

While Bai E was still trying to simulate "capturing" Spiritual Energy, his consciousness, multitasking in a state of alertness, heard the alarm sounding from the central console.

"It's appeared again!" Aryan's voice was crisp and pleasant to hear.

Bai E's consciousness instantly returned from the world of Spiritual Energy.

"Where is it?"

"B2."

"Tap tap tap~"

Minister Eric, panting as he dashed to the targeted location and watching Bai E, who seemed to be searching for something, and Aryan, who was a few steps ahead, couldn't help feeling puzzled.

"What are we doing here?"

Without Pansen, what business did they, commoners without Spiritual Energy, have being here?

"Just taking a casual look, maybe we'll find some clues."

Bai E looked up and down, while his other half-consciousness swept over the largest area he could cover with "exploratory" Spiritual Energy.

Like a brush, it swept through this 4x4 space from one edge to the other.

Bai E, applying his Spiritual Energy attribute in combat for the first time, was somewhat surprised.

In the observation from "exploratory" Spiritual Energy, everything in the world took on a layer of marvelous colors.

Spiritual Energy was closely connected to real space, and even in the void of the real world where there was nothing, the corresponding location in the Spiritual Power World still had a faint flow of natural Spiritual Energy passing through.

Sometimes dense, sometimes sparse.

Like a gust of wind carrying the scent of blossoming flowers, freely drifting toward every direction of the world.

Compared to spiritual perception, "exploration" of Spiritual Energy offered a more in-depth and thorough observation of the Spiritual Power World, like the difference between wearing night-vision goggles at night or not...

And it was during this back-and-forth sweeping that the engulfing black mirror was discovered for the first time in Bai E's first-person perspective—occupying just a small corner of his mind.

Only when he moved his will completely close and engaged, did the other side reveal the "virtual world" entity that had occupied his entire field of vision when he had observed Pansen capturing it before.

But that was it...

The reappearance of the virtual world came too quickly, and he hadn't learned "capture" yet.

When he used "exploratory" Spiritual Energy to sweep over it, it was like a gentle breeze on the face, completely unable to arouse any alarm in the other party.

Even if Bai E tirelessly swept his Spiritual Energy over the other party's body time and again, the black mirror that devoured everything remained as if it were indifferent, gorging itself to satisfaction.

Then it wiped its mouth and left.

Of course, Bai E's harassment didn't last too long; most of his time had already been wasted in the previous "scanning" process.

"I'm going to sleep too," Bai E calmly told Minister Eric his intentions.

Before he mastered the "capture" Spiritual Energy, staying here was pointless; it was better to find a quiet place so he could devote himself entirely to the imitation of Spiritual Energy attributes.

"Good, you should have rested earlier."

...

[You are spending combat experience to assist the definition of your Spiritual Energy attribute...]

[Current definition completion: 13.3%]

...

[You are spending combat experience to assist the definition of your Spiritual Energy attribute...]

[Current definition completion: 33.3%]

...

[You are spending combat experience to assist the definition of your Spiritual Energy attribute...]

[Current definition completion: 99.9%]

Compared to mimicking the entire ability, the difficulty of mimicking the second development plummeted. With just the cost of 800 points of combat experience and 1200 points of universal experience, Bai E successfully mastered the advanced development function of Heavenly Eye—

[Spiritual Energy (Heavenly Eye*Fake) (Second Development): Sufficient surveillance gives you a deep understanding, and when you know your target well enough, you can easily bind it. Control the target as subtly as possible, without drawing its attention, and it will never be able to escape from you. The subject must perform a set of will checks to determine if they can successfully escape. (Fake: Your ability will be overwritten within the range of the original version, and it will not affect the owner of the original ability.)]

Good!

Job well done!

Even if it's a pirated version, he had the tool needed to catch his prey.

With the tool in hand, could the prey still escape?

Chapter 472 Broken!

Bai E, rushing to the control station, laid his eyes first upon Lord Pansen, who was meditating in a sitting position by the edge of the console.

"Has it appeared again?"

It was eight in the morning, and according to the pattern observed, it was around the time the virtual world would usually manifest.

The entity's "feeding" activity had been artificially interrupted the day before, making it uncertain whether it would occur earlier or later today.

"No." Miss Aryan shook her head, leaning in close to Bai E's chin and whispering by the side of her own jaw with the back of her hand, "Lord is cultivating his powers."

After a sufficiently long period of sleep and recovery, Pansen was once again full of energy.

It seemed he heard Bai E's voice. Pansen opened his eyes and a fleeting glint of dark light passed through them, then dissipated into the invisible.

"Here!" With a spin that didn't rely on any leverage, Pansen stood up, excitedly facing Bai E, "When I woke up this morning, I thought of an excellent plan to deal with the virtual world."

Bai E's heart trembled, and he stepped forward abruptly, "Lord, after Your rest, I too have devised a brilliant strategy!"

"Oh? Let's hear it."

"According to past records, under normal circumstances, the virtual world appears only once a day..." As Bai E said this, he watched for Pansen's expressions.

When he saw Pansen's excitement and agreement intensifying, Bai E was assured that they had come to the same conclusion—this was an obvious hypothesis—

"However, yesterday, because of your multiple interruptions, the target had to come and "feed" over and over again. If we can continue to disrupt its 'feeding' process, perhaps we can force it to increase the time needed for each subsequent feeding due to lack of energy replenishment. If we could keep accumulating this time..."

"Yes!" Pansen declared firmly, "Exactly! I also reviewed the records just now, and the longest duration the enemy stole Computing Power Resources at the beginning exceeded 23 minutes! If I have that much time again to complete its disconnection, I am certain I will be able to capture it!"

"Yes, that's right! Lord!" Bai E's face too was aglow with an "excited" flush, "Based on the pattern we have, our chances are great!"

"Then it's decided for today!" Though Pansen's cultivation of his Spiritual Energy control was not yet extraordinary, as long as he had ample time and thorough preparation, without having to drag his weary body in a head-on struggle with the foe, he felt the task should be almost certainty!

Seeing his own plan acknowledged by Bai E, Pansen felt even more confident.

Leaning against the edge of the control station, his gaze unfocused as he unintentionally swept everything before him, Pansen merely pressed his palm down, muttering softly, "Come on... come on... "

Show yourself!

Today, we shall compete in another form!

As seconds and minutes passed by, Minister Eric and Miss Aryan, the assistant, were quite thrilled after hearing the Lord had a plan filled with confidence.

If the Lord could successfully capture the virtual world, then the information division wouldn't be able to miss any data relating to the virtual world.

Acquiring more knowledge in this field could undoubtedly accelerate their research in this area.

11:49 AM.

"Beep, beep, beep~"

In the midst of eager anticipation, the virtual world, likely devoid of human-like will, made its appearance at noon, immediately triggering an alert from the control station.

"E2!"

"Let's go!" Pansen looked toward Bai E, who knowingly led the way.

While not particularly keen on seeing the virtual world ultimately captured by Pansen, it remained uncertain what the virtual world might offer humanity...or even himself. Not being involved in the matter might not imply a significant loss.

Moreover, considering this morning's conversation, Lord Pansen seemed inexplicably friendly and trusting towards him. If the item was held in his hands for a while, he might later, when able to reveal his possession of Spiritual Energy, ask to learn about or see the virtual world — and Pansen might agree.

For now, he had to wait and see...

Leading the way diligently, Bai E harbored no thoughts of sabotage.

Find the area, lock the position, capture the interference.

Done in one go.

This process, repeated many times, was now second nature to Pansen; precision was not required as long as he could "scare off" the adversary by deploying a "capture" of Spiritual Energy the instant it was locked on.

Once... twice... thrice...

1:31 PM.

2:18 PM.

5:59 PM.

7:00 PM...

8:00 PM...

9:00 PM...

With continuous aggressive interruptions, the virtual world, seemingly without a human consciousness, began to behave like a frenzied bull, repeatedly attacking the server room.

Yet it fled at once after each "scare."

10:00 PM...

11:00 PM...

12:00 AM...

"Why isn't it coming?"

"Could it have been scared off?"

The four individuals, having waited by the control station for over two hours, murmured their confusion.

The virtual world was a unique entity that everyone had encountered, and without prior experience, any unforeseen events had to be dealt with based solely on the information at hand and basic logical conjectures.

Chapter 473 Broken!_2

"Is there any other place with food besides this one?"

"Perhaps it has some sort of preset that decides to starve itself to death if it's discovered a certain number of times?" Miss Aryan casually tossed out an irresponsible guess.

And with that, the entire hall fell silent in an instant.

In the world of humans, to prevent one's creations from being stolen by others and to avoid unnecessary losses, it is quite normal to have a setting that locks an account or device after several incorrect password attempts.

If such a higher being possessed a similar setting... it would make sense.

"..."

"No way... right?" Minister Eric, pulling at his not-so-thick hair on the top of his head, sounded somewhat uncertain.

However, the air fell into silence.

Until the "beep beep beep" sound once again dispelled everyone's bad hunches.

"Phew~" Miss Aryan, who was the first to scramble to the central control console to check the area that had been tampered with, let out a huge sigh of relief.

'Thank goodness, thank goodness...'

She had almost jinxed it with her words.

"A1."

The very edge of the entire underground control room.

"Do we continue to scare it away?" Bai E asked, turning around after arriving at the area.

"Of course," Lord Pansen replied without hesitation.

This was their carefully planned strategy; they couldn't abandon it just because of a small hiccup.

This was only the first day. If they gave up on their plan now, they would fall back into the same agony as the day before, stuck in an endless stalemate, waiting to see who would be the first to break.

Since they had decided to execute the plan, they had to follow through with it for at least a few days, until they had "starved" the opponent to a sufficient degree, only then would the opponent's next "feeding" time be long enough.

"Let's go."

The plan was in motion!

Five times...

Ten times...

Twenty times...

Fifty times...

They interrupted again and again.

The virtual world did not rest, and thus Pansen could not either. Almost every one or two hours, he had to respond to an attack.

Minister Eric and Miss Aryan, responsible for monitoring the central console, naturally began to take turns on shifts.

It wasn't until the evening of the fourth day, feeling it was about time, that Pansen finally stopped the disruptive actions.

Even though they had ascertained through several days of probing that the virtual world didn't have logic akin to humans, Pansen still sensed the opponent's "impatience" from the increasingly frequent attacks—sometimes happening every half an hour.

With a shortage of energy, the virtual world would recklessly initiate one assault after another.

"Beep beep beep~"

"Here it comes!" Pansen, who had been meditating with closed eyes, opened them sharply.

The bloodshot in his eyes was somewhat frightening.

After several consecutive days of sleep deprivation, and having to summon Spiritual Energy every short interval, even though there was sufficient rest in between, the frequent depletion and meditation recovery had not even matched a natural rest. His mind felt as if it were being churned by a red-hot iron rod.

Since the end of the last disruption, he had been determined that this would be the last time!

The continuous days of probing and deadlock would end today!

The grand Spiritual Energy swept across the 4x4 space, and the virtual world that randomly appeared in some corner could not escape.

Coming as close as possible directly below the target, Pansen closed his eyes and exerted his Spiritual Energy from his brain to the outside with all his might.

This time, there were no reservations!

The ultimate battle, do or die!

The milky white Spiritual Energy tendrils moved at a measured pace along the edges of the dark mirror. Bai E, who was watching from a distance with his spiritual senses, maintained a calm demeanor as he quietly watched the event unfold, while the other half of his alert will also kept a close eye on the time in the real world—

One minute...

Two minutes...

Five minutes...

Ten minutes...

The spread of the Spiritual Energy tentacles wasn't fast, but it was steady.

After consecutive days of honing his own Spiritual Energy and becoming familiar with the process, Pansen's control over Spiritual Energy had become increasingly adept.

As long as enough time was given, it was just a matter of patience for the capturing net to completely envelop the "black mirror" of the virtual world.

And obviously, for someone who could rise to a second-stage Spiritual Energy user through sheer effort, and even after becoming a third-stage practitioner still had the patience for a prolonged war of attrition with a target, patience was the least of his concerns.

Entangling and weaving, threads forming a net.

The net of Spiritual Energy ultimately enveloped the "black mirror" completely, resembling a thin silkworm cocoon that seemed to have a breathing-like twitching within the Spiritual Power World.

'Success!' Bai E thought with a silent sigh of relief in his heart.

"It's done!" Pansen clinched his fist as he finished the capture, his will manipulating the Spiritual Energy to tighten the "ropes," slowly pulling his newly acquired prey towards him, towards his own foundation in the Spiritual Power World—his storage space.

Only there, could he decisively say that this intangible thing in the Spiritual Power World had become his own private property.

However...

"Boom!"

Bai E only saw the virtual world covered by the capture net slowly falling into a misty space surrounding Pansen.

The next moment, a thunderous roar echoed throughout the Spiritual Power World.

Endless winds buffeted Bai E's spiritual senses, mixed with countless sharp fragments that felt like glass scraping across his cheeks.

Through the split-second direct contact, Bai E realized what these glass-like shards truly were—

Pieces... of a storage space.

Pansen's storage space had exploded!

A storage space was directly connected to one's will, almost a physical manifestation of personal will within the Spiritual Power World. Although it did not represent the personal will itself, it was closely related to it.

Yue Ying had never mentioned to Bai E what the consequences would be if it ever exploded, as such an incident seemed unprecedented in her understanding. But clearly... Pansen, right in front of Bai E's eyes, demonstrated the unexpected outcome.

"Pfft!" Pansen in the real world suddenly spit out a mouthful of blood.

His entire aura weakened in an instant, and the abundant Spiritual Energy around him rapidly shrank and collapsed towards himself to stabilize his being.

Bai E, who stood to the side, immediately reached out to catch Pansen in his arms as Minister Eric's panicked voice loudly inquired nearby, "What happened? Are you alright, my lord?"

"I'll take him to the medical room!" Bai E carried Pansen and ran, showing the responsibility inherent in his position.

"We'll go together!" Minister Eric followed closely behind, his face full of tension.

Last time Lord Pansen had bled from all seven orifices right here, and now, once again, he was bleeding from all seven orifices right here...

Eric didn't understand the Spiritual Power World; he only felt that the wheel of fate might be turning at this moment... or perhaps it had started turning since the last incident.

In the medical room... it was all chaos.

The base's personnel were all sent over by Bai E in two troop transportation operations. Among the first group, Bai E possessed the best medical skills. The second time, they brought professional doctors planning to stay for a long term, but without various modern instruments, the doctors could only rely on their own experience and skills to temporarily stabilize Pansen's vital signs.

"Keeping him alive is already the limit of what I can do; I don't understand the Spiritual Power World," the doctor informed truthfully.

Minister Eric, who held the highest position besides Pansen at the base, nodded somewhat dazedly, "Oh..."

The sudden collapse of Lord Pansen had thrown all of Eric's thoughts into disarray. The lord didn't give any warning or hint before the mishap, leaving Eric completely clueless about what to do next.

Watching the crowd of figures around the sickbed, Bai E silently retreated to the back of the room.

As he moved further away from the medical room, Bai E broke into a run, heading straight for the underground control room.

The conflict and entanglement of the past several days could not go to waste here.

Pansen had failed!

But that wouldn't discourage Bai E's courage.

The problem lay in the level of Pansen's storage space.

This was the information he had gleaned from the remnants of the explosion in that fleeting moment of shattering.

And his own storage space was considered first-class by Yue Ying's standards.

If Pansen couldn't do it, shouldn't he give it a try?

Chapter 474 Received!

Seizing the moment when all key figures were distracted by Pansen's severe injuries, Bai E found himself alone at the central control panel.

Although Pansen's attempt had ended in failure, it had obviously startled the virtual world into fleeing.

In front of the vast central control panel, there was silence, and Bai E stood there with his eyes closed, waiting.

Aside from the few thoughts reserved for monitoring the control panel's alarms, he continued to focus the rest of his mind on training his Spiritual Energy.

Sharpening one's weapons before battle may not be ideal, but it is necessary.

He hadn't yet confronted the virtual world directly using Spiritual Energy, but having observed Pansen's operation, he had a very clear understanding of the process.

As for whether any unexpected situations would arise during the actual operation, that was a matter of fate.

He wasn't like Pansen, who, as long as the virtual world didn't change unpredictably, could afford infinite trials and errors.

He only had this one chance.

The opportunity for a prolonged capture brought about by Pansen's relentless pursuit was now, and Bai E could hardly evict the virtual world repeatedly in front of Minister Eric, doing the same thing as Pansen.

Moreover... his time was running out.

He had never forgotten the task he had issued to the players, and if they succeeded, it would be well and good.

But if the players failed, he couldn't go back on his word, as the fugitives from Grey Iron City—the proxy team leader who controlled his fortune and the little boy—were both waiting for him to bring them the life-saving medicine.

If the players couldn't complete the mission within the final deadline, Bai E would have to find a way to personally make a trip to Grey Iron City.

With only one opportunity, Bai E had to give it his all.

"Tick tock tick tock~" Time passed quietly by, with the seconds ticking against Bai E's heart.

At an extremely quiet moment, a piercing buzzing sound seemed to rise from the distant horizon, and a moment before that, Bai E seemed to have a premonition and opened his eyes in advance.

"Beep beep beep beep~"

'There it is!'

His gaze swept across the screens on the control panel, and with his will-controlled access, the result was presented instantly.

"C4!"

With a leap, Bai E rushed towards the target.

Upon reaching the edge of the 4*4 area, Bai E unleashed his Spiritual Energy in an instant.

His Spiritual Energy, under the guise of "scanning," spread around him more actively than it ever had before.

His will growing ever stronger brought about an increasingly lively Spiritual Energy.

Bai E's figure quickly passed over the edge of the 4*4 space.

His Spiritual Energy could not cover the entire 4*4 space directly like Pansen, so he had to compensate for this shortcoming in coverage with speed.

The sweep of Spiritual Energy painstakingly scanned every inch of the area.

"Shh~" A sharp brake and a sudden turn around.

'Lucky.'

Having scanned just along the edge, he had already pinpointed the target.

Good luck undoubtedly indicated a good omen.

Bai E moved to the real-world space that corresponded directly beneath the target.

The closer physical proximity also shortened the transmission distance of Spiritual Energy, thereby reducing its dissipation.

The connection between the real world and the Spiritual Power World was complex and ever-changing, not entirely connected, yet at certain times, deeply intertwined.

Countless threads, inscribed with runes, floated out from above Bai E's head, gliding like thousands of swimming snakes, tracing unique curves as they moved towards the black mirror, which was absorbing luminescent green streams above.

During their approach to the black mirror, the threads spiraled around each other, eventually twisting into thicker "ropes."

The ropes wove into a net, spreading rapidly over the entirety of the black mirror, starting from its edges.

Bai E's brows slightly furrowed, his mind reaching the utmost level of concentration.

There was only one chance, and his control over Spiritual Energy was fully displayed at this moment.

Endless strands continued to emerge from the top of Bai E's head, joining the effort to capture the virtual entity.

The milky-white net spread like the tide, gradually enveloping the black mirror with visible swiftness.

The familiar scene unfolded once more, but this time, much faster than with Pansen.

Precise control over Spiritual Energy had nothing to do with the level of Spiritual Energy itself; perhaps there was also a difference in innate talent.

Unaware of this, the virtual world sucked in large gulps of Computing Power Resources produced by the servers to fill its massive void from not having "fed" for many days.

However, the net had already been set without its knowledge, sealing even the last escape to space completely.

'Done!'

With a surge of joy in his heart, Bai E issued the command with his will, and the net began to retract.

Like a diligent gold miner, Bai E began to slowly reclaim the net loaded with the virtual world.

Getting closer... closer...

The representation of his storage space within the Spiritual Power World was around him, and when the net, along with the virtual world, fell entirely within that designated area, it meant that the virtual world had been captured into Bai E's storage space, becoming his personal property.

Beings from the Spiritual Power World require storage spaces within the same realm to be managed, and only within a storage space directly connected to one's will can a Spiritual Energy user delve directly into the interior of the virtual world to thoroughly analyze this unprecedented novelty.

"Snap~"

The moment the storage space touched the virtual world, Bai E clearly felt a slight tremor in the storage space connected to his will.

It was as if countless unseen, untouchable, ineffable "substances" burst forth from the virtual world, instantly filling the entire storage space.

Chapter 475 Received!_2

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But in a world where he could control everything down to the minutest detail, Bai E had failed to discover any observable "entities."

"Nothingness," filled the entire storage space?

That was the only change.

Like a balloon with its neck released, full of air, the moment it entered Bai E's storage space, the virtual world seemed to have spewed out all the "nothingness" gases contained within it. Then, there was no more movement.

The weapon that had once instantly shattered Pansen's storage space showed not the slightest trace of its former grandeur at this moment.

Perhaps it was this "nothingness gas" itself that had directly burst Pansen's storage space?

As for his own... a storage space that covered life and death, illusion and reality, allowing all existing rules and all possible rules in the world to exist and be inevitably rational, could hold everything.

The virtual world quieted down.

Owning an entity with form but intangible, it occupied a tiny corner in Bai E's storage space. The initial contact released all the "nothingness" gas, which after being released, entered an unobservable, imperceptible state.

When everything calmed down, Bai E somewhat surprisingly "looked" at the transparent, irregularly-shaped "virtual world" lying in a corner of the storage space, almost unable to believe everything had settled so peacefully.

Although his Spiritual Energy had nearly been depleted, the outcome was unexpectedly delightful.

Only after confirming that the thing which had caused such an uproar had completely become his personal property did Bai E start to extend his will, attempting to delve deeper into the virtual world.

The moment his willful tendrils touched it, they easily penetrated it.

The answer was... a blank space.

White spread before Bai E's eyes.

Light from an unknown source filled Bai E's spiritual senses.

Blank... blank... all was blank...

Within the virtual world lay things beyond Bai E's human comprehension... "things."

Bai E felt as if from that blankness, he could hear countless soft but indistinct voices, and as if he could see a magnificent river surging towards him from the end of his sight, easily flowing through his body, and then boldly rushing towards the distant future behind him...

But the few vague images noticed in that moment of distraction vanished completely in a moment of clarity.

What was left... was only a vast blankness.

Blankness...

Bai E felt somewhat wistfully disappointed.

Having gone through so much effort, the virtual world he had been looking forward to was nothing but an incomprehensible blank space, which, naturally, was a bit disappointing.

"Eh?"

When his consciousness returned to his body and felt that sense of full satisfaction within, Bai E unconsciously let out a light exclamation.

The Spiritual Energy that was completely used up for "investigation" and "capture" had now fully recovered within the brief time he observed the virtual world.

Even due to a thorough depletion and recovery, the limit had increased by 1 point.

[Your Spiritual Energy has been rigorously exercised through long-term practice and usage, achieving a slight breakthrough, Spiritual Energy +1/1.]

Why?

His rapid recovery did indeed have a certain restoring effect on Spiritual Energy; the more it was depleted, the stronger the recovery effect, which was verified in the past.

But even in the fastest of times, it was at most a few points a minute—how could it compare to the instant replenishment of over a hundred points of Spiritual Energy?

What was the issue?

Bai E subconsciously called out his personal panel, and the blue light screen cascaded down like mercury, instantly spreading out in front of him.

With his consciousness flowing, the personal panel's history record of his personal state immediately popped up before his eyes—

[Feeling the energy emptiness within you, your "Rapid Recovery" has absorbed an intensely dense ownerless energy, replenishing your Spiritual Energy to full.]

"..."

It really was Rapid Recovery?!

But this "intensely dense ownerless energy"...

...

...

His gaze drifted, detached from the normal five senses, as his spiritual perception "saw" the transparent "air bag" lying quietly in his storage space.

If there had been any changes during this brief period, it seemed only reasonable to think of this thing.

This thing, could it replenish his magic?

A reserve hidden energy source that could fill up his Spiritual Energy at any time?

Infinite blue bars, no cooldown, could he now unleash his ultimate moves without limit?

Turtle turtle!

Thinking about this glorious future made Bai E's breathing instantly become heavy.

The virtual world! The legacy left by the electronic devil should indeed have this kind of heaven-defying effect to match its grand origin.

Bai E's heartbeat sped up slightly.

It was still uncertain whether this was a one-time benefit of first conquest or a permanent effect, something that would need to be verified in the future.

If it were true...

Without the limitation of Spiritual Energy, even piloting a Mecha with huge consumption, he could use his strongest burst unrestrictedly.

Once again facing the nearly impervious armor of the Bug Race he had encountered last time, would you believe it if he said he could instantly kill a hundred with direct smashes to your face?

"Bai E..." A crisp call sounded not far away.

Immersed in his fleeting blissful reverie, Bai E jolted to attention at the sound and looked toward the source of the voice, spotting a sprightly figure standing there gazing in his direction, "Aryan?"

"It's me." A smile instantly burst across Aryan's face as she quickly ran over, "Why did you come here alone?"

Everyone was fussing over a man named Pansen, but... what did that have to do with him?

She was just a limited-capability assistant from the information department. Doing her assigned duties was all her world entailed, and she was not inclined to ponder too much on the so-called bigger picture.

If she could manage her duties while also doing things she enjoyed, that would be even better.

What were the things she enjoyed?

It was the process of coming out to look for him as soon as she realized he was missing...

"Me?" Bai E, who had done what he wanted to since arriving at the base and now felt satisfied, responded with an obviously warm smile, "Just taking a walk... I couldn't help with the big man's issue, so I thought I might see if there's anything here at the computing center that needed help."

Speaking, Bai E paused and then added, "By the way, when did you come here?"

Seeing Bai E's gentle smile, Aryan's heart skipped a beat and she shyly lowered her head and replied in a soft voice, "I've been looking for you ever since I noticed you were gone..."

Wasn't that declaration a bit too bold?

As she spoke, Aryan's hands were crossed behind her back, her fingers tightly interlocked with nervousness.

"Have you been standing there the whole time?" Bai E asked Aryan, who was looking down, his eyes flashing with a hint of undetectable chill.

"Hm... When I arrived, I saw you standing here lost in thought, and... didn't dare to call out to you."

After all, the daydreaming Bai E seemed to possess a different kind of charming appeal~

"Is that so..." Bai E smiled, suppressing the flicker of murderous intent that should not have been there in the first place.

Although Aryan's unexpected actions had risked exposing him, especially since the virtual world would no longer "attack" the computing center to steal Computing Power Resources after he had left, thereby heightening suspicion, he must not resort to killing over such a minor risk.

Not to speak of consequences, Bai E was far from being that brutal.

What puzzled Bai E even more was why, under his artificial being's absolute command to loyally protect humans, did he harbor the subconscious thought of killing an innocent person?

Not just now... The same went for his encounter with Pansen.

But fortunately, his will always dominated everything.

"Now that the big man has failed, what will you do?" Aryan flicked the hair from her brow and looked curiously at the side of Bai E's face.

"What will we do?" Bai E shrugged helplessly, "What else can we do? Besides the big man, we have no other experts in this area. We can only go back~"

"Oh~" Aryan nodded her head with a hint of disappointment, "Then... will you come back here in the future?"

...

Chapter 476 The First Lie

This question ultimately remained unanswered because Bai E himself didn't know when he would return if there was nothing wrong.

The convoy was fully prepared under the morning sun, just waiting to depart.

The situation with Lord Pansen was urgent. Even in the entire city, a third-level Spiritual Energy user was considered a significant strategic talent. After communicating with the city, the city's upper echelons decided to have the convoy return immediately.

However, due to the events of the previous night lasting until midnight, and only stabilizing Pansen's condition by the afternoon of the next day, departing then would mean spending the night in the wilderness, which was far less preferable than leaving at dawn the next day and using a whole day to rush back to the city.

So now, it was already the morning of the third day.

The convoy had brought many medical and technical staff as well as relief personnel on the way there. Now, the return trip was a lot emptier, and they had even left behind two vehicles for the use of those who stayed at the base.

Aryan leaned against the doorway, reaching out carefully towards the figure stepping onto the door frame of the vehicle under the sunlight, and whispered goodbye so softly that only those nearby could hear.

"Goodbye~"

"If you're saying goodbye, do it to their face. If you like them, go confess..." A figure in a white lab coat walked past Aryan to a parallel position.

Minister Eric, with his arms crossed, looked at the convoy making its final preparations and said to the girl beside him, "Why are you young people so hesitant? In this age, we have today but not necessarily tomorrow. Do you really need to wait until a moment's regret becomes an eternal one before you understand regret?"

"...It's none of your business!"

Watching Aryan turn and walk away, Minister Eric squinted his eyes in a daze.

Had his little assistant become temperamental after so many days?

With a snort of laughter, Minister Eric shook his head and stood there, watching everyone get into the vehicles.

He had no plans to return. Last time, he had to be there at the start of rebooting the internet to set the tone for many things. Now that most of the development was on track, it was more beneficial for him and the city to remain in this legacy of the old era to learn more about the technology of the ancients.

"Hum~"

The engine started, and the vehicle trembled slightly.

Bai E glanced at the sickbed fastened at the back through the rear-view mirror in the carriage, as well as the comatose Pansen who was strapped to the bed, took a light breath, and pressed down on the accelerator.

Departure!

Return to the city!

The road through the wilderness was never easy; and now without Pansen's Spiritual Energy barrier, they had to be even more careful.

Watching the bizarre birds startled into flight down the path through the dense jungle, Minister Eric sighed and walked back slowly.

With Lord Pansen in a coma, the affairs of the virtual world were naturally going awry again.

Until the city sent another high-ranking Spiritual Energy user skilled in this field, that little thing that no one had a solution for would probably keep stealing Computing Power Resources from the mainframe cluster.

Although the loss of a small amount of computing power was completely inconsequential to humans at present, the fear was that after absorbing enough Computing Power Resources, this creation borne of electronic demons might undergo some unpredictable changes.

More importantly, since the incident with Lord Pansen, they had not received any alerts of invasions to the mainframe cluster up to this moment.

The unknown was the most unsettling.

As he said, the world was full of unpredictable changes, from day to day.

If there's something you want to do, then just boldly go do it...

"Beep beep beep~" Aryan's call suddenly came through the earpiece, "Minister, headquarters is calling you."

"Oh!" Eric perked up and strode towards the direction of the central control desk.

"Click clack~" The heels of his leather shoes echoed on the smooth marble floor. Eric's voice could be heard even before he drew near, "What are they saying?"

Aryan propped herself on the communications desk with her headphones on, listening to the voice from the receiver and quietly responding with "Hmm" affirmations.

"Hmm~"

"Hmm~"

"No."

"Haven't found anything so far."

As Eric approached, he patted Aryan's shoulder, and she understood his gesture, removing her headphones and stepping aside to let Minister Eric take over, "This is Eric speaking. Go ahead."

"Minister Eric, yesterday's communication was brief, and there are still many details we are unaware of. Today, we would like to clarify with you," the voice said.

"Yes, go ahead."

"Did the incident occur the day before yesterday?"

"The evening of the day before yesterday, at 7:31 PM."

"Since then, have there been any sightings of the target?"

Minister Eric hesitated, exchanging a questioning glance with his assistant who was operating the central control desk, and continued responding into the earpiece, "Currently... there shouldn't be any..."

Knowing his answer would not satisfy the other party, yet Eric didn't dare to make definitive statements, so he quickly followed up with, "There was a long period when we were all concerned about Lord Pansen's health, and no one was watching this area."

With Pansen's incident, the whole base had been in disarray yesterday.

And the central control desk didn't actually require continuous supervision.

Major incidents would trigger an alarm throughout the base; it was only for smaller alerts, like a minor theft of Computing Power Resources from a portion of the mainframe cluster, that one had to stay beside the control desk.

Besides, with Lord Pansen down, even if they did catch the little thief stealing Computing Power Resources again, what could they do?

Chapter 477 The First Lie_2

"Confirm it," the voice from the base commanded, "Based on the data and pattern analysis you provided earlier, the virtual world whose theft of computing power resources was interrupted by Pansen lacks sufficient energy to maintain its operation. It shouldn't have been absent all day yesterday. If it hasn't shown up at all, we need to consider whether this little thing has been 'frightened' by Pansen's actions and has completely fled."

This meant that it would probably be much harder for them to receive any news regarding the virtual world again.

"Yes."

The central console contained all the historical records of information, which could be queried at any time, even if asked.

Eric did not have the authority to check the log records. It could only be checked by his assistant Aryan, who was standing a short distance away and operating the central console.

"Okay." Aryan nodded his head, easily pulling up the system log panel.

[...Evening 19:31:02 F1 district host group operating efficiency decreased by 11%, lasting 17 minutes and 23 seconds.]

[...Evening 20:17:18 C4 district host group operating efficiency decreased by 4%, lasting 15 minutes and 18 seconds.]

Tw... twice.

Aryan was slightly startled upon seeing the last two lines of the log record.

The figure who stood alone beside the host that evening, lost in thought, flashed through his mind like an instinct.

'Come out for a walk... I can't help with Lord's matters, might as well come and see if there's anything in the server room that needs help.'

"..."

That smiling face was still so warm, but the location of its appearance was too coincidental.

Aryan had a good memory.

So why did Bai E coincidentally appear in the C4 district?

So why does the time... also match exactly?

Intentionally hiding something?

Hiding what?

The trajectory of Bai E's movements within the base flashed through Aryan's mind in an instant... particularly clear because of the special attention paid.

As long as Pansen was there, Bai E would never be absent.

Even if it meant going several days without sleep, he would always "guard" by the side.

This is a base!

The solid walls of the Golden Age protected the important interior; all the warriors brought in firmly controlled every passage in and out. Even a fly coming in had to greet the monitors, what did he have to guard?

What did he need to stay vigilant for, without sleep day and night?

Moreover, in their occasional idle conversation, she heard Minister Eric say... Bai E was originally not allowed to leave the camp on his own, and he had exchanged a great merit from the battlefield for the opportunity to come to the base.

There was a time when she harbored a one in ten thousand sweet fantasy in her heart—imagining that perhaps Bai E had come for her.

But now it seems, Bai E... also came for the virtual world!

The twists and turns were many, but once a thought was clear, all became instantly transparent.

She was mild-mannered, but not stupid.

Aryan's intelligence was significant enough to become the personal assistant to the head of the Information Department of the city's Scientific Research Institute while still young.

Having confirmed that Bai E was also related to the virtual world, the words "it appeared once more" that were about to leave her lips were forcibly swallowed down.

It didn't show up! It didn't appear today.

If since Lord Pansen's intervention, the virtual world hadn't shown up even once, then the possibility that it was "scared away" by his actions could stand.

But if it appeared once after Pansen, why didn't it appear again today?

Pansen came to capture that elusive virtual world.

And after Bai E had "contact" with it, the virtual world never showed up again. Does this mean that...

Bai E had taken it away?

This was something the city's authorities had specifically requested.

"..." Biting her lower lip, Aryan, who had never lied before, experienced the torture of her conscience for the first time.

"What's wrong?" Minister Eric, still wearing his headset and waiting for an answer, asked in confusion, seeing Aryan's somewhat dazed profile.

The slight raise in her voice made Aryan tremble all over; inexplicably, her hands shook as she instinctively used her authority to delete the last log entry before lowering her head and gently shaking it, "It... It hasn't shown up."

"Oh~" Minister Eric, not doubting her, replied to the voice in the headset, "It hasn't shown up."

"Understood." The voice on the other end responded instantly, giving instructions, "Continue the monitoring. If it appears again, make sure to notify me immediately."

"Understood."

"Doot~ Doot~ Doot~" After hanging up the communication, Minister Eric approached Aryan, "What's the matter, you seemed distracted just now?"

"I was... thinking about something else."

"The person left, taking your soul with him..." Eric shook his head helplessly, "He must not have gone far, should I call him now, ask him to come back, and take you along as well?"

"No need!" Aryan tossed her ponytail and turned to run away.

Arriving at a corner out of Eric's sight, Aryan pressed her body tightly against the wall, gasping for air.

Her heart dared to beat wildly with panic only at that moment.

It was her first time lying, and it was to the high-level officials of the city.

Secretly taking away the "virtual world" that the adults in the city coveted, Bai E... what exactly do you want to do?

More crucially... how could Bai E take away what even Lord Pansen couldn't?

...

["Lucky Strike" energy +5.]

"Huh?"

Bai E, who was driving, had a slight tremor in his palm, somewhat surprised.

What did I do? Suddenly +5?

Not understanding, he decided not to think about it.

The accelerator pressed to the floor, Bai E hurried back to town.

It wasn't just about following orders from superiors, it was also for his own development.

Since yesterday, Bai E had begun to sense a faint suction force acting upon his body.

After several moments of paranoia, Bai E eventually pinpointed the source—

The storage space, or rather, the virtual world.

Like a transparent airbag, the virtual world became a cave with an increasingly strong suction force. From the initially faint presence to a strength that allowed identification of the source, Bai E roughly guessed what "it" was demanding.

Food.

When it had no owner, it would sneak into the machine room and feed itself, but now that it had an owner, does it mean it no longer needs to eat?

To stay in the base, provided with meals all day long?

Does that mean I shouldn't plan my own development? Being isolated from the outside world for a virtual world, effectively trapping myself there?

Impossible.

The more one gains, the more one carries.

I have to find my own way.

Computing Power Resources... these things are not so rare.

Although it's carefree in the main server room of the base, it's not impossible to acquire them outside either, just a little more troublesome...

Didn't we get a bunch last time we attacked the cybernetic stronghold?

Though it was all turned in...

But if there's a place where it can be found, there's a way.

No one likes to mess with cybernetics because they offer little reward and cause big trouble.

After defeating them, the most valuable looted items include their intelligence cores and Computing Power Resources, but these items can't be directly utilized by humans. Even vehicles and equipment produced by cybernetics can't be used directly by humans because there's no provision for a driver.

Besides gaining a bunch of possibly refined steel, fighting them yields nothing else of value.

And if the annihilation isn't complete, the crazed revenge from them would be a headache for anyone.

But what if their produced resources are needed?

There are plenty of minor fortresses on the map, free for the taking.

Whether or not the mission in Grey Iron City succeeds, it's about time for the players to return.

It would be perfect to segue into a new mission seamlessly. If I'm available, why not lead them into a...
dungeon raid animation?

With plans for the future plotted in his mind, Bai E was eager to return home.

...

"Ssshhh~"

"Ssshhh~"

The transparent airbag pulsed as if alive, drawing in cool air from the storage space with each contraction.

In the blank beyond Bai E's observation, an unknowable viewpoint plummeted... falling... falling...

Down to a clarity below the blankness, where the world suddenly opened up...

Chapter 478 "The World in the Spacetime Singularity"

The vast blue sky, with its verdant mountains and green waters.

Below the sky sprinkled with white clouds, the morning sunlight, carried on a gentle breeze, brushed every pedestrian amidst the towering buildings.

"Crack, crack, crack~" A faint breaking sound arose from somewhere in the space, as a tiny black crack flashed overhead the pedestrians, then vanished as swiftly as it had appeared, as if it had never been there at all.

The folding of space mirrored distant vistas, reflecting the scenery in the eyes of the nearby pedestrians as if through a mirror.

Regrettably, the bustling crowd hurried by, not a single person catching sight of this fleeting, strange landscape.

Kuang Xin stood at the edge of the spacious square, holding his phone, and chattered away to the person on the other end, "Guang, after knowing each other for so long I've just realized we're in the same city, how about we meet up?."

"I'm not going." a buzzing voice came from the other end of the phone, "Not familiar."

"Don't be like that... We've been through a bunch of stuff doing missions for our boss; tonight's probably the final battle, aren't you going to come out and cheer on your brother?"

"The final battle?"

"Yeah... I'm telling you, we had a blast. Tonight, we plan to storm right into their armory to put up a big fight! Win and we go home for the New Year; lose and the whole crew gets arrested, ahaha~"

"..." Xu Ruoguang stayed silent for a moment before he could only spit out two words, "Awesome."

"Pretty standard... so are you coming or not? You've got nothing else to do at home anyway, and you can't play the game during the day."

"Galaxy Online" was strange for the fact that it could only be entered while sleeping at night. Unlike other games in this world, it didn't take up the normal daytime hours; moreover, everyone in the world experienced an irresistible urge to sleep from midnight to 8 AM. No matter where they were or what they were doing, they would be suddenly overwhelmed by a wave of sleepiness, plunging them into deep slumber.

And what a wondrous experience it was to be cradled in this irresistible sleep, lying in a gaming capsule with a helmet on, living another life in the game world, and waking up without any trace of tiredness from the dreamscape of the game?

Thus, from the moment this game was released, it took the whole world by storm.

However, because of this characteristic, you couldn't play the game during the day...

"Okay..." After some rustling, Xu Ruoguang's voice came through again, sounding cool and detached, "Where?"

"Central Plaza. Just take the subway line 1 to get there." Knowing Xu Ruoguang was a homebody, Kuang Xin compassionately provided him with directions, then muttered under his breath, "I can't believe you've lived in this city for over a decade and don't even know this."

"I'm not coming."

"Ah, no, no, no, I was wrong, bro."

"I'm waiting."

"Alright~ I'm wearing all yellow today, just standing under that statue in Central Plaza. Easy to spot."

"Got it..."

As Kuang Xin waited, he occasionally checked his reflection on the smooth metal surfaces along the street.

Hmm... 11 out of 10, not shy to admit it, because facts need no boasting.

"Woooo~"

The subway roared underground, the winding cry brought by the passing trains, accompanied by the tremble of the earth, traveled up to Kuang Xin's feet.

Before long, a young man dressed in black and white came jogging in his direction.

Watching him head straight towards him, Kuang Xin, a bit nervously, clenched his fingers until the other approached, cautiously asking, "Guang?"

"Yes." Xu Ruoguang nodded, his expression neutral.

Kuang Xin eyed him up and down with a hint of surprise in his gaze, "You look this good?"

Being handsome wasn't the key point; what was surprising was that this guy actually used his own face for his character in the game!

So the handsome ones really could do whatever they wanted, huh?

"..." Xu Ruoguang pursed his lips, "What did you call me out for?"

"Nothing much... just to hang out. Isn't it boring to stay at home all day?"

"I thought you wanted to talk about things in the game."

"The game?" Kuang Xin was taken aback, "What's there to talk about with the game? Just get on with it."

"And if you lose?"

"If we lose, we'll just do it again, and in three days I'll be as good as new!"

"..."

Quite carefree.

But it seemed that this was the attitude towards the game held by everyone... or at least the majority of people in this world.

Because of the unique irreproducibility of this game—everyone's starting point and identity were completely different—everyone's paths diverged so much that almost none were the same. Cross-regional information was almost pointless, and only players born in the same game region needed to share information, which could be done within the game.

Online... you couldn't find anyone on the internet.

At least Xu Ruoguang had almost never found any discussion about the game that was remotely popular.

It seemed that no one really cared...

With a helpless sigh, Xu Ruoguang's gaze wandered around him.

He always felt a strange sense of detachment from this relatively unfamiliar world.

"Hmm... hmm?" Staring at a figure walking leisurely not far away, Xu Ruoguang's gaze sharpened, feeling as if he had seen them somewhere before.

"Hey hey hey? What are you looking at?" Kuang Xin waved his hand in front of his eyes, wondering what had captured the attention of the guy he had managed to coax out.

Chapter 479 "The World in the Spacetime Singularity"_2

Xu Ruoguang pried open his palm and turned his head around, trying to find the source of his familiarity.

When his gaze shifted to a silvery-grey object, Xu Ruoguang was suddenly taken aback, "..."

The silvery-grey object was... a statue.

That person... looked exactly like the statue?

"Is there some kind of cosplay event today?" Xu Ruoguang asked, dumbfounded.

In Xu Ruoguang's understanding, only those historical figures who had made extraordinary contributions were worthy of being immortalized with statues for people to revere.

Such people... generally aren't alive, right?

"Huh?" Kuang Xin followed Xu Ruoguang's gaze and naturally replied without a second thought, "Of course, there's no cosplay expo... Isn't that Aristotle himself? What, have you been living in Mingguang City for over a decade and never seen him?"

"Should I have seen him?"

"Shouldn't you have seen him?"

"..."

"..."

"Stop looking, stop looking..." Kuang Xin took it as the self-restraint of a hard-core homebody, grabbed Xu Ruoguang's arm, and started running forward, "Come on, I heard that another 'relic' was unearthed today, let's go check out the scene."

"What 'relic'? I'm not interested." The soft objection clearly couldn't overcome Kuang Xin's enthusiasm, and Xu Ruoguang was involuntarily pulled along and rushed forward.

Not only was Kuang Xin a handsome, muscular giant in the game, but in the real... world, he was also a tough, handsome man more than 1.8 meters tall.

The subway connected all places, and after taking Xu Ruoguang on two subway rides, and traveling for more than fifty minutes, they finally reached the other end of the city.

Like a museum's vast exhibition hall, the crowd was steady, and those who received the news and were interested converged from all parts of the city.

Following the crowd into the exhibition hall, Kuang Xin pulled Xu Ruoguang expertly toward a certain direction.

All the cameras, big and small, were aimed in one direction, where an old man with white hair, looking somewhat perplexed and dressed in a black classical suit, sat in his place, his gaze inquisitive yet cautious as he surveyed everything before him.

"Sir, welcome back." The host sitting opposite the old man, also dressed in a black suit and wearing a small earpiece, smiled as he began his opening speech, "This is a brand-new era, sir. Thanks to your relentless efforts in the past, we are now living in the most glorious of times. Welcome to waking up in the new world, this is the 137th year of the Golden Age... Mr. Einstein."

The white-haired old man's eyes showed rare confusion, but knowledge about this era's basic facts kept emerging in his mind after waking up and gradually occupied his will.

This was a golden age... where there were no more wars, no more poverty.

There were no longer national divides, as humanity united completely for the first time.

Talents from all over the world, from the past and the future...from all fields and races, were working in various domains for the future of mankind.

Humanity looked down proudly at everything, with the whole world prostrated at humanity's feet.

Only the distant space was the sole destination for mankind's future.

What kind of era was this?

Filled with miracles... even the deceased could be resurrected, miracles had become commonplace.

Xu Ruoguang below the stage stared with wide eyes, utterly unable to believe what he was seeing.

Kuang Xin, who occasionally glanced at Xu Ruoguang's profile, was less concerned with what was happening on stage. After all, he had seen similar scenes too many times before. Instead, he was more interested in the hardcore homebody beside him.

"What? Is this your first time at the scene?"

"No..." Xu Ruoguang shook his head blankly.

This wasn't my first time at the scene, but it was the first time I learned that such things existed in this world.

Was it because the past me held a distance from this world, or because the past me lived so obliviously that I had failed to notice such astonishing phenomena?

The resurrection of the dead, this is a forbidden spell.

No! Where did this rigid view of mine come from?

The fact had already happened before my eyes, from where did I get the impression that this phenomenon should be surprising?

Everyone present... they all seemed to take it for granted, no one questioned it. They were calmly admiring the figures who had stepped out of historical records, quietly appreciating the beauty of this temporal anomaly.

It wasn't until the crowd dispersed that Kuang Xin pulled me away from the exhibition hall, and I recovered some sanity under the sunlit sky outside.

"How is this done?" Xu Ruoguang asked.

He knew he could look it up online, but having an acquainted friend right by his side to ask would obviously yield a more detailed understanding.

"I don't know~" Kuang Xin said with a pair of bewildered eyes, "I'm not one of those scientists... But I've seen some news occasionally. The scholars believe we are in a special temporal singularity, where the river of time occasionally stirs up ripples and brings people from epochs not belonging to our own to this place. In fact, people we've never heard of or even from the so-called 'future' frequently appear. Their identities and backgrounds vary, and they aren't necessarily directly connected to our past or future. Whenever such individuals appear, it becomes one of the scholars' favorite topics to dig through various fragmented pieces of information to assemble background data on the eras they come from."

"...Oh~"

During the conversation, another solemn interview scene appeared on the supersized screen outside the skyscraper across the square.

The woman presenter, graceful and stunning in a white suit uniform, excitedly stretched her hand toward the camera and introduced, "This is the plaza of the Human Federation's upper council, and just now, the results of the election for the new Great Chief Executive of the Human Federation have been announced. The new Great Chief Executive will be Mr. Kevin, who hasn't been very high-profile before and only became politically active recently. It's said that Mr. Kevin also comes from the tunnels of time, hailing from an era of war, and it's unknown how this past experience will influence his governance philosophy."

As she spoke, a colorful crowd emerged densely on the steps behind her.

At the back of the crowd, there was a group of people being escorted outward.

"Oh~ Our new Great Chief Executive has come out, let's go interview this great leader who may still be unfamiliar to everyone and see where the path of our Human Federation will head..."

With the target group's appearance, the camera showed that many journalists, like the woman presenter, immediately gathered around.

"Mr. Kevin..."

"Mr. Kevin may I ask..."

"Mr. Kevin!"

"Mr. Kevin!" The woman presenter in the white suit took the forefront, squeezing in the lead, her mouth moving quickly and clearly as she rapidly fired off a string of words, "First of all, congratulations on being elected as the Great Chief Executive of our term; could you share with us your future plans for the Federal Government?"

Kevin, dressed in a well-fitted naval officer uniform, looked at the camera with a smile on his face, yet maintained a solemn tone, "Playing 'aircraft'."

"..."

For a moment, the presenter's face stiffened, but she quickly followed up, "Do you think our future..."

"The future will surely belong to the skies!" Kevin pointed to the horizon, beyond the azure sky was a vast interstellar wilderness, "Fighter jets soaring through the sky, only the finest warriors can lay the foundation for the empire's victory."

Empire? The empire is an all too distant past.

Now is the era of the Federal Government.

But nobody had the time to care about this small grammatical error from the new Great Chief Executive; they were more interested in the future direction, "Chief Executive, do you think there is a possibility of restarting a war in the future? Where is the enemy?"

"Do you believe the Federal Government will ultimately splinter?"

"Has the government discovered extraterrestrial forces in the universe?"

Kevin's words were like a boulder thrown into a pond, creating lively ripples.

He just pursed his lips, smiling, "Starting from tomorrow, a game called 'Raiden' involving the control of fighter jets will be released across all platforms. I require that within two years, everyone must clear it once!"

Chapter 480 I encountered a few NPCs.

"Let's go~" After meeting up with a net friend and feeling quite content, "I'll see you back online... Oh wait, we can't see each other. Off to fight~"

Kuang Xin patted his buttocks and turned to leave.

Once home, he put on his helmet, laid down in his beloved gaming pod, and succumbed to darkness as electric pulses stimulated his senses.

In the midst of overwhelming drowsiness, the gates to another world swung open with a roar.

The game's timeline remained exactly where he left off when he logged out, resuming instantly as if he had merely taken a nap.

Kuang Xin's gaze swept over the dim world before him, this underground cavern housed countless warriors striving for their dreams.

This was all Yanzi's doing.

Thinking back on the experiences after arriving in Grey Iron City, Kuang Xin still felt it was as magical as a dream.

What shocked him the most was the change in Yanzi... or perhaps that she had always been like this, and they just hadn't realized it before.

Kuang Xin's eyes glazed over as his thoughts drifted, taking him back to his first day in Grey Iron City.

...

The rumbling vehicle came to a slow halt after the majestic city came into view.

New to the place, nobody had any idea what rules the city followed.

If the city conducted detailed searches on people and vehicles entering and leaving, like in Blackwater City, it was unlikely their group from the outer city could hide anything.

It seemed wisest to first wander around the city's outskirts to perhaps encounter some locals and glean general information about the city.

The four of them disembarked from the vehicle, with Kuang Xin rubbing his behind, his face scrunched up in discomfort, "When we get some money, let's get a different vehicle; this one's just not made for sitting."

"Dream on..." Gu Lan, a mature beauty in brown leather shorts and jacket, hopped out sprightly from behind and retorted, "Having a vehicle is already good; so many others who started the game with us are still running around the map on foot."

Dai Lian and Gong Yan didn't speak, just quietly observed the distant city—

The dormant volcano provided a backdrop for the city, making it appear quite small in comparison.

The air was filled with a choking layer of ash, like the remains of burned paper, crumbling at a touch.

On the mountain range in the distance, many columns of black smoke were visible, the source of the ashy flakes being expelled from the volcanic vents.

Carried high into the sky and swept away by the winds, the ashes spread around the entire city... including the city itself.

"Cough cough cough~" Gong Yan couldn't help but sneeze several times.

Dai Lian casually pulled out a moist black scarf from his chest and handed it to her, his eyes still fixed on the world filled with floating black ash, "It's troublesome."

Adjusting to the new environment was the first challenge they had to face.

As the undisputed leader of this small group, Dai Lian willingly shouldered all the responsibilities that came with the role.

Before coming here, he managed to gather some information about Grey Iron City through his old power-leveling networks.

The damp scarf was a preparation he had made in advance.

But he had not expected the effect to be this severe—

[You have inhaled a large amount of harmful substances, your body suffers great damage, Health -1.]

[Your body is weakened by toxic substances, reducing your agility by 10%.]

Carrying out tasks that could last for days or even weeks here, merely relying on a moist scarf to alleviate discomfort was unrealistic.

They anticipated encountering various elements and characters in their mission; they could act as outsiders, but when necessary, they had to blend in as locals to carry out essential interactions.

Integrating into the local community was the first imperative task upon arrival.

Fortunately, this task was actually quite simple.

One of "Galaxy Online's" best features was that many abilities could be gained through repetitive training.

Even adapting to the environment; as long as one didn't die, repeatedly diving into water would teach someone to swim, freezing in the snow for days would allow running naked, and living in a radiation zone for years would lead to coexisting with radioactive elements...

Drink seawater for long enough, and anyone can become a superhuman.

So the best way to adapt to the environment was...

"Inhale~"

"Exhale~"

"Inhale~"

"Exhale~"

"Cough cough cough!" Kuang Xin, choked by the black dust before him, coughed out mucus and tears, bending over and staring at Dai Lian as he questioned, "Is this the method you spoke of?"

Running to the edge of a volcano to breathe?

"Any problem?" Dai Lian lifted an eyelid, himself caught off guard and coughing.

"Cough cough cough!"

While choking, he continued to explain, "I have a friend in Grey Iron City; he said the first hurdle for local players is to overcome this."

Unlike players in other cities, those born in Grey Iron City had to first acquire the "Adaptive Breathing Enhancement" trait, or else they might as well restart early.

"Hahaha!" Gu Lan laughed heartily without restraint, entertained by the argument between the two, but then carelessly...

"Cough cough cough!"

As she coughed up a storm of snot and tears, Gu Lan didn't forget to tease them, "When you've trained up, if I need help removing formaldehyde from my villa, I'll call you guys haha... cough cough cough~"

As they continued to inhale the harmful particles in the air, the panel began to display the body's suffering in text form.

[You have inhaled a large amount of harmful substances, your body suffers great damage, Health -1.]