

## Wow 511

### Chapter 511 April 20 Appointment 2

At least Bai E didn't see any signs of the players being bewitched by demons, unless they were willing...

Of course, he was familiar with players like Kuang Xin, but the player responsible must be a permanent resident of the town's ruins. Kuang Xin's four-person squad was used to operating on their own. They would likely receive many tasks in the future and probably wouldn't stay here all the time, so they weren't suitable.

The target... hadn't been identified.

"My Lord, it seems you are troubled by something?" A gentle voice rang out nearby, lively and bright. Bai E looked up and saw a radiant smile.

Yafei?

He remembered the name as one of the more memorable among the new players he had met.

The main reason was that this girl was the closest to Kuang Xin and the others, appearing quite familiar with them.

"Hmm," Bai E nodded with interest.

Players were always bold and proactive.

In the face of these fellows, he didn't mind showing his troubles.

After all, if NPCs had no troubles, how could players have opportunities?

Yafei's eyes moved around, her gaze sweeping over the rock nearby that was explaining the work to everyone. "My Lord... are you troubled by the construction supervision of the city?"

"Yes," Bai E replied with an encouraging smile. "So, can you help?"

The standard phrasing of a task, Yafei's face lit up with a smile.

"..."

The smile gradually solidified.

No task alerts received?

After a moment of confusion, Yafei earnestly asked, "I'm not sure how I can be of help to you, my Lord?"

"The work of supervision in construction naturally requires the supervisor to have an understanding of the construction itself..."

That's right!

Different roles require different abilities in the appointer.

The defense force of Black Street needs a certain level of martial capability, and a manager needs a certain level of management experience.

So, the supervisor in charge of the city construction naturally must possess certain construction skills to be competent.

The effect of appointments comes from the different abilities each person possesses.

So far, no player with construction skills had been found among the players; this was the core reason Bai E hadn't found a suitable target yet.

"I see!" Yafei's eyes shone. "I understand, my Lord!"

With that, she took the Wang brothers and turned to leave. "Follow me!"

Watching the three figures walking away, Bai E's gaze was tinged with anticipation as he stroked his chin.

He had some impression of these three, and since they were close to Kuang Xin and his group, they must have earned some basic recognition from them.

If they could surprise him, he wouldn't mind giving them a lift.

...

"Big sister, where are we going?"

"Where are we going?" Yafei turned around and, with some frustration, poked Wang Wenyan's forehead with her finger. "We're going to learn skills! Wasn't the Lord's meaning clear enough? It's a shame, one of you is a doctoral student and the other a graduate student!"

A Supervisor!

An instant elevation to the management level!

This was a chance to soar to the heavens that could only appear with the emergence of a new force and new opportunities!

As long as they could seize it, what would the advantage gained by other players hunting monsters amount to?

Yafei was uncertain about the road ahead, but given that their combat abilities were not as savage as other players, this was their only chance to overtake others on the curve.

The Wang brothers could understand this as well, but...

Wang Wenbo, the graduate student, couldn't accept this and retorted, "We need a place to learn skills before we can think of learning... and we can't beat the monsters to it."

Wang Wenyan, the doctoral student, also puzzled, scratched his cheek, "Yeah... where do we go to learn?"

"Have you forgotten the tasks we did in the city before?" Yafei raised an eyebrow. "As long as you're willing to work, there are plenty of tasks available at the NPCs!"

They arrived at a construction site they had passed by before, and seeing the NPC who was instructively pointing while supporting a log on his shoulder, Yafei rushed up eagerly, "Uncle, is there anything we can help with?"

"Help?" The burly, bearded man glanced at Yafei then casually pointed to the side. "There's plenty of help needed; go to whatever you like and lend a hand."

[Side Quest Triggered—Lend a Hand!]

[Lend a Hand!: The city lies in ruins waiting to be rebuilt. Everywhere is in dire need of manpower. Find a suitable place to help complete a certain degree of construction work, and you shall receive the reward of diligence. Quest Requirement: Focus on assisting the construction for at least 0/60 minutes. Quest Completion Reward: Basic Building Techniques Experience +25.]

As expected!

Yafei's face brightened, and he turned to look at the two Wang brothers, "What are we waiting for?"

Though the experience was scant, it could be conjured from nothing.

They carried on them a few hundred points of general experience and a small amount of combat experience accumulated from the past, but without any level-one skills, they couldn't utilize that experience.

They must find a mentor, or receive a quest that grants the necessary special ability experience, to learn the required skills.

In this period of national reconstruction, mentors were hard to find, but were quests also difficult to come by?

...

Time passed quietly, and the sun gradually rose higher.

The players were quite diligent, battling non-stop even during the night when beasts preferred to roam, thankfully their efforts were quite fruitful—

[Feedback from the commission: Insight +1.0, Physical Strength +1.2, Reflex +0.7, Mystery +0.3, Light Weapons Mastery Experience +148, Light Firearms Mastery Experience +382, Ranged Weapons Mastery Experience +158, Heavy Weapons Mastery Experience +274.]

That was a fat loot!

Many hands make light work. Even though the bounty was greatly reduced, these players, who once struggled at the bottom of the game, or rather the world, were now achieving astonishing improvements with the support of a guaranteed platform.

Accordingly, the power fed back to Bai E was unprecedentedly abundant.

Bai E, who had experienced several encounters with demons in the past, was highly alert to this sudden surge in power. Although he did not resist being called a child of demons by the players, he had to be careful about the source of this title.

The moment he felt the power burgeoning from all corners within his body, he mobilized his Spiritual Energy to meticulously monitor every physical and mental change.

Fortunately... except for the rise in power itself, there were no other changes.

At that moment, Bai E, who had been meditating at the edge of the battlefield to restore his Spiritual Energy, suddenly opened his eyes—the keen Spiritual Energy "reported" several purposeful gazes slowly approaching from the distance.

Was it Yafei and the two other players?

Bai E, upon opening his eyes, understood their intent.

He looked at them with a bit of admiration because in his own visible appointment panel, the names of the three had already appeared on the list of potential candidates for the Infrastructure Department.

"It seems you have already achieved enough growth," Bai E said without waiting for them to speak. As they approached, he was the first to greet them.

"My lord..." Yafei gazed intently at Bai E, full of expectation.

"However, only one of you can be the official in charge of supervising the construction. Perhaps a choice must be made amongst yourselves."

This was something the three had not anticipated.

The three looked at each other, their eyes somewhat confused.

They had been excited about the prospect of becoming city officials together after working all night, but now...

After a moment of hesitation, Yafei calmly issued the command, "Wen Bo, you go."

"Boss?" Wen Bo felt somewhat embarrassed.

Although he wanted this rare opportunity, it was Yafei who had found it and led them to action; now...

Yafei's brow furrowed, her tone sounding a bit harsh, "If I tell you to go, then go! Why all this fuss?"

Wen Bo was not as steady as needed, and engaging in this kind of work was just the right thing to make him settle down. Yafei thought there was no problem with it.

"Yes... yes!" Faced with a now-serious Yafei, Wen Bo instantly agreed.

[You have invited "Wang Wen Bo" to become the head of the Infrastructure Department in your territory (Dawn Town).]

[The target has accepted your invitation.]

"There's more work for you all," Bai E said with a smile to the remaining two, including Yafei, after completing the appointment.

It was just a small test of his. Although he trusted players more, not every player could be trusted.

These three players, however, were worth using.

"The city is in ruins and needs more than just supervision over construction. Logistics and production areas also need careful attention..."

Yafei, who had been a bit dispirited, once again lit up, "My lord..."

"But first, you all need to master the relevant abilities..."

[Side Quest Triggered—Officer Training...]

Chapter 512 Explosion!

"The steel mill over there is being rebuilt. Who among you will go help?"

"Wen Yan, you go."

Wang Wenyan was a truthful person; letting him take control of production seemed quite appropriate.

"The supplies we brought are not overly abundant. The allocation for each person needs to be just right. Until we find a new stable source, we must tighten our belts. And even after we find a new acquisition channel, we can't waste resources at will. We must have enough control over the big picture."

"If the lord doesn't mind, I'd like to give it a try." Yafei volunteered.

Bai E chuckled and waved them off, "Go ahead, I await your good news."

Bai E was full of confidence in the players.

Although these guys were often unruly, when it came to achieving their goals, they were the most willing to work hard in the world.

Because... he was also a player.

After handing over the daily task qualifications that originally belonged to Kuang Xin and the others to these three players, Bai E waited with ease.

If these three players proved to be competitive enough, then the overall framework for the town's development would be basically established.

Before waiting for the good news to arrive, in order to prepare to teach these players, Bai E first leveled up his own skills. After all, how could he teach others if he didn't know it himself?

Basic Steel Smelting Process... maxed out!

Basic Parts Forging Process... maxed out!

Advanced Steel Smelting Process... maxed out!

Advanced Parts Forging Process... maxed out!

[Technology — Basic Steel Smelting Process (3/3 level): You have mastered the basic steel smelting processes and can forge most common ores. From now on, you can oversee the construction of steel production furnaces, producing most conventional steel and somewhat increasing production efficiency. Production rate +30%, and qualification to learn "Advanced Technology — Advanced Steel Smelting Process" unlocked.]

[Technology — Advanced Steel Smelting Process (1/1 level): You have mastered even more advanced steel smelting processes, capable of producing special high-grade steel with a small probability. From now on, there is a certain probability to produce advanced steel materials in the steel you smelt, with advanced steel completion rate +10%.]

[Technology — Basic Parts Forging Process (3/3 level): You have mastered the basic parts forging processes... Production rate +30%, and qualification to learn "Advanced Technology — Advanced Parts Forging Process" unlocked.]

[Technology — Advanced Parts Forging Process (1/1 level): More advanced materials require more advanced forging processes... The advanced parts forging completion rate +10%.]

These skills were all dropped from the smart machines last time, and once you have the skill books, you just need to spend the experience to unlock the actual levels, just like the "Knowledge — Firearm Maintenance" that I initially acquired.

The only difference is that these abilities are "technology", and according to Bai E's own understanding of technology and knowledge, technology can be mass-produced repeatedly, so the experience required for these skills is also far greater than knowledge.

Basic technology level one needs 1000, and to max out three levels in total requires 9000 experience points.

Advanced technology has only one level, which also requires 1000 experience, and maxing out all four technologies cost Bai E a total of 20,000 experience points.

Bai E upgraded the four technologies almost without hesitation, fearing that any hesitation would make him regret the hard-earned experience.

After all, it was a significant expenditure of experience; previously, Bai E was unwilling to use his universal experience to level up, and if not for having just harvested a large sum of experience from the players, even if he wanted to, he would be powerless.

But now, since he wanted to develop the force seriously, he either wouldn't do it at all or he would do it to the best of his ability.

Developing the town always required an initial core pillar industry, and steel was a very good business.

Black Street had received orders and he had the basic technology in hand.

Both external and internal conditions were satisfied, and starting with steel also offered considerable future development potential.

The basis of all modern facilities is steel; it's the steel that opens the possibility of building one's own Cosmic Legion.

As for parts forging, it was the foundation of development.

Being able to smelt qualified steel could only make one a merchant supplying "raw materials", but only a force that can utilize the steel can really develop and grow stronger.

One day...

Two days...

"Captain, we should head back." You glanced at the bustling construction site in the distance and then at the time on his wrist, reminding Bai E by his side.

They had been out for quite some time. Although the military camp offered a degree of flexibility in terms of the duration of special squads' missions, they couldn't stretch it too far...

If it went on much longer, it wouldn't be so easy to gloss over upon returning.

"I know." Bai E nodded, shifting his gaze from the pioneering players who were winding down from chasing various residual wild threats in the depths of the town's hidden corners.

After the initial two days of frenzy, the frequency at which players came to learn in the last half had dropped significantly.

The lack of monsters providing experience was one factor; having learned most of what they needed to learn was another.

Bai E didn't offer them all of his capabilities, only roughly equivalent to what the Faction Shop provided on the first and second floor, so Kuang Xin and the others wouldn't feel their previous efforts were in vain.

Chapter 513 Explosion!\_2

Seeing the small town's development progress past the initial chaos, Bai E was able to relax a bit.

His gaze swept over the panel, and the fruits of the past few days' labor appeared before his eyes—

[Battle Experience]: 27000

[General Experience]: 7364

[Faction]: Li Ming Town:

Infrastructure Department——Wang Wenbo: Construction quality +20%, Construction speed +10%;

Logistics Department——Yafei: Satisfaction Rate 95%, Resource Consumption -5%;

Production Department——Wang Wenyan: None.

A total of over fifty thousand experience points had been earned, and the officials of the three small town cities had also been appointed.

Everyone was playing their part, except for Wang Wenyan, as the head of the Production Department...

After all, even the steel factory itself hadn't been completely rebuilt yet; his title as the head of the Production Department was somewhat in name only.

He had put in the most effort in experience, and under his dedicated training, he had already learned Level 2 Basic Steel Smelting from Bai E, but was frustrated by the lack of practical experience.

That opportunity... it wouldn't come too late.

Bai E stood up, watching as the limited stationing period he had set for the players ticked ever closer.

He had a clear idea of when to leave, and he had even made it public to the players in advance. However, there was no need to go into detail with the native residents like You and others.

3...

2...

1...

Time's up.

Bai E turned decisively, his light voice drifting on the wind, "Let's go."

A player who had finally gathered enough experience to learn a new skill and had hurried over could only stand rooted to the spot as Bai E's figure receded, exclaiming, "Damn! Time's up!"

Time was up...

"We're leaving," Bai E said with a smile to the crowd that had gathered, including both natives and players, upon hearing the news: "But don't worry. We will come back. A brief farewell is just a part of life; we will meet again. And when we do, I'll bring surprises for you all, but I also hope you can accelerate the development here in our absence. I didn't lead you out of Grey Iron City just to live each day as it comes. The times are destined to change drastically by our hands, and I hope none of you lags

behind in this process. No one wants to live a life like a stagnant puddle of mud, I know I don't, and I assume neither do you. Ladies and gentlemen, farewell!"

"Upon our next meeting, I only hope to see all of you shining bright as candles, as lanterns, like the first glimmer of dawn lighting up this world. At the break of dawn, may we join hands."

'...'

'So in the Master's eyes, we are all useful.'

'The Master has such faith in us?'

'So, we're not just a bunch of unwanted trash?'

In the midst of the silent crowd, countless thoughts swirled.

As they watched the two vehicles leave, the silent crowd remained motionless, not stirring until the shadows of the cars disappeared below the horizon.

"From today on, I'll be someone useful to the Master," someone said, turning around with determination in their eyes.

"I don't know what the world needs from me, but I know what the Master needs from me."

"Be someone useful to the Master!"

["Lucky Strike" Charge +50.]

...

The vehicle shook, Bai E swayed freely.

Seeing the 50 skill charge points just added to his account, Bai E smiled.

247/100 now.

Enough for him to use Lucky Strike twice.

Damn that delicious meal machine! I'm finally coming for you!

The moment he had first seen that thing, Bai E had thought about blowing it up.

But until now, he had been tight on skill charge points, unwilling to spend them on anything unrelated to combat power before he had enough to ensure his own safety.

The recent battle with the orc war boss had given Bai E a clear understanding of his current strength.

Perhaps he still couldn't swagger across the entire planet, but in most head-on conflicts, unless he did something reckless, it was unlikely he'd find himself in any situation he couldn't get out of.

After resolving the issue of combat power, Bai E, who needed to focus on developing his influence, also needed to make certain investments in the growth of his power.

What is the most basic necessity for a group of people, even though a single person may manage somehow?

Food!

Eating!

Food is the paramount necessity of the people!

If they can't eat their fill, what will they use to labor? What will they use to develop?

Anxious to return, he raced back at breakneck speed.

Of course, to take care of the Kuang Xin squad of four following behind, Bai E expressly told Rose, who was driving, to slow down a bit.

Half a day passed in the blink of an eye, and the SUV slowly came to a stop on the drill ground.

The few people who got out of the car scattered in different directions.

"I'll go report," You was the first to say.

As a "veteran of two dynasties," she took the initiative to undertake all sorts of clerical-like work within the squad.

"I'm going to eat."

Bai E, embodying a glutton, headed straight for the canteen.

The canteen was sparsely populated, after all, they returned at a non-mealtime.

Looking left and right and seeing no one paying attention, Bai E quietly approached the porridge machine, a surge of Spiritual Energy coursing through his hands.

The tumultuous Spiritual Energy turned into a tangible impact, which, under the augment of "critical hit," was incredibly powerful.

The simple porridge machine was unaware of the sinister intentions of humans, and in a loud explosion, it was completely shattered to pieces.

The huge commotion drew the immediate response of the few figures in the canteen. Looking at Bai E, who stood beside the porridge machine looking equally "stunned," then to the shattered remains of the machine, these few figures fell into deep contemplation—

What kind of method of getting their food could have caused such a violent reaction from the porridge machine?

The alarm sounded, and the emergency response personnel in charge of the canteen were the first to arrive on the scene.

Looking at the porridge machine wreckage that seemed to have exploded without any trace of gunpowder residue, the emergency response personnel also fell into deep contemplation—

What exactly did the Logistics Department do to make a food-manufacturing machine into something akin to a "bomb"?

Although the world wasn't particularly peaceful, wasn't this technology a bit too much of a precaution?

"Are you okay?" someone asked with concern, looking Bai E up and down.

"I'm fine, I'm fine," Bai E said, shaking his head as if he had just had a narrow escape, even turning around to inquire about the well-being of the machine, "How's the machine looking?"

The young lady who cared about Bai E looked regretfully at the debris on the ground, "If there's no accident, this machine is probably scrapped."

"...Such a pity."

"...Such a pity."

[Acquired drops: Delicious Porridge\*250kg, Cooking Experience 500 points, Recipe: Delicious Porridge.]

Got it!

A recipe capable of providing ample nutrition was also a significant piece of knowledge in this era.

Bai E's face remained calm, but inside he was slightly delighted; indeed, the destruction of a porridge machine was nothing significant for a military camp, even if the scene of its demise was somewhat spectacular.

Stepping aside to a separate window, Bai E received his share of the "No. 3 slot bar."

Looking at the long pipe behind the window, Bai E's gaze filled with regret.

The No. 3 slot bar was obviously not made on the spot; this window was merely a distribution outlet.

Otherwise, blowing up the machine making the No. 3 slot bar would have been the real catch.

Stashing the No. 3 slot bar into his front pocket, Bai E looked at the panel which still had one trial opportunity left for the critical hit, then turned his gaze towards another victim...

"Commander, I want to visit the food factory in the city."

That's right, even though people normally eat "porridge" that's synthesized, the raw materials for porridge are still those naturally grown food ingredients.

In this harsh era, with such an overwhelming population in the cities, it was impossible to rely on limited land to harvest crops batch after batch. Industrialized greenhouse cultivation was the only way out in these times.

...

"Bang!"

[Acquired drops: Native Wheat\*5000kg, Industrialized Basic Cultivation Experience 2000 points, Technology: Industrialized Basic Cultivation.]

Chapter 514 Decision of Pursuit on April 22

[You have mastered "Technology — Industrialized Basic Planting," and you can now improve the technology level by investing "General/Scientific Research Experience."]

[Current "Technology — Industrialized Basic Planting" experience 2000/1000, continue paying "Technology Point\*1" to unlock "Level 1 Technology — Industrialized Basic Planting."]

[Payment: Technology Point\*1.]

[Technology — Industrialized Basic Planting (1/3 Level): You have mastered the method of large-scale planting of food and other crops in a limited space. From now on, you can guide your organization to create a perfect greenhouse for basic agricultural planting, with a plant growth rate of +100% and yield +30%.]

Got it!

But he was also politely "asked" to leave.

Whether it was because of Bai E that the central control core of the greenhouse was broken, this unexpected visitor signified trouble.

Satisfied, Bai E walked through the somewhat desolate barracks and returned to the tent of his own squad.

As soon as he arrived at the barracks, he heard a slightly mocking, frivolous voice, "Bai E and the irrelevant are not allowed inside."

Looking towards the source of the voice, he only found Rose with a clearly teasing smile on her face.

"I was just having a look..." Bai E said earnestly, changing the subject, "On my way back, why did I see so few people in the barracks, where did they all go?"

"The final big drill." You, who was hidden in the corner, suddenly spoke up to explain.

She was responsible for all the tasks related to the handover between the squad and the army and was sensitive enough to any activities in the barracks.

"Ah?" Stone lifted his head in confusion and voiced his puzzlement.

"The Military Department is preparing for the final battle against the Blackrock Bug Nest, so the drills for all soldiers in the barracks have intensified compared to before. Nearby threats have been mostly cleared, and now the army is divided into several teams clearing out the 'tentacles' that the Bug Race has reached out around the nest."

With recent multiple strikes against the Bug Race, the Military Department has gained sufficient knowledge of several new types of bugs that have appeared.

The cleanup of the bug nest must be successful, and the military's enthusiasm has never been higher than it is now.

"So we don't have much time left for free activities. When I accepted the mission just now, the officer said that we will only have seven more days at most, and then we must return to our respective combat units."

Bai E's squad was indeed a special unit, but Bai E and Rose, because of their uniqueness, were also the chief mech pilots of the Mech Armored Corps, the highest priority in the barracks.

A special squad without its captain and main force was in name only, on the frontline they could only coordinate with other special squads.

"Hmm..." Bai E frowned slightly.

The prelude to the great counter-offensive was not newly known, but it was only now that they had a definite time limit.

'Seven days, huh?'

It was enough.

One more trip to "Li Ming Town" would be enough to build all the basics for them.

He only hoped that during his back-and-forth travels, the natives would work hard enough to restore some of the key functional buildings of the town so that when he returned, he could immediately start building a modernized industrial food production system.

Quiet sounds filled the tent.

"I wonder if it'll succeed this time." Stone sat on his bed, mumbling to himself.

This was not only his thought but also a concern of the five people in the squad, and even everyone in the barracks.

It wasn't surprising that the Military Department made plans for a decisive battle; in this era, information was not transparent, there were no certain victories, only full preparations and then taking the fight as it comes.

But whether they could win, nobody knew.

Even if they won, the Blackrock Bug Nest was just the closest nest to the city, not the entirety of the Bug Race in this world.

Moreover, the Blackrock Bug Nest wasn't even the largest of the known bug nests.

Winning this battle did not mean the world would then be peaceful, nor that humankind would be safe from then on.

Bai E, who was more expectant on bigger things, certainly paid attention to more than just the present.

But the present too could not be taken lightly.

"We'll do our best," Bai E sighed softly, his firm voice dispelling the doubts among his teammates.

An individual's strength always seems minor on a large battlefield; in the end, one can only try their best.

In a barracks where almost everyone shouldered combat missions, the departure of a small special squad caused no ripples.

They simply returned to camp to follow procedures and take on a new mission, then hurriedly set off towards the developing wilderness ruins.

The small task they took on was... to clear automaton mining carts.

Mining areas are non-renewable resources in this world that all factions compete for.

However, from a racial standpoint, bugs and beastmen have little interest in mining areas; it is only the automatons and humans who directly clash over them.

The mining area is exploited in turns, generally in a cycle of clearing out mining spots and stealthily mining.

Especially now that human forces are mostly concentrated on the total offensive against the Bug Race, there is a severe shortage of armed forces in the mining areas, and one plea for help after another is sent to the barracks from the mining teams.

The military doesn't expect a small squad of five or six people to directly clear out large automaton mining spots, but the automatons have mining cart teams responsible for stealing ore; that is the target of Bai E's squad on this mission.

## Chapter 515 Decision of Pursuit on April 22\_2

The mining vein was located directly north of the city, where an expansive mountain range stretched endlessly, shielding against the Arctic chill winds from the north.

Beneath the entire mountain range lay innumerable types of mineral resources, which had been so extensively mined over the years that the shape of the mountain range had been permanently altered.

At times, a narrow gap was all that separated the towering ridges from the pitch-black abyss, with some parts of the mountain range combed into a series of neat and orderly trenches.

Finding the petty thieves who stole from the mines in such complex terrain was no easy task, but even a mission accepted on a whim needed to yield some results.

...

The off-road vehicle swayed over the gloomy terrain. Bai E sat by the window, gazing into the distance, lost in thought.

"What are you looking at?" Rose glanced from the rear-view mirror inside the car and asked curiously.

"Over there," Bai E lifted his chin slightly, "that's where we encountered Nova and the others."

Indeed, the journey from Blackwater City to the mining vein wasn't far from the last mission's objective: the signal station or the Intelligent Mechanism Base.

Both were to the north of the city, though the Intelligent Mechanism Base was a bit further to the west.

The distance that seemed minute on the map translated into something beyond sight in reality.

Although Bai E was looking in that direction, he actually couldn't see the familiar base.

Within that base, he and Rose had left behind the highest level of access privileges.

After their last mission, Bai E wondered if the military had dispatched forces to take over the place... or had it been recaptured by the Intelligent Mechanisms?

A thought flashed through his mind, and Bai E, raising an eyebrow, suddenly spoke, "Let's go have a look."

The vehicle took a sharp turn, maneuvering smoothly.

Rose immediately complied with Bai E's order without question, then asked, "What's up? Got a plan?"

At the start of their journey, they had discussed how to complete the "minor task" they had casually taken on, but according to the experience of others, it was all down to luck.

There certainly were mining thief squads, those Intelligent Mechanisms were more stubborn than anyone.

But whether they would encounter them, when they might do so, and the specific size of the group they might find all depended on luck.

If they had truly come out on this mission just for the sake of it, roaming the mountains and leaving it to chance would suffice.

But their real business was setting up their own enterprise in the town of Li Ming, and this task was just a front.

Matters unrelated to their main objective naturally should take up as little time as possible.

Given that Bai E had suddenly acted out of the ordinary, he must have had some idea of his own.

"Hmm..." Bai E narrowed his eyes and nodded.

A dangerous idea was brewing in his heart, growing more and more inflated.

If they were going to act, they might as well go big.

Since they were already causing trouble for the Intelligent Mechanisms, why merely settle for the hassle of finding a roaming thief vehicle?

Did he remember what he needed to obtain from the Intelligent Mechanisms?

Computing Power Resources!

With the acquisition of the virtual world, the virtual world's ability to replenish his magic during combat was truly formidable, but at the same time... the virtual world's demand for computing power resources was also essential.

Especially after the battle with the orc war boss, Bai E felt even more the suction emanating from within his soul... or rather, from the depths of his Sea of Consciousness, from the core of his Psychic Storage Space.

This suction was steadily increasing, and if he couldn't satisfy the other party's needs, Bai E did not know what the consequences would be.

Would it begin to consume his Spiritual Energy or even his soul? Or would it sever its connection with him completely, even if it meant being shattered and both suffering?

He didn't know, and Bai E certainly didn't want to wait to find out.

Moreover, he couldn't possibly reside indefinitely in the desolate area of the server ruins. Therefore, those crystal-like "Computing Power Resources" that only Intelligent Mechanisms could steadily produce were a must-have for him.

Where there were Computing Power Resources, there were bound to be Intelligent Mechanisms' constructs guarding it. When the time came, he could just take some battle footage and a few war spoils back to report, thus completing the mission and achieving two goals with one action.

So if the base from last time was once again occupied by Intelligent Mechanisms, then they would just have to take it down once more.

Even if those intelligent mechanisms hadn't reclaimed it, they could still feast on their own virtual world through that independent signal base station, easing the "hunger" that had been troubling them for so long.

After the off-road vehicle turned around, it took just over two hours to see the familiar exterior walls of the base station from a distance.

They had been in a hurry at that time and hadn't destroyed the intelligent mechanisms' infrastructure. Now upon returning, the bunker was still there.

The vehicle stopped next to a nearby rock pillar. Rose easily climbed up and, lifting the binoculars hanging in front of her chest, looked towards the bunker, "It seems no trace of intelligent mechanisms... nor of humans."

No one?

"No!"

There were people... or rather, signs of activity.

Tracks from caterpillar vehicles, fresh ones.

Bai E's pupils dilated again after contracting, and he leaped down from the several-meter-high rock pillar.

"Let's go, take it back directly."

The military clearly didn't have the spare forces to send a large guard presence here. The tracks from those caterpillars were identical to those of the intelligent mechanism transport vehicles they took out last time, indicating that the base station had once again fallen into the hands of the intelligent mechanisms.

But probably because they had suffered a heavy loss last time, the first-generation intelligent mechanisms were obviously extremely precious within their community, and thus the intelligent mechanism fortress's guard was now quite weak and had all shrunk back.

Playing a game of tug-of-war with humans was a bet on the humans being spread too thin, trying to put out fires everywhere.

This had become a traditional skill tacitly agreed upon between intelligent mechanisms and humans.

Bai E's squad, intent on recapturing the base station, charged in forcefully.

Last time, the enemy had a first-generation intelligent mechanism in command, and even their defensive force was extremely formidable. Plus, there was a traitor eager to turn on them.

Now the enemy was significantly weakened while their own strength was unimpaired, if not increased. Taking down a fortress guarded only by a few new-generation intelligent mechanisms was as easy as reaching into a bag.

They didn't even take the vehicle. Defying the intelligent mechanisms' artillery fire that signalled enemy detection, Bai E, alone with a war bug knife in hand, charged into the fortress.

Unlimited Spiritual Energy and a recently greatly enhanced set of basic attributes made Bai E like a true War God.

When the off-road vehicle caught up to Bai E, all it found were several blossoms of explosions in the air above the bunker.

Highest authority was still intact; even the intelligent mechanisms couldn't break through the technological barriers of the Golden Age from the lowest level.

Recognizing Bai E's arrival, the base station's gates opened automatically.

Inside the room... it was empty.

Only a small amount of blank crystal blocks calmly stacked in a corner.

The fresh tracks of caterpillar vehicles seen before entering the fortress flashed before his eyes, and images of the transport convoy filled with completed computing power resources leaving became as vivid as if he had witnessed them firsthand.

"A step too late..."

The finished products had already been moved out. Taking those blank crystal blocks was meaningless.

"How is it?" Rose was the first to rush into the base station, arriving behind Bai E.

Bai E narrowed his eyes, a dangerous glint flashing across his pupils.

The destination of the intelligent mechanism transport vehicles leaving was surely the Intelligent Mechanism Base they had speculated about last time.

If it was the Intelligent Mechanism Base... there would likely be even more computing power resources, right?

Bai E didn't want the hassle of dealing with these metal nuisances all the time, they were annoying enough without him seeking them out.

Moreover, he wasn't absolutely free in the city either. If he didn't store enough supplies, what would he do when the virtual world really reached the brink of "starvation"?

If he didn't act, he had to make it big!

Of course, his biggest source of confidence now was the nearly unlimited outburst of Spiritual Energy.

Bai E made a decision, "Let everyone rest for a while, and then we'll pursue!"

Chapter 516 Transfer Factory

Feeling the abundant information flow within the signal station, the "virtual world" in the Psychic Storage Space seemed like a shark that had caught the scent of blood, becoming restless.

After invisibly obtaining Bai E's approval, the flow of information transformed from Computing Power Resources merged into the void above his head as if it had substance right in front of his eyes.

Under the power of Heavenly Eye, no object could hide.

The voracious virtual world sucked in the computing power resources from the signal station with such greed that even the central control screen in the station stuttered at this moment.

Though the independent small signal station couldn't compare with the greatest masterpiece of human beings from the Golden Age, it was fortunate that the basic functions were still intact.

Many functions, unknown or unblocked even by the smart machinery that had occupied the place for a while, were aside from Bai E, who had the highest authority.

The central control screen was playing a video recording; the time was the day they had breached the signal station and then quickly fled.

The heavy rain fell chaotically in front of the camera lens, small puddles on the ground reflecting the moonlight in the sky.

The trembling earth made the camera wobble as the dark, metallic army approached slowly from a distance.

Smart machinery, having received the message of the fortress being attacked, indeed dispatched troops to reclaim it, but what awaited them was merely a silent base.

Fortunate to have fled early, Bai E felt a sense of relief after watching the footage.

Back then it was not like now; if they had really been caught by so many smart machineries, their squad would have been in trouble.

As his thoughts whirled, his mind continued forward with the video without realizing it.

After completing a full search of the entire fortress base, the smart machinery's army fell silent on the spot.

The number was much greater than the one seen this time...

Among them was even the figure of a colorful first-generation smart machinery; the slightly distracted Bai E did not notice an obvious fact, as only the sound of the rain in the recording tirelessly played on.

At a moment Bai E wasn't particularly focusing on, a group of figures clad in black raincoats abruptly appeared within the camera's field of vision.

"Da da da da da da!"

The sound of gunfire jolted the distracted Bai E back to reality, his eyes narrowing instantly upon seeing the scene on the screen.

Humans?

Humans clashing with smart machinery?

The battle was almost completely one-sided, with the newly arrived humans displaying terrifying combat prowess.

The occasional clashes of flesh against steel blades and even the hard resistance to smart machinery bullets rang out with crisp metallic sounds.

This familiar scene reminded Bai E of the modified human soldiers including Nova, from Grey Iron City.

The manner of combat of the black raincoat-clad humans in the recording wasn't much different from that of Nova's teammates; it was an open and direct confrontation, completely disregarding their own fragile bodies... perhaps their bodies were not fragile at all.

And as the black raincoated figures together drove away the first-generation smart machinery, they, too, stood silent like a group of robots, their gazes all focusing in the same direction.

A figure, even taller than the others in black raincoats, strode into view from beyond the edge of the recording.

"Find Number One!"

"Where are the people? Where are the people?"

...

"Where are the people! Find the people for me!"

...

"Doctor, we've searched everywhere, there really isn't..."

...

The doctor!

That's the doctor?!

Watching the man in the video, who was of an extraordinary stature but whose face could not be seen clearly, Bai E's gaze sharpened.

Nova was right; the doctor would indeed come looking for her.

The person had even pinpointed the last signal station where Nova appeared.

"Pause." Silently commanding in his mind, Bai E watched the screen freeze at the moment depicting the "doctor," a dangerous glint flashing in his pupils.

The other party... had roughly located the direction.

In the final moments of the recording, the direction pointed by the doctor to his subordinates in black raincoats... was towards Blackwater City!

Had he discovered it? Or was it just a guess?

The calm of the previous days had almost led Bai E to believe that the crisis involving Nova might have passed, but now it seemed that danger was merely brewing in the shadows.

But so much time had passed since that incident; if the other party had come to Blackwater City, why hadn't there been any news?

Such levels of interaction between cities should normally cause a significant disturbance, right?

Or perhaps... the other party had also infiltrated secretly?

Considering the skills of those in black raincoats, blending into Blackwater City and going unnoticed wouldn't be difficult for them.

The other party didn't want to alarm the official forces of Blackwater City and also hadn't confirmed his own identity or Nova's whereabouts?

"..."

Upon returning, he would need to ask Gilder to pay more attention to the surrounding area for any suspicious presence.

Even if the other party was powerful, as long as they were human, they couldn't escape leaving traces of daily life behind.

Clothing, food, shelter, and transportation—none could be avoided; the other party couldn't possibly bring endless supplies from Grey Iron City, and such a large number of people would inevitably impact Blackwater City's underground market.

They certainly could be found! If the other party really had come to Blackwater City, that is.

"What are you watching?" Rose's voice suddenly sounded from behind.

"Nova's situation... They've followed us here," Bai E stepped aside to let Rose see the video content he had been viewing.

Rose watched intently, her expression also becoming serious.

Chapter 517 Transfer Factory\_2

...

The combat methods of those in the black raincoats displayed on the screen had put considerable pressure on her.

Each of their skills was much stronger than the teammates she had encountered with Nova.

Picking any one of them for a one-on-one match, Rose could not guarantee an absolute victory for herself.

And the number of those black raincoats... The surveillance screen showed a limited view, the quantity was unknown, but it was known there had to be at least a hundred.

If these people were all enemies...

"Don't think too much," Bai E patted Rose's shoulder, "Let's go, it's time for us to set off."

Knowing the Doctor's existence just put an anticipated foe in the open, which did not affect their imminent operation in the slightest.

After about twenty minutes of "wolfing down," the virtual world also sent out a sentiment akin to "having eaten one's fill."

It was time to set out!

...

The off-road vehicle once again headed towards the unknown wasteland.

At the edge of the earth, the horizon quietly fell at the end of the sky, following the edge of the world, Bai E and the others gradually saw a stroke of black unlike anything ordinary.

The black machine oil was like a thick black quilt covering the land, the sticky and greasy sensation was sent clearly to Bai E's senses through the touch of the soles of his shoes.

"We're almost there," Bai E, getting off the vehicle and looking into the distance, squinted to try to see something farther away.

In the distance beyond sight, the pitch-black factory was rumbling on, day and night.

To the extent that the low-frequency high-pitch vibrations constantly affected the land beneath their feet.

The ground was full of numerous fresh "tire tracks" that all converged towards the same spot.

"Hide the vehicle," Bai E patted the door, signaling Rose to find a place to hide it, "I'll go take a look myself."

Intelligent mechanisms inherit technology from the Golden Age, and if humans inherited the very essence of human morality of the Golden Age, then intelligent mechanisms inherited the various cutting-edge technologies of that era.

They have outstanding techniques in reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance, and although cost reasons may prevent these technologies from being universally applied to every new intelligent mechanism, coming to a place like this that at first glance looks like a major base, there might be some unimaginable means to monitor the "outsiders" visiting.

Only by going alone and using the "Heavenly Eye" Spiritual Energy from Pansen could he slightly reduce the risk of being exposed prematurely.

"Understood," Rose softly acknowledged without any objection.

Watching the off-road vehicle head towards what was clearly a man-made but now abandoned shelter, Bai E then set off alone toward the distant base of the intelligent mechanisms.

All monitoring methods are essentially an exchange of information; the "Heavenly Eye" Spiritual Energy envelops Bai E, so even the reflection of light must have Bai E's consent.

This powerful stealth ability gave Bai E a great deal of confidence; the Spiritual Energy from Pansen was indeed very useful...

The land above was quiet, even the numerous transport teams coming and going seemed silent and lifeless.

The rumbling tremor emitted when the steel factory started up only made the vast steel factory seem even more quiet.

That's how cold and detached intelligent mechanisms are; lower grade intelligent mechanisms lack what is called self-will, while higher grade mechanisms that have thoughts similar to humans only transmit them through the mechanical connections established.

A large-scale transfer mining facility?

Bai E, who had been secretly observing from all angles for a while, concluded what role this factory played within the intelligent mechanism community, which was slightly different from his previous speculation when the information was vague.

Those so-called stolen mine carts did indeed transport all the collected raw material ores to this factory, but Bai E also saw many semi-processed, semi-assembled semi-finished products being transported collectively toward another direction by larger haul trucks.

Not only is human territory segmented into pieces by various forces on the planet, but the intelligent mechanism community also could not avoid this trouble.

Moreover, the raw computing power resources that were collected from the signal stations seemed to also undergo preliminary processing in this factory. Bai E, having boldly approached one of the large transport teams leaving the factory, sensed more active computing data inside.

A transfer station...

The scale was quite large, but not despairingly so.

The scale of the internal guard was unclear, whether there were intelligent mechanisms was also unknown, but... it seemed to match the preparations he had in mind before his arrival.

Bai E would not dare to take risks with a too-large intelligent mechanism base, taking his four teammates straight to it.

The sensation that the first-generation intelligent mechanism gave Bai E was still fresh in his memory, and Bai E believed that even if he encountered such weapons again now, he would still not escape the fate of being split in two.

...

And last time, there was only one original Artificial Intelligence, and Nova was tying it down with her full strength.

This time?

One or two could be attempted for a sneak attack to create the chance for a one-on-one fight, but if there are too many original AIs, the only option is to play cat and mouse.

Such a scale of the transfer station is not the core base of the AIs; there should not be too many original AIs stationed here, right?

It's worth a try.

The previous ideas were just ideas; only after preliminary reconnaissance of the target did those ideas start becoming actionable and capable of being carried out.

...

When seeing Bai E suddenly appear in the middle of the clearing within their consciousness, all the team members showed visible surprise except for Rose.

"Captain!?"

Bai E waved his hand, "It's okay, it's me."

"Captain, when did you learn this kind of stealth ability?"

"Not long ago," Bai E casually brushed it off. Even within his own team, he hadn't disclosed his ability to use Spiritual Energy. It's known that many secrets in this world could be leaked even if just one more person is aware, regardless of their relationship or personal credibility.

"The captain is so impressive!" Zero's eyes were full of admiration.

He was the team member responsible for sniping and fire support; insight was his strongest attribute. However, the sniper skilled in insight was unnoticed even as someone approached him; if this were on the battlefield, he would have been dead without a trace.

Professional gratitude brought relief; he was clearer than anyone else about the terror of his captain's ability.

["Lucky Hit" charged +5.]

"..."

"How did the observation go?" Rose took the initiative to change the subject for Bai E.

In her view, Bai E just walked back openly, but combining the other team members' surprise and her experience with Arbitration Place's special training, she generally understood what had happened.

Bai E definitely used Spiritual Energy to hide his presence without anyone realizing.

Not only had he used Spiritual Energy without announcing it, but she also had to cover for him... tsk!

Facing Rose's slightly disdainful look, a hint of apology flashed deep in Bai E's pupils—'Forgot~'

"A transfer station of moderate size," Bai E calmly uttered his observation, successfully diverting everyone's attention.

"Transfer station?"

"Yeah... it's just a factory the Als use for preliminary processing of raw materials, not their core territory."

Therefore, the defense might be strong, but it wouldn't be despairingly so.

"What do you plan to do?"

Bai E glanced over his team members and asked softly, "Shall we give it a try?"

All these ideas were his alone, unrelated to military orders.

Even though all these team members were those he could absolutely trust, Bai E never neglected their personal wishes.

"Whatever the captain says." Stone was indifferent, as if he had never once considered who the opponent was, so simple was his response.

"I'll strike wherever the captain asks me to." Looking calm and cool, Zero held a compliant smile towards Bai E; since the time Bai E had saved his life from the Praying Mantis' blade arms during the rookie trials, "Bai E" the captain was all that mattered under human righteousness.

"Click-clack." Without a word, You loaded the bullets into his usual twin submachine guns.

"Not in a hurry..." Bai E's lips twitched slightly as he pressed his hand down, "I called for some people, they're on the way. Let's wait for them before we start the operation."

On the way back, he had been considering this issue, which is why he forgot he was still using the "Heavenly Eye" Spiritual Energy.

If they could win, how would his five-person squad manage to take all those spoils of war?

Moreover, the AIs' counterattacks were always swift; waiting to call for reinforcements after taking down the factory would mean missing the opportunity.

Chapter 518 Yao Ren

In the distant town of Li Ming, Dai Lian suddenly received a message from the superior—"Coordinates \*\*.\*\*, there's a resource, come quickly."

As their own efforts and status in the organization grew, the devices they had on hand for contacting their superiors evolved from a one-sided signal flare to a more advanced communicator that was said to enable global communication.

The communicator supported the sending of brief messages, which, compared to the mobile phones they used in the real world of the players, was far inferior, but in this game world, it was a remarkable leap forward.

Now, it was the first call from the superior since he provided them with the communicator.

It wasn't a mission, but the superior's request couldn't be ignored.

"Brothers, there's work to do."

The giant spiders in the town were almost entirely wiped out due to the players' relentless pioneering activities throughout the night, and it was hard to find any living thing larger than a bacterium within the ruins of the town, other than humans.

The players who had just finished the intense and thrilling pioneering operation still felt some longing; after all, when had they ever seen such rapid progress coming from Grey Iron City?

When they were driven out of Grey Iron City, they endured mocking, but now, in less than a few days, they had made several times more progress than before.

If they returned to Grey Iron City, they would have to show off in front of those people.

It goes without saying who brought about all these changes, and now... that superior had once again issued a call. Could it mean that they had more benefits to gain?

"What are we waiting for? Let's go!" The players summoned were spirited.

They only resented that the only communicator capable of reaching the superior was in the hands of the archer Dai, not in their own.

"The superior wants us to move things, and it's far away. We need to prepare properly, and I'm telling you in advance just to give you a heads-up. Of course, if anyone has any objections, feel free to bring them up."

Dai Lian had interpreted the superior's message.

Resources? Does that mean manpower is needed to transport them?

And with the distance being far, the safety en route and the supplies needed also had to be well planned.

Organizing a large operation was completely different from their previous small team of three or four. As leaders of the organization, they had to consider numerous details.

"We need to take all the transport vehicles from the town."

"Should we bring those NPCs as well?"

"We can't take all of them, right? What if we encounter those orcs again?"

"What's there to be afraid of? Now that the superior needs manpower, let's take them with us. We are much stronger than before."

If they encountered those orcs again, aside from the orc chief, it was uncertain who would win.

The confidence from their newfound power was wildly inflated; fearless of the heights of heaven or depths of earth, players with a bit of power dared to challenge any Order.

"..."

Dai Lian tried to extract any useful suggestions from the noisy voices; in the game, players always had their own thoughts about everything and dared to express their bold ideas.

After analyzing comprehensively, NPCs should be brought along, but it's best to limit the number to the size of about fifty to sixty people, roughly equal to the number of players.

After all, the distance was somewhat considerable. Even if the players had greatly improved their strength, in this era no official NPC force would dare claim to freely dominate the wilderness; how then could those minor shrimps still growing up have their way?

Supplies should also be taken just enough for the round trip without error.

As for safety issues... they only need to be careful on the way there, as the return trip would likely be safeguarded personally by the superior.

And on the way... fight against those you can defeat, and rely on luck for the rest.

Then, with that... they set out!

...

"Let's go!"

Gilder patted the young man in front of him, one of the refugees who had returned to the city with him and his true confidant, "The superior has sent a message for all the vehicles from Black Street to be sent over. I'm entrusting you with this task—don't screw it up. And about your affairs... after this task is completed, I will bring them up with the superior. I know you want to grow, but we must not bring too negative of an impact to the superior."

The young man smiled brightly, "Of course, I understand. We are not ungrateful people. We will be on our way then."

"Go, go..."

"Rumble rumble..."

The convoy set out under the cover of night.

Black Street's development had been quite positive lately, particularly since securing a substantial order for steel, Black Street's conditions had visibly improved. Even the number of vehicles had increased—ensuring readiness for any urgent needs.

Therefore, upon receiving a message from Bai E, all of Black Street's resources could be mobilized in an instant.

Gazing at the taillights disappearing into the darkness in the distance, Gilder only then stooped his back and walked into the street.

He wasn't too worried about the safety of the convoy.

Within the convoy was a mysterious young lady specifically instructed by the superior; the superior's confidence assured her combat prowess would be enough to protect the convoy's safety.

But... did the superior mean to have the mysterious young lady stay away for a while?

Was someone eyeing Black Street from the shadows?

Who could it be?

Walking under the dim street lights, Gilder's murky old eyes shone with a sharp and frosty light.

Anyone coveting the superior's enterprise was unforgivable!

...

The tall figure that had left Black Street under the moonlight returned to a temporary base established in the sewers by his men.

"Doctor!" said the warrior in black leather, bowing, "We've spotted a total of seventeen vehicles leaving Black Street, heading northward."

"What are they carrying?" the Doctor asked gravely.

As an ordinary person mingling in Black Street, he couldn't know the "ins and outs" of Black Street's underworkings. No one here had any involvement with the steel industry; everyone was engaged in barely subsistence-level basic industries.

And yet, this small-scale power had provided him with substantial amounts of formed steel twice before, raising doubts about the true nature of Black Street's operations.

Now, a departing convoy from Black Street could perhaps reveal the true background behind it.

"Empty."

"Empty?"

"Yes, empty!" the warrior in black leather affirmed firmly, "The tracks were light; they were definitely empty."

'Could it be that these are the vehicles returning to collect the steel?'

It's possible, especially since he had urged his men to accelerate the steel orders.

So by following this convoy, perhaps they could discover the background that supports Black Street?

The Doctor's eyebrows, sharp as blades, furrowed slightly as he coldly ordered, "Send a small team of ten to follow and observe."

"Yes!"

Chapter 519 High-Dimensional Walking

...

"It's about time..." At daybreak, the morning sun had just risen from the horizon.

The first streak of milky white glow was cast equally upon every creature on earth.

Bai E peacefully opened his eyes and murmured softly.

He had called in people from both Black Street and the small town, but he did not expect them to join the battle.

The power of the Smart Machinery relative to ordinary people was too terrifying; even those players who had grown could not make much of a difference in this fight.

Bai E did not place his hopes on them; he only called them to take care of the aftermath and move the goods.

Thus, he couldn't wait for their actual arrival before launching the attack.

Rustling sounds emerged around, as everyone in the vehicle was making their final combat preparations.

It was undoubtedly a tall tale to directly assault a relatively large Smart Machinery Factory with the strength of a five-person squad.

But if their team leader led them, then all possibilities existed.

Bai E clapped his hands to draw everyone's attention, "There's not much to say, nor are there any tactical choices. The plan is simple, I'll go test the limits of those Smart Machines first. If the communication works, we'll use voice; if not, you'll have to play it by ear."

Tactics could only be discussed among individuals or groups with roughly the same abilities. However, other than himself, the rest of the team lagged far behind the guardians of the Smart Machinery, making any kind of tactics mere nonsense.

In this world, after all, only power was the real trump card.

As he spoke, Bai E single-handedly picked up a military Blast Shield and lightly hopped out of the vehicle.

His bold action made his blood boil so much that even the normally placid Spiritual Energy seemed to pulsate with excitement.

Bai E could feel the thrill in his body. Self-restraint also reminded him whether he should suppress these physical changes.

But Bai E didn't want to do that.

A certain degree of excitement was conducive to better performance.

Not to mention, in this world, there was the magical force of Spiritual Energy. Cold reason could indeed utilize the effectiveness of Spiritual Energy, but ardent passion often reflected the "miracles" of Spiritual Energy to a greater extent.

Watching Bai E's solitary figure recede, the four left in the vehicle looked at each other.

"I always feel like our captain is becoming less and less human..."

"Right... becoming more and more freakish."

One person rushing into a large Smart Machinery Factory—does that sound like something a normal person would do?

But that was exactly what their captain did...

And he didn't even use that wonderful "stealth" ability.

A drone released by Ling was trailing far behind Bai E, maintaining a distance where they could just barely ascertain their captain's fate. The technology of Smart Machinery was not something this era could compare with; getting too close would likely result in being detected by Smart Machinery before their captain.

The four inside the vehicle watched the small screen with bated breath. The lens trembled slightly, yet always focused on the tiny advancing speck.

Bai E's pace was neither fast nor slow, moving steadily toward the pitch-black factory like a normal march.

The trembling of the earth became gradually more distinct. The moment he crossed a certain boundary, Bai E's "Heavenly Eye" Spiritual Energy sharply detected a signal firmly locked onto him.

'Radar?'

As this thought flashed through his mind, a distant glimmer of firelight had appeared at the farthest range of his vision, not very bright under the morning sun but enough to catch attention.

The firelight quickly magnified and split into several different trajectories.

Missiles?

They really aren't being polite...

...

A thought flashed through Bai E's mind as his feet suddenly erupted.

The ground beneath him caved in violently, and his body was already shooting out in an instant.

"Boom!"

A series of small mushroom clouds merged into one after another, as human speed could never match that of high-tech weaponry.

Amidst the dust, the agile figure continued to surge forward.

"That's really tough..."

To withstand missiles with one's body, I must be mad.

Would I have dared to dream of such a day when I first came to this world? Yet the fact is, I have unconsciously reached this inhuman level.

Spiritual Energy lent an almost eternal protection to the Blast Shield in my hand, and the skill of Absolute Defense rendered my body as formidable as the terror of the elemental series alloy.

But Bai E, having avoided the core of the explosion, still felt surges of blood and energy.

This meant that if I truly stood still and withstood the missiles, my current level was far from sufficient.

But how many chances do you have to fire missiles?

The next moment, Bai E lifted his head.

In a glance, fireworks burst profusely before my eyes.

Countless warheads, trailing orange tails like raindrops, came at me so quickly I could only let out a curse of "Damn," before I had to immediately initiate Spiritual Energy and enter a special state—

High-Dimensional Walking.

What was originally a technique for combat in high-dimensional space could also be used to evade some attacks in the real world if applied well.

Spiritual Energy shifted as my form swiftly transitioned.

The real body turned into an elusive Spiritual Body and escaped into the vast and empty high-dimensional world.

Bai E had no time to admire the exquisite scenery of the high-dimensional world; the moment I entered the High-Dimensional Walking state, I sprinted towards a direction I had marked.

The connection between high-dimensional space and the real world is not absolute; the north in the real world and what the conscious spiritual body "perceives" as north in high-dimensional space could be two completely different directions.

Without an absolute sense of space and prior Spiritual Energy marking, a spiritual energy user might emerge from the High-Dimensional Walking state in unpredictable locations.

"Boom boom boom boom boom!"

A succession of explosions nearly leveled several centimeters of the ground, yet at the very forefront of the explosive dust, that agile dark shadow continued to run towards the factory at an undiminished pace.

Ling Zero, who spotted the captain's figure in the surveillance video, could only helplessly open her mouth wide, watching this incomprehensible scene unfold before her eyes.

Is the captain... still human?

["Lucky Hit" charge +12.]

"..."

Are all my team members my fervent little fanboys?

This thought passed through Bai E's mind before he noticed another round of attacks arriving.

The sinister-looking green warheads emitted an ominous aura; the extra-large warheads displayed a much slower trajectory and were not aimed at me.

"Boom!"

As the warhead hit the ground, the world went silent; a greenish glow radiated out in a form beyond vision, and Bai E abruptly felt his perception of the high-dimensional space being blocked by some barrier...

Chapter 520 Sweep

The sudden turn of events did not panic Bai E. Although military intelligence on AI was not exhaustive, they had recorded such basic information.

The Golden Age had conducted research on Spiritual Energy early on, and the spiritual energy practitioners from that era had evolved through a chaotic period of development, not all of whom were affiliated with human Federal Organizations. Therefore, there was no shortage of measures to deal with practitioners of spiritual energy.

As for High-Dimensional Walking, which could isolate physical damage from the real world, they had already developed methods to temporarily sever the connection between the high-dimensional space and the real world.

This "Dimensional Bomb" was one of the most violent solutions in their arsenal, and now, it was mastered by the AIs that inherited the technology of the Golden Age.

But it didn't matter. High-Dimensional Walking was not a critical ability among Bai E's many capabilities, and it had fulfilled its mission by unexpectedly avoiding a wave of heavy cluster bombings.

With this burst of speed, Bai E had already reached a point considerably close to the factory.

At this distance, if the AIs continued to launch powerful missiles, they would undoubtedly end up damaging their own factory facilities.

As expected, mechanical changes occurred instantly on the walls that were originally just dark steel barriers. Countless oil-slicked machine guns flipped out from below, revealing their ferocious true faces.

"Boom boom boom boom boom!"

The fire from numerous heavy machine guns blanketed the sky, and the dense barrage of fire blocked all of Bai E's dodging routes.

Even the bullets that missed and hit the ground instantly kicked up mud, and for a moment, the land around Bai E looked like waves in an angry sea, with countless specks of mud churning.

Amidst the densest center, the "clang clang clang clang" sounds of impact were nearly constant.

The metallic storm hitting the Blast Shield, strengthened with Spiritual Energy, sparked off noise like metal clashing, with sparks flying in every direction.

The occasional bullet that breached the Blast Shield's defense and hit Bai E was stopped by his skin, as tough as reinforced steel and iron.

Deformed bullet casings followed in Bai E's wake, strewn across the ground.

The shooting trajectories swayed and floundered in their efforts to catch up with the agile shadow.

Watching the terrifying battle unfold on the screen, the four people inside the transport vehicle were utterly stunned, with their mouths agape, at a loss for what to do.

If the dash out of the missile's aftermath had not yet left a deeply shocking impression,

"What should we do?"

"I have no idea..."

This kind of combat scene surpassed any situation they had previously encountered. The intense and thrilling battlefield left them clueless about where to begin.

Rush in together? They were not the captain, and upon entering, they would be shredded within minutes.

Just stand there watching? It felt wrong to let the captain charge into battle alone...

"Let's just watch..." Rose pursed her lips, making the decision for the group.

The battle situation was not something they were qualified to engage in. They would wait until Bai E had handled the major issues, and if there really was a need for support or clean-up afterward, that would be their time to step in.

["Lucky Strike" +12.]

The fanboys were powering up.

Bai E was also powering up.

His will was concentrated to the extreme, and the veins on his forehead seemed about to burst.

The bullets appeared to be fighting against his Blast Shield and his body, but when they struck the two augmented by Spiritual Energy, in essence, they were contending with Bai E's spiritual energy.

As long as the attack level was below a certain threshold, the basic enhancement from spiritual energy was enough to cope, not yet reaching the "superior" level.

But when the attack exceeded the skill's basic enhancement, any additional resistance would shift to rest on Bai E's spiritual energy.

The power of spiritual energy was the power of will.

All the bullets striking him were as if they were hitting his soul directly.

Willpower would eventually weaken; even the most resilient soul would gradually languish under relentless assault.

Even if the consumed energy could be quickly replenished by the virtual world, the quality would gradually decline to the point where it could no longer protect against the invading bullets.

He couldn't let the machine guns keep firing at him! Although they weren't breaking through his defenses for the moment, the impact from the bullets still prevented him from moving forward quickly.

The continuous, non-stop impacts were even more troublesome than the bombardment of missile clusters.

The distance to the steel barrier seemed just two to three hundred meters, but if he continued to tangle with these bullets, that short span might become an insurmountable chasm.

The thought of testing his limits ceased there, "Heavenly Eye" Spiritual Energy, activate!

The power of spiritual energy was no longer confined to himself and the objects he held. A gray fog instantly spread, enveloping a certain range around Bai E.

Although it was far from the range of the original owner, the same spiritual energy in the hands of an assistant or a charge warrior could yield entirely different results.

The moment Heavenly Eye Spiritual Energy unfolded, all the bullets within the domain became clearly visible to Bai E.

Within this domain, no change in detail could escape his "eye".

While the bullet screen was dense, they did not all arrive at the same time.

There were actually significant gaps between them. However, in the blinding speed of a normal barrage, it was difficult to find an opening.

But within his own domain, everything became actionable.

Not to mention that "Heavenly Eye" was not just for "observation." Everything within the domain would also be controlled by Bai E's will.