

Wow 631

Chapter 631: asking for help

At the close of the meeting, Bai E saw a familiar figure approaching him.

Caesar.

The handsome, melancholic man who had intended to vie with Weslin for the position of marshal of the military district.

"Congratulations," the man said with a sincere smile on his face, "General Bai E, the security of the city will be relying heavily on you from now on."

"?" Bai E narrowed his eyes, but said nothing.

The other man was proactive in his attitude, ready to explain any queries.

As long as he did not make a statement, the power and leadership would always be in his hands.

Aglaya, observing this exchange, smiled with a knowing look, "So, you know General Bai. No wonder your men suddenly stepped up to speak."

Was Caesar the head of the city's security forces?

Then why had he claimed to be from the Spiritual Power Managers Center before?

As this question flickered through his mind, Caesar explained with a smile, "Before taking my position with the security forces, I was a registered spiritual energy user at the Center. And to be honest, my identity in the security forces was nothing to be proud of when I first met General Bai."

His tone held self-deprecating humor, and he had a more likable presence than Weslin... If not for his initial impression, Bai E felt he would have a good opinion of him.

"So, you have been promoted now?"

Caesar shrugged, "Just yesterday..."

Aglaya looked at him with an appreciative gaze, "Caesar has worked hard, always struggling on the front line against those battling gangs."

Unlike Weslin's meteoric, helicopter-style rise to marshal, Caesar's ascent was purely the result of fighting his way up with his own two hands.

Or perhaps... it was also partly compensation for the inability to support Caesar's bid for the marshal position of the military district?

Caesar's gaze, warm and intense, was fixed on Bai E, "General Bai, I'm not one for pleasantries. Please take what I say to heart."

Aglaya's eyebrows furrowed, confused, "What's the matter? Has the security team encountered many troubles lately?"

Caesar shook his head with a wry smile, "Not now... but soon."

"Soon?"

"The intentions of those old men couldn't be clearer; they're just waiting for us to make a mistake." Caesar stripped the playful expression from his face, his countenance became earnest and grave, "If the crime rate in the city remains high post-castle dismantling, if vicious incidents keep happening incessantly, making everyone feel at risk, how do you think public opinion will be swayed?"

Aglaya squinted her eyes, her gaze sharp, "They wouldn't go that far, would they?"

"Go that far?" Caesar let out a cold laugh, "What's stopping them? If they can spout platitudes like 'Political wisdom is about fulfilling some human desires while ensuring overall benefits,' what's there they wouldn't do?"

"..." Aglaya pursed her lips, her demeanor cold and stern, "What do you plan to do?"

"In the coming period, the enemy's counter-attack will undoubtedly be the fiercest. The battalions they support will surely execute their will, and other autonomous battalions may take the opportunity to stir up trouble. Fires will break out all over the city, and just relying on our security team's regular size won't be enough to respond promptly to crises everywhere. Now that Weslin is unconscious, General Bai, you are the military district's highest spokesperson. I hope that you can provide timely assistance when our security team is short-handed. As long as we can withstand their immediate backlash, they won't dare to completely tear off the facade."

The city is too vast, and the armed level of combat is low, our opponents are also our own kind.

There's no need for an institution like the Heretical Arbitration House, which targets demons, nor for elite forces like the Mechanical Court. What is needed is a vast number of ordinary armed personnel.

In the city, apart from the security teams, only military barracks could provide large-scale conventional arms.

Bai E stared into Caesar's eyes, where only sincerity and openness could be seen.

"I'm not familiar with this matter and dare not make a decision rashly. I need to go back and discuss it with other generals before I can give you an answer," Bai E said.

"Then I'll await your good news," Caesar replied with a slight smile. "I believe that anyone who cares about the safety of the city would not sit by and watch this chaos unfold. The generals in the military district should also understand the implications behind this."

"Hmm."

"Your military district suffered heavy losses on the last expedition; I'm not sure how the recruitment has been replenishing the ranks lately. In fact, it was common practice to draft criminals who caused trouble in the city into the military."

Humans may fight amongst themselves, but that's as far as it goes.

In the barracks, the only enemies are alien races like insects and orcs.

No human could defect to such alien races. If convicts wished to redeem themselves, they had to be fiercer than anyone else on the battlefield.

"Thank you for the reminder, but as I just mentioned, I'm not clear about these matters. Marshal Weslin is not here, and I need to discuss with other generals before I can make a decision," Bai E said.

"Alright, then I won't disturb General Bai any further," Caesar said.

Caesar retreated with a smile, efficient and without delay.

Watching Caesar leave, Aglaya dropped her smile and admonished Bai E with a serious face, "I can't see through Caesar either, so you should weigh his words carefully. The generals in the military district may not be far-sighted sages, but they are probably quite familiar with the intricacies of these matters. You can listen to their opinions. If you still feel uncertain about making a decision, you can come and ask for my opinion after gathering all the information. Now, let's go. Didn't you say you wanted to see how the survivors were doing? I'll take you there."

Being an artificial human seemed to naturally grant one the benefit of being considered a "blank slate" with pure thoughts by all those who came into contact with them.

Even a high-ranking spiritual energy user like Aglaya instinctively felt at ease and close to them.

...

"How much longer do we have to be locked up?"

"Didn't they say they've already done the inspection? Why haven't they let us go yet?"

"I'm dying of impatience! Dying of impatience! Dying of impatience!"

A group of players whined as they were locked up in a specially designed cage.

Caged together with them, a woman with a scorpion tattoo between her brows couldn't understand how these guys could be so carefree.

Having witnessed the invasion by high-level multidimensional demons, she would have begged the City Arbitration Office to conduct dozens more checks on her to ensure she wasn't compromised.

But what about these people?

All they think about is escaping?

So, the demon invasion that just happened before your eyes didn't have any sobering effect on you at all?

"It's them, if there are no issues, let them out," a voice called out from a distance.

The moment he heard that familiar voice, Kuang Xin excitedly leaped up and exclaimed, "It's the superior!"

Chapter 632: Wild Ambition

"Let's go, you're safe now,"

With the endorsement of the popular rising star General Bai E, several ordinary survivors, already deemed unproblematic, were easily let go.

After saying goodbye to Aglaya, Bai E took them to a deserted corner outside.

Unable to be in several places at once, he had a mission in mind for these players.

"My lord!"

Kuang Xin looked at Bai E with fervent admiration, as other players had recounted to him once again the General's impressive performance in the battle at the castle.

An all-out slaughter.

They had been growing, but since Bai E appeared before them, his achievements in battle became more and more exaggerated with each account, seemingly outstripping their growth by leaps and bounds.

It even led some to wonder who exactly was the player here.

"Mhm," Bai E responded indifferently, looking at the group of players staring at him, his eyes reflecting a hard-to-define turmoil.

All that he had seen in the city council had brought Bai E's frustration to a peak.

The dirty dealings could be openly discussed as if there were no line between people and objects in their eyes, as if everything in the world could be measured in terms of gain. Was there any point to the existence of such a city?

Having been exposed to the core of the city's upper echelons for the first time, Bai E felt waves of nausea from deep within.

Never before had his desire to control the city been so intense.

And then Caesar's proposal sparked a wild thought in Bai E's mind.

Caesar's suggestion that he should lead troops into the city, was it to quell the growing human disasters, or to initiate a grand revolution?

Who knows?

He could only hope that the so-called nobility's stirrings of unrest would be slow enough, slow until he was sufficiently prepared to, under the guise of quelling unrest, overtly send troops into the city.

Slow until he could first establish tight connections with the various power groups within the city so that they wouldn't instantly react and obstruct his movements at the start of the revolution.

To achieve this, first and foremost, he needed to gain control of an army that was entirely loyal to him and powerful enough.

Black Street? Being just ordinary folks, they were only good for passing on some information and conducting basic transactions, but not much else.

The town of Li Ming? As outcasts of Grey Iron City, it wasn't easy for them to enter the city, and it wasn't realistic to fully arm them and turn them into a reliable military force in a short period.

What remained... was the military barracks.

It was not good to recruit and he had no intention of recruiting natural born humans.

The main policy set by the barracks was to intensify the production of artificial humans for use as disposable cannon fodder in the next campaign against the insect nests; thus, artificial soldiers would definitely make up the main body within the barracks.

Artificial soldiers were, of course, loyal to humans, loyal to the city, but not necessarily loyal to the current city lord.

The Genetic Prohibition didn't have a mechanism to spell out loyalty to such a degree; the growth of artificial soldiers still required post-birth guidance.

Would it be to guide them to become selfless cannon fodder for the city, or would it be to let them fight for themselves, becoming the new wave that changes the city?

While Weslin was unconscious, the initiative was in Bai E's hands.

Not to mention, Bai E also held a certain capital to rewrite the prohibitions.

Inheriting the technology of his predecessors certainly didn't allow one to break their restraints, but Bai E could choose to add a personal worship alongside the loyal human subject.

The current city lord hadn't done so because he didn't have the time to frequently show his face in the barracks.

He was unable to trigger and reinforce that impression of worship, but Bai E... could.

Of course, the tasks left for the players were certainly not limited to that, but rather... training.

Let Dai Lian train their archery skills.

Let Kuang Xin train their physical skills.

Let Gu Lan train their affinity with Spiritual Energy.

Let Gong Yan train their special skills in bandaging and medical care.

The natives weren't fools; they had their own learning systems.

Having both learning and teaching interaction templates, maybe the players had them too.

It just lacked an incentive to trigger it, Bai E thought he might try, so he began crafting tasks.

"There are some things I plan to have you do."

[Auto-generating commission description...]

[Side quest—Dawn! (Resource-type Commission): Your monarch is plotting a groundbreaking feat. To ensure the power to initiate this upheaval, you must first build a trusted and valiant army for your monarch! Now, you have all been granted the "Teaching" authority, allowing you to impart everything you've learned to those in need. Dawn... is approaching!

Quest requirements: Teach all the abilities you command.

Quest reward: Each successfully taught individual grants progress, and you will also receive feedback on your abilities (rewards issued on a tiered basis.)

(Note: "Auto-complete" allowed; "Authority" and "Expenditure" will be deducted and locked upon confirming the commission.)

[Would you like to issue this commission?]

Bai E scrutinized it carefully, saw no apparent issues, and agreed to issue it.

[Confirmed for issue!]

At the moment the quest prompt sounded, every player was invigorated.

Dawn!

That was the name of their organization.

The monarchy of their organization, namely their own lord, was finally ready to initiate a tumultuous campaign?

Accept accept accept!

Wen Jie, also brought along, looked utterly perplexed. Do I get a part in this too?

With a smile on his face, Bai E looked at the group of players before him, "The only people I can trust are you. I will specify the targets that need teaching in due time. Whether our cause can ultimately succeed will depend on you!"

"We will not fail the trust you've placed in us!" Several players were ablaze with enthusiasm, filled with excitement.

Being part of the force driving major events in the game, they all felt an unparalleled thrill.

And the words in the quest were clear—monarch.

Who could be called a monarch?

Did it mean that after this battle, they could become revered elders of a newly founded nation?

Geez!

Our lord is awesome!

[As the leader of a power, your bond with the members of the organization has strengthened. Sociology +5]

[Sociology +8: The population under your governance feels a stronger sense of identification with your identity. Commission authority content has been upgraded—Basic combat-type commission authority for a single experience quota has been increased to: 50~450 points, authority for daily experience quota has been increased to: 50~1700 points; Basic resource-type commission authority for a single commission has been increased to: Science research experience 0~200 points, authority for daily commission quota has been added: Science research experience 0~450 points. (Effective upon issuing new commissions.)]

Chapter 633: Harvest

"Additionally, I wonder how far you've come in understanding what you've learned recently?"

The city had granted me access to all of the Spiritual Energy secrets, which meant that in the time to come, I would have to deal with things I had never touched before.

Everyone thinks they're a genius, but only I know I'm not.

Without the aid of experience to assist learning, I am nothing.

After the battle at the castle, my reserve of experience was left with just over nine thousand but less than ten thousand points. If I do not regain some from the players, Bai E would have no clue how to learn those Spiritual Energy secrets.

Bai E clenched his fist, "I think a test is also necessary to make sure you truly have the ability to teach others."

It wasn't long before the players lay in a heap in front of Bai E.

The perverted Kuang Xin still wanted more, only to be knocked out with a slap from Bai E.

"All these days, your strength hasn't improved at all!"

Dai Lian clutched his chest, feeling stifled, and gazed at the adult in front of him with resentment on his face.

'Brother, it's not that we're not trying, it's just that you're too abnormal.'

Their strength, whether among the natives or the players, was considered to be at the very top in terms of progress. However, when facing Bai E, they were like helpless chicks, completely at his mercy.

Apart from Kuang Xin, who had managed to gain a little progress in hand-to-hand combat, the rest were easily overpowered.

As Meng Meng hugged Bai E's thigh tightly upon waking, "My Lord, we are so eager to progress, please teach us some new skills!"

"Hmm," Bai E hummed in response, which was exactly his intention.

After going through his own abilities, Bai E found more that were suitable for teaching—

[Skill — Boon of Release (Requirement: Mastery of Combat Specialization Level 4), Price — Basic Instruction: 100 points of influence contribution.]

[Skill — Firepower Suppression (Requirement: Mastery of Light Firearms Specialization Level 4), Price — Basic Instruction: 100 points of influence contribution.]

[Feat — Overlord's Grasp (Requirement: Mastery of Heavy Weapon Specialization Level 4), Price — Basic Instruction: 100 points of influence contribution.]

[Feat — Sky-Shattering Strike (Requirement: Mastery of Heavy Weapon Specialization Level 4), Price — Basic Instruction: 100 points of influence contribution.]

[Feat — Weapon Master (Requirement: Mastery of at least three types of weapon specializations up to Level 4, and possession of at least one skill from each of the three weapon specialization trees), Price — Basic Instruction: 200 points of influence contribution.]

[Feat — Fury's Tide, Price — Basic Instruction: 150 points of influence contribution.]

[Unlock the choice for the next tier of exchange items after "four times" unlocking from the current tier, stay tuned...]

Taking into account that there were almost no abilities suitable for Spiritual Energy practitioners in the third tier of the exchange store, Bai E added two practical abilities to the third tier—

[Skill — Blade of Magic (Requirement: Mastery of Light Weapon Specialization Level 4), Price — Basic Instruction: 100 points of influence contribution.]

[Skill — Dance of Agility (Requirement: Mastery of Light Weapon Specialization Level 4), Price — Basic Instruction: 100 points of influence contribution.]

Considering that if players ever possess amazing personal expertise, and all the skills I can provide are already known to them, yet they still wish to unlock the store to see what is available at the higher levels, Bai E made all of the specialization abilities he mastered available in the store, though it was more of a makeshift effort.

One must completely learn to the first level.

50 points of influence contribution are required to go from level one to two in the first-tier store, and 100 points of influence contribution are needed for level three to four in the second-tier store. The exchange continues at an equal ratio of two levels per tier store and 50 points of influence contribution.

Kuang Xin was the first to signal excitedly, "My Lord, I want to learn! My Lord, I want to learn!"

"What to learn?"

"Overlord's Grasp, Sky Lifting Strike, Weapon Master, Fury Torrent..."

Kuang Xin wanted to learn all these abilities.

Unfortunately, the influence points he had accumulated recently were not sufficient for him to learn all the abilities thoroughly, so he had to choose some that were more suitable for his current needs and learn those first.

After several days, Bai E finally managed to completely harvest the experience from the players.

That wasn't to say it was completely harvested, of course, as without enough influence points, the experience couldn't be utilized.

In this game, everything required a process, not just a simple click of the buttons to achieve instant success.

Even if Bai E had the time to interact with every player, collecting all of their experience was not an easy task.

Instead of being distracted by collecting all around, it was better to focus on cultivating some core members he believed in.

["Teaching" ended, you have obtained a total of 72,000 combat experience points and 3,000 general experience points through the "Teaching" feedback.]

It was clear that the players had been diligent and hardworking while he wasn't supervising them, accumulating a lot of experience and making significant contributions to their own development.

Watching the adult leave, Dai Lian and others looked at Kuang Xin and asked in some confusion, "Why are you learning such a mix of messy abilities?"

They were also present during the teaching.

Those not in teaching mode certainly couldn't immerse themselves in learning with experience, but at least they knew what the adult was teaching.

The things Kuang Xin learned were suspicious and disorderly—Blessed Release, Sky Lifting Strike, Strong Shot, Gun Fighting Skill.

He learned one skill from each of four different specializations.

Gu Lan tugged at Kuang Xin's sleeve, asking curiously, "When did you get Light Firearms Specialization and long-range weapons to Level 4?"

You can't learn skills under a specialization if it's not at Level 4.

Heavy Weapon Specialization and Combat Specialization Level 4 were common knowledge, as Kuang Xin's main specializations, and he had long since leveled them up to Level 6.

But as for the other two specializations, he hadn't been seen using them at all since he got past the initial newbie stage.

"Yeah!" Dai Lian frowned at Kuang Xin, "Don't bite off more than you can chew."

With limited experience gained, if you just dabble a little here and a little there in specializations, ending up without a single competent skill, that would be a joke.

After all, at their stage, when facing some big bosses, it's only when each person plays to their strengths that they can pose an effective threat to the boss.

Only Gong Yan was staring at the smiling profile of Kuang Xin, feeling that something was off.

Ever since the castle incident, Kuang Xin had become particularly active upon returning.

Amid the surrounding chatter, Gong Yan asked casually, "Tell us, what benefits did you get when the adult saved you?"

"Not much... just ninety thousand experience..." Kuang Xin eventually couldn't hold back any longer, his grin splitting his face.

After he defeated those monsters transformed from the three "slaves", the unimaginably generous experience almost drowned him.

He couldn't use it up! It was simply too much to use!

Chapter 634: Spiritual Power Managers Center

...

Bai E, having gained enough experience, finally had the confidence to step through the gates of the Spiritual Power Managers Center.

Theoretically, all spiritual energy users in the city needed to be managed by this center, even the enforcers from the Arbitration Place were theoretically required to return to this place periodically for a variety of checks related to spiritual energy, providing important baseline data to deepen humans' understanding of spiritual energy.

But over time, most spiritual energy users with other identities generally did not adhere to this rule.

Yet, the Spiritual Power Managers Center remained the absolute core institution representing the highest achievements and frontier results of spiritual energy users throughout the city.

The library housing all secret spiritual techniques was located in this place.

With city secret order permission, Bai E had unobstructed access, and Aglaya personally met with him, leading him to a dark building within the center's underground.

"This is your first time here, before we take you to the library, we need to conduct a comprehensive investigation of your spiritual energy, it won't take much of your time, but it's a necessary procedure,"

What Aglaya did not fully explain was that the entire research center was quite interested in Bai E's spiritual energy.

The fact that an artificial human possessed spiritual energy was already an incredible matter to them, let alone an artificial human who had done many things with spiritual energy that normal spiritual talent users found difficult to achieve.

Bai E could learn the Exorcism Magic Circle, a secret technique difficult for normal people to master, just by watching half a demonstration, and if this extraordinary comprehension did not involve some factor of spiritual energy but relied solely on personal talent, they were skeptical of that as well.

This case was extremely rare in the history of human spiritual energy development, and nobody was not curious about what kind of properties such a spiritual energy user's energy actually had.

Technology and spiritual energy achieved perfect harmony at the Spiritual Power Managers Center.

Standing in a small room, Bai E could feel the various tendrils of spiritual energy touching his own.

"Relax, freely extend your spiritual energy, just like in meditation," Aglaya's voice came from the speakers in the small room.

Bai E hesitated, then chose to follow the instructions.

Of course, his hesitation was about which spiritual energy attribute to display.

His original spiritual energy attribute was neutral, with no particular leaning, while the spiritual energy attribute he learned by mimicking Pansen was "Heavenly Eye." Showing which attribute was a choice for Bai E.

After a moment of thought, Bai E decided to showcase his own spiritual energy.

Pansen was a registered spiritual energy user at the Spiritual Power Managers Center, and the center probably had quite exhaustive data on his spiritual energy.

If he displayed the same attribute as Pansen, the difference between the two would be too great, which could lead these people to doubt their lives... or doubt himself.

It's better to give them a spiritual energy attribute they have completely never seen before, to potentially make them accept all the unreasonable behavior.

As Bai E aimlessly unleashed his spiritual energy tendrils, their wills began to communicate.

Aglaya's voice continued, "Keep releasing, don't stop."

Most research on spiritual energy could be quickly recorded during contact, but to test the limit of energy retention, one must see the limit of the spiritual energy user's release.

The higher the rank of the spiritual energy user, the slower this process.

With Bai E's previous exaggerated performance, many suspected that his level of spiritual energy had actually reached the third tier or could possibly be one of the only two examples of the fourth tier in the entire human empire.

As the process of probing the limit progressed, the first phase contact report had already arrived in the hands of Aglaya and others.

"How is it?" A middle-aged man with silver at his temples but still a vigorous bearing leaned over to inquire.

There were several influential figures in the entire center, and Aglaya was just one of them, even the youngest and least experienced.

They all came to witness the first study of Bai E's spiritual energy.

Without a sound, a look of puzzlement appeared on Aglaya's handsome face.

The man peering in from the side also saw the words on the report: Tier—Second Tier.

The quantity of spiritual energy needs to touch the limit, but the quality is a static thing.

No one can easily change the essence of their spiritual energy.

If the energy of a first-tier spiritual energy user is like air, then the energy of a second-tier is like steam, and a third-tier's is like actual liquid.

There is a clear boundary between each, and there has been no ambiguous case to date.

This test has never been wrong...which means that Bai E is truly a second-tier spiritual energy user?!

"How could a spiritual energy user of this level learn the Demon-Expelling Grand Array?"

"Kiro Lan is also a second-tier spiritual energy user."

"But his performance is not on the same level, okay? And how could a second-tier spiritual energy user withstand the consumption of the Demon-Expelling Grand Array?"

"Perhaps he's a special 'wartime' spiritual energy user?"

In the empire's long history, even the most special cases have occurred.

In the previous study of Bai E by Helen, there was a description related to this—Bai E seemed to be able to sense the remaining unwilling wills of other warriors nearby.

Will can transform into spiritual energy; in any place where human will surges, the performance of such spiritual energy users would be quite terrifying.

Chapter 635: Spiritual Power Managers Center_2

...

Even his own surging will could quickly transform into Spiritual Energy, as long as his anger was unquenchable, the flow of Spiritual Energy would not cease.

"That's not right, though... If he's just a second-order Spiritual Energy user, shouldn't he have reached his limit by now?" Someone looked toward the figure in the surveillance video.

Even "wartime" Spiritual Energy users couldn't just suddenly become inflamed with passion during such a safe and harmless check period, right?

"There have been some cases in the past where users possess amounts of Spiritual Energy that exceed the limits of their tier but have yet to advance. There are quite a few such examples."

Those kinds of Spiritual Energy users are generally failures.

Their unique psychic worlds allow them to hold a large amount of Spiritual Energy, but their limited aptitude prevents them from breaking through to the next level.

But even such accumulation would at most slightly exceed their tier's limit. If the maximum capacity for a second-order user is 1000, then an increase of 50% to reach a storage of 1500 is already an exaggerated case.

Would Bai even be like that?

"Moreover... his Spiritual Energy attribute is also very strange."

"None?"

Or rather, undetectable?

Having no specific leaning in Spiritual Energy means having no strengths.

In this world, uniqueness is the advantage.

Lacking uniqueness means lacking advantage.

"Where exactly does his Spiritual Energy come from?"

"The cultivation sects are not the methods of our Human Race."

Any method of cultivation would form habits and create identifiable characteristics.

Bai E's performance... was completely unlike anything they had ever seen before.

"But it's not the method of the Elf Race either."

The only known races capable of actively cultivating Spiritual Energy methods, aside from humans, are the Elves.

And the Elf Race's method... humans can't even use it, right?

"Or could it be just an instinctual operation?"

Bai E had no instruction, and even when discovered, it was only after his Spiritual Energy had already become as powerful as it is now. How had he managed all this time until then?

His application and exploration of Spiritual Energy must have all come from instinct.

"It's possible."

Watching Bai E, who kept testing his limits without ever seeming to reach them, an elderly woman with a low voice speculated, "No-attribute Spiritual Energy may allow him direct communication with higher-dimensional space, and his body is merely a conduit for the emergence of Spiritual Energy. Could this be why he has an endless supply to use?"

"But such people... don't they usually become vessels for demons among humans?"

"..."

Turning oneself into a channel, only those completely controlled by demons, the crazed believers, would do so.

This question truly exceeded everyone's cognitive limits.

"There will always be situations on the path of Spiritual Energy that we have not encountered before. Just record them; speculating too much is of no use."

Only with a sufficient number of cases can a unified analysis be conducted. With only Bai E as a case, comparative analysis is not possible.

"True... Instead, let's see how long he can hold on."

"Even crazed believers who turn themselves into conduits for demonic power have their limits, right?"

Otherwise, if the four ultimate Evil Gods found a channel, wouldn't they be able to bring all their power directly into the world?

At that thought, everyone's eyes were once again fixed on Bai E, to see just how long this artificially created warrior could last.

How long?

How long?

Long?

Long...

"Not watching anymore!" The man with graying temples flung his arm and left, "Frustrating."

A second-order Spiritual Energy user, yet with such an enormous capacity for Spiritual Energy.

...

...

The normal testing time by now should have required at least a spiritual energy reserve of over ten thousand to sustain, right?

No wonder everyone says that a monster has emerged from the city... if this ain't a monster, what is?

Realizing that she might not be able to comprehend the limits of Bai, Aglaya also terminated the final test.

["Lucky Strike" Charge+4.]

Bai E saw Aglaya, who was responsible for leading the way, standing at the entrance to the small room.

"Let's go, I will now take you to the library where secret techniques are stored."

"Can I see the test results?" Bai E asked with some curiosity.

He didn't know to what extent the city's spiritual energy testing indicators could be precise, and wanted to see how the city's recognition of his own strength would be limited.

"No problem." Aglaya agreed immediately and handed over the test reports to Bai E.

[Spiritual Energy Hierarchy: Second Tier/Dispersion 87.3%]

[Spiritual Energy Attribute: None/Unmanifested]

[Spiritual Energy Reserve: ???]

The core three items, followed by a bunch of detailed analysis in fine print, but none of that mattered now.

Seeing the report, Bai E felt somewhat relieved.

Indeed, spiritual energy is the most mysterious thing in this world; even if he fully opened up, with the current level of humans, they still couldn't figure out the peculiar traits of his own.

The irrational parts, he had to make up in his mind.

"Click-clack, click-clack." The sound of Aglaya's high heels tapping on the floor guided Bai E deeper into the secretive areas of the center.

In the midst of mechanization, the library took on an even more surreal and magical appearance.

Gleaming green text floated in the void around them, and the mechanical bookshelves held not only books and scrolls, but also discs and crystals.

The origins of spiritual power techniques varied, as did their media.

Different media required different methods of viewing; some so-called spiritual power techniques were actually pieces of knowledge that only top-tier spiritual power users could access, while others were pure thoughts and considerations to be perceived with pure spirit and will, inexpressible in words.

"Relax your spiritual tentacles; when you approach each technique, you will inherently know how to consult the different techniques through the feedback of your spiritual energy," Aglaya led the way only this far.

Even she didn't have full access to this library; it wouldn't be appropriate for her to stay longer.

Watching as Bai entered the library and the gates slowly closed behind him, Aglaya closed her eyes and sighed softly.

The voices of the other higher-ups at the center sounded from behind her, "What's your plan for locking him in there?"

The library was both a treasure trove of knowledge and a cage.

Those forbidden pieces of knowledge about spiritual power are like alluring poisons, tempting every person who comes into contact with them to keep delving deeper into their study.

The knowledge stored here... For a normal spiritual power user, it would likely take years, if not decades, to leave this place.

Even for ones like them, outstanding among spiritual power users, it would take at least a year or more to overcome the obsession with forbidden knowledge in their hearts.

To learn everything... that's impossible.

The field of spiritual power is different from other things; if you can't learn it, you simply can't learn it, not in a lifetime.

But the more you can't learn, the more you want to learn – that's the curse that spiritual power users are doomed to carry.

Even if General Bai E's performance had been ever so heaven-defying before, once locked up here, no one would think he could come out willingly in just a few months.

Aglaya opened her tightly shut eyes, a gentle gleam flashing through them, "The city has undergone a lot of turmoil recently..."

The failure of the expansion efforts led to the city's investment going down the drain, and the incident with the underground castle has exacerbated the conflict between noble interests and the city's security to an extreme.

General Bai E is a straightforward person; it's best if he doesn't get entangled in these complicated matters.

Keep him locked up here for a few months, wait for the dust to settle outside, and after the city has established a new order, then it would be best to let him out.

After all, with General Bai's strength and temperament, no matter the outcome for the city, the real power-holders would not waste such a top-tier strategic talent.

"Let's go." Aglaya turned and strode away, no longer looking back, "The city's atmosphere is treacherous, and the Elf Race's negotiation team will soon arrive; there's still much for us to worry about!"

...

In the dimly lit green library, Bai E stood in front of a crystal-like gemstone, releasing his spiritual tendrils.

Chapter 636: Showdown

Aglaya pinched the bridge of her nose, returning to the management center with evident exhaustion.

"My lord..."

"My lord."

As she passed by, the staff greeted her respectfully, and Aglaya could only muster a bit of energy to nod in acknowledgment.

After a whole day of dealing with the greedy so-called nobles in the city, her spirit was utterly fatigued.

Struggling with human minds was much more exhausting than researching Spiritual Energy.

If possible, she would rather indulge only in the world of Spiritual Energy instead of worrying about the messy affairs of the real world.

Unfortunately, an organization always needs one or two people to take the lead, and none of the other bigwigs in the management center were willing, so the task had fallen on her, the youngest in seniority.

"Lady Aglaya, it's so good to see you. General Bai E has been waiting for you in the reception room for a while now, please hurry over."

"Ok, I know, I'll be right there," Aglaya automatically nodded in response, her steps already turning towards the reception room. However, her expression suddenly changed, and she spun around to look at the woman who had just passed by, "Who did you say is waiting for me?"

"General Bai E..." The woman said as if it were obvious: "Didn't you bring him to the center today? It seems he wanted to say goodbye to you."

Bringing Bai E to the book storage to observe all the secret techniques was not publicly known news. Most people in the center were unaware, and it was natural for such a subordinate, who wasn't privy to many details, to simply convey the message as it was.

"???" Aglaya's mind was filled with question marks, "General Bai E?"

Hadn't she sent General Bai E into the book storage?

The knowledge in there was addictively attractive to any Spiritual Energy user, so why would he appear in any location outside the book storage at this time?

Impossible! Absolutely impossible!

Aglaya didn't ask any further but quickened her stride with her long legs towards the direction of the reception room.

She wanted to see for herself who was playing tricks on her.

"Lady Aglaya."

The figure sitting on the reception sofa, seeing a visibly agitated Aglaya entering the room, calmly stood up and nodded in greeting, "I was just about to leave and wanted to say goodbye. I have been looking for you but was told no one could contact you."

"Ah~" Aglaya looked at the Bai E before her, questioning the authenticity of this person.

Was this really Bai E?

But he didn't seem to bear any sign of a disguise, and her own Spiritual Energy had not detected any suspicious signs.

Was it really Bai E?

But how could Bai E have left? How was it even possible for him to leave?

"You... are leaving?" Aglaya stared at the "Bai E" before her, hesitant and unwilling to jump to conclusions.

"Yes." Bai E said, nodding with a smile, "There are many things to deal with back at the barracks, I said before coming that there was much to discuss upon my return."

"Oh." Aglaya's normally austere and cold face appeared oddly baffled and cute. "Will you... be coming back later?"

"Not really..." Bai E seemed a bit perplexed as well, "Unless there's another book storage that contains secret Spiritual Energy techniques?"

"Another place?" Aglaya's gaze at Bai E grew increasingly strange, "You... finished?"

"Yes." Bai E nodded matter-of-factly, "Isn't that all there is? I've finished reading it all."

The number of secret Spiritual Energy techniques stored in the city wasn't actually that large. On the contrary, there was a wealth of related knowledge in the field of Spiritual Energy. However, after Bai E had first learned a Spiritual Energy secret technique called "Instant Association," everything he viewed was simply scanned with Spiritual Energy, allowing all the content recorded in various ways to enter Bai E's mind.

With a mere command of Bai E's will, it was available for his use.

"What did you do after finishing?" Aglaya visibly swallowed, "Don't you want to learn?"

Bai E's face remained serene, "Once you finish reading, don't you know it?"

It might have cost him over thirty thousand experience points, but as long as he learned it, it was worth it.

The secret Spiritual Energy techniques almost covered any scenario of daily use, ensuring the owner would have more options in many situations.

For him, this learning trip felt quite worthwhile.

"Once you finish reading, don't you know it?"

"...don't you know it?"

"Know it?"

Bai E's words echoed repetitively in Aglaya's mind, like a devilish chant, cascading layer upon layer.

Is that even humanly possible?

To know it just by reading once?

"I just came to say goodbye. If you have no other matters, I must be leaving the city to head back to the barracks," Bai E continued to state his purpose.

"Uh... understood." Aglaya felt completely numb as she watched Bai E's retreating figure. She immediately headed straight for the book storage.

Even though she knew it was highly unlikely that General Bai E had the thought to "deceive," nor the motive to do so, such an unbelievably incredible occurrence was something she had to witness for herself.

All the treasured volumes in the book storage, regardless of the storage method, were monitored by a Spiritual Energy security system.

As long as she pulled up the access privileges, it was easy to see the browsing records, which was also why they, the guards, couldn't "steal from themselves."

Some knowledge that wasn't open to them, even the ones acting as the book storage guardians, was off-limits to view.

Chapter 637: Showdown_2

And now...

Aglaya, who had accessed privileged information, stared at the near-continuous record of book perusals, feeling a buzzing in her head.

The colleague of equal rank from the neighboring department came over with a chuckle, glanced over, and then the smile on his face vanished immediately.

"Who is this? Someone has read through them all so quickly?"

"Today, there was only one person in the library," Aglaya stated this fact with an indifferent expression.

"..."

"..."

The man was shivering as he stroked his small mustache, looking at Aglaya with a shocked stare, and asked with a slightly trembling voice, "No... It couldn't be, could it?"

Aglaya nodded calmly, "It's exactly as you're thinking."

"???"

Is General Bai E human?

"Could he be the chosen of the Lord of Curiosity?" speculated another manager who had hurried over, stroking his chin.

The Lord of Curiosity is also a symbol of knowledge; if blessed by it, possessing such a heaven-defying level of comprehension ability would seem plausible.

"But could the chosen of the Lord of Curiosity be as formidable on the battlefield as General Bai E?"

"Then he is the chosen of the God of War!"

"General Bai E's regenerative ability is also terrifyingly unbelievable."

"Then he is the chosen of the God of Eternity!"

"To hell with whoever! Damn Spiritual Energy!" The robe-clad manager turned and walked away.

The deeper one delves into this field, the more one discovers many illogical and incomprehensible things within it.

Things one couldn't understand should be left to successors; the only thing they could do was to preserve as many complete cases of Spiritual Energy as possible...

["Lucky Strike" energy +6.]

After leaving the Spiritual Power Managers Center and heading straight for the Scientific Research Institute, Bai E's lips curled slightly, knowing that Aglaya and the others had probably finally caught on.

He knew those secret Spiritual Energy techniques must be quite difficult to learn, just like the "Exorcism Magic Circle" also found in the library.

Just looking at people's attitudes towards it, he knew it was not easy to learn.

In the entire city, there would not be many who could learn it, and there were several items in the library of approximately the same level as the Exorcism Magic Circle.

Having learned them all so quickly, he would definitely surprise them.

Just how much he would surprise them wasn't his concern though.

Any irrational event that occurred had an explanation.

They would hypothesize about it on their own; he didn't need to worry about it.

Ever since his return to the city, Bai E had been maintaining private contact with Helen.

To make contact outside the city's surveillance was quite simple for the both of them.

Bai E, who sought Helen out in private, stated his intent directly, "I want to reset the technical standards of the Artificial Human production line."

Helen stared at Bai E with her narrow and alluring eyes, her gaze flickering, a slight smile playing on her lips, "I knew your previous research on the production pods wasn't aimless."

Without letting Bai E answer this awkward question, Helen continued to speak on her own, wanting Bai E to know—she was aware of everything he was doing.

"What do you want to change?" said Helen as she casually sat down, drawing her robe aside to sit on the chair behind her.

Her posture was relaxed, striving not to make Bai E feel even a hint of uncomfortable aggression.

The spring scenery under her robe was subtly visible, but Bai E did not look aside, staring into Helen's eyes with an expressionless face as he replied, "I think there's no longer a need to apply the cognitive delay restrictions on them."

The trait of cognitive dulling indeed allowed artificial human soldiers to ignore, to some extent, the suppression from the Spiritual Energy field; during Bai E's first participation in the total assault on the hive, artificial human soldiers showed a significant resistance advantage in proportion to natural human soldiers when the Overmind appeared.

However, that was all.

While this restriction offered slight protection, it was more limiting than anything else.

It limited the potential for artificial humans to develop Spiritual Energy.

If their purpose was to serve as cannon fodder, then having no potential was acceptable; the city only required them to be effective.

But if every newly created artificial person is unwilling to be mere cannon fodder, then without lifting the ban, they will never become truly adept masters on their own.

Helen's IQ is top-notch in the entire city, and with just a thought, she understood the underlying meaning of Bai E's words.

"You want to develop artificial humans?" Helen's eyes narrowed slightly, "But you must understand that the suppression of artificial humans isn't just about their origins. Resources are always limited; if they consume more, others have less. Nobody wants to create a competitor who will eat into their own share of resources."

If Bai E really intended to develop artificial humans, then the ultimate outcome would only be that everyone would choose to do without them.

Under endless sacrifices, selecting from natural humans indeed became a bit difficult, but if they truly managed to conquer the Blackrock District Hive, then the last batch of sacrificed military camp fighters would become the final song.

Even if the world's situation remained severe in the future, the annual consumption of nearly ten thousand regular soldiers would not be necessary any longer.

"I know, so... I have a Spiritual Power Method that can be shared with everyone for cultivation," Bai E said, staring at Helen, emotionless as he dropped a bombshell.

The Spiritual Power Breathing Skill he had learned from Yue Ying and had successfully adapted after personal modification to suit human physique was his biggest gesture of sincerity. "I visited the Spiritual

Power Managers Center today. After a thorough investigation of my spiritual power, they believe that my subconscious self-cultivation might have already formed an entirely new method. But privately, I've already tried it out. Aside from Rose, all the members of my special squad have already developed the seeds of spiritual power."

No matter how Helen would think, after careful consideration, Bai E believed that this was his only chip to firmly tie Helen to his chariot.

Helen is the most dedicated of researchers.

Anything that could significantly raise the overall human limit, she wouldn't be able to refuse.

Indeed...

"!" The veins on Helen's hand resting on the armrest of her chair bulged, her face flushed slightly and her breathing became noticeably heavier.

A brand new Spiritual Power cultivation method!

Even artificial human warriors with innate limitations could nurture the seeds of Spiritual Energy with dedicated care.

What about after discarding those innate limitations?

What about all the natural humans in the city?

Of course, there are many things Bai E didn't articulate, but she roughly knew them.

Bai E certainly would not be the "blank slate" he appeared to be; his emotionless facade was too deceitful, making even the current "laying of cards on the table" seem somewhat insincere.

There is no essential difference between artificial humans and natural humans.

When Bai E spoke of lifting restrictions on artificial humans, it was clear he intended to circulate his method only within a small circle—or rather, only among "the artificial humans who obey him."

He wanted power!

He would not contemplate spreading this weapon throughout all humanity, or even throughout all the natural humans in the city, until he had enough power to satisfy his ambition.

But what of it?

As long as it was a discovery that could propel humanity to new heights, Helen would only support its emergence!

Her loyalty was always to the overall limits of humanity, not simply to the three words "Blackwater City."

As long as the implications roughly aligned, she could pinch her nose and work with it.

But if there was a significant divergence, she would only adhere to her own inner path.

Smart people never call out another's flaws.

No matter what pretense Bai E used, she would not raise it directly.

In their conversations, they would only discuss official matters; only by doing so could she gradually make Bai E believe that she truly stood with him.

"What do you need me to do?"

"I only need access," Bai E said, asking for nothing else.

Even though he had acquired the technology for genetic programming after blowing up a production chamber, without the access, he naturally could not interfere with the chamber's backend.

Sneaking around was one idea, but during the lengthy process of artificial human maturation, if the monitoring authorities noticed that anyone tampered with the backend technical parameters, they would need just a simple command to instantly stop all production lines in operation.

Without Helen, Bai E could never achieve his goals.

"Access isn't a problem, but you don't need my help?" Helen replied curtly.

"No need."

Bai E did not trust others to do it; only his own settings were truly within his control.

"Fine." Helen glanced deeply at Bai E, her gaze filled with admiration as she agreed.

Just through the research done last time, he had already mastered technology to this extent.

It seemed that General Bai E had much more up his sleeve than he was letting on!

Chapter 638: Deep Collaboration

"I need to go with you," Helen said bluntly. "For backend programming operations like this, even with my order, you couldn't possibly go in alone. I don't have the final say in the Scientific Research Institute, and you can only get in by pretending to be my attendant."

"That's no problem."

As long as Bai E was the one doing the work, he wasn't worried.

"Shall we set off now?" Helen was a person of action; when she had something to do, she did it without hesitation or delay.

"Yeah," Bai E nodded, although he also had other matters he planned to discuss with Helen.

But things had to be done one at a time.

The human heart is a black box; Helen seemed cooperative, but what she was truly planning, only she knew.

Before verifying things one by one, Bai E wasn't ready to throw out all his plans to work alongside her.

The master control backend of the artificial human production line was also located underground in the military area, guarded by a tight security system; with multiple protective measures against violence and Spiritual Energy, getting in without Helen would be quite a headache for Bai E.

There were also people inside the computer room. Upon arriving with Bai E, Helen waved her hand, signaling them to leave.

"You guys go take care of other things; I need to check things over here," she said.

Any machinery that runs for a long time would develop various faults and deviations, and the artificial human production master control console monitoring various technical indicators was no exception.

Usually, Helen would conduct regular maintenance checks, and though the interval was shorter this time, it shouldn't be a problem.

"You can start now." Helen stood aside, watching Bai E with interest.

'Allocate the points!' Bai E thought silently, spending experience.

[Payment: Scientific research experience 400 points.]

[Learned "Level 2 Gene Editing," simultaneously gaining 2* science points.]

[Current gene editing experience 0/500, you can master "Level 3 Gene Editing" when full. Note: The knowledge acquired only allows mastery to a maximum of Level 2 Gene Editing.]

[Gene Editing (2/? levels): You have mastered certain secrets of genetics; from now on, you have the ability to perform "simple" arrangements and modifications of the original genetic sequences. You may also try more complex genetic programming for additional experience and proficiency, but there is a high possibility of mutations. Please proceed with caution.]

The knowledge upper limit extracted from the production chamber was only what the original owner knew, but the original owner's level was sufficient to support Bai E in doing what he wanted to do.

A dense array of data flashed rapidly across the screen in front of Bai E. Following the subconscious guidance of the knowledge in his mind, he input commands as if by muscle memory, changing the settings of the genetic prohibitions on artificial humans.

Mastering meant mastery, and not mastering meant the absence of it.

Watching Bai E's fluent operations, Helen couldn't help but feel deep admiration.

It was not only knowledge but also familiarity.

The proficiency of his operations was comparable to her own, despite being the one who had set up the prohibitions.

Was this his talent?

Glancing at Bai E's profile, the thought that had long been suppressed in her heart surged once again.

Gene segments that underwent optimization often became "distorted" during inheritance. The more potent the gene segment, the harder it was to pass down. Offspring born through normal reproduction were less likely to survive, and embryos cultivated through unconventional means often resulted in various mutations.

This was the harm that gene optimization could cause to humanity as a whole. Unless this problem was thoroughly resolved, even if Gene Optimization Solution could be supplied on a large scale one day, those in power would not make it universally available.

The strength of one generation could lead to the extinction of the entire species, and unless it was a dire life-or-death situation, no one would make such a choice.

Yet such a potent talent, even though it might make reproduction more difficult and the chances of a normal offspring smaller, was still an incredibly tempting option.

With this thought, a strange desire surged through Helen, making her body stir uncontrollably.

In her daze, Bai E seemed to have completed his task.

"It's done."

His calm voice sounded as if it came from another world, jolting Helen, who had been lost in brief reverie, back to reality, "What?"

"I'm finished. We can leave now."

Bai E's voice was like a touch of cool brilliance, dispelling the last threads of turmoil in her mind.

Helen's hand brushed her cheek, feeling a burning heat.

'Why is this happening?'

With that thought, Helen nodded to Bai E and firmly replied, "Then let's go. This isn't a place to talk."

After leaving the core computer room, Bai E continued to speak to Helen, "Use this template for subsequent production. I need to urgently create at least ten thousand artificial human soldiers."

"You need that many?" Helen narrowed her eyes, puzzled.

"Uh..." Bai E hesitated, then explained the reason to Helen, "The city security forces' chief, Caesar, came to me in private and said that the decision to close the underground castle would drive those 'nobles,' whose interests were affected, into a frenzy. They might instigate unrest in the city by manipulating the fighting guilds under their control. Their security forces are having difficulty recruiting and cannot expand their ranks quickly. He anticipates that with their current manpower, they won't be able to suppress the unrest, and military assistance from our barracks might be necessary. At the same time, we can't ignore the threat from outside enemies. So, I think it's best to quickly produce soldiers to ensure everything is under control."

Chapter 639: Deep Collaboration_2

"Those fools," Helen frowned tightly, feeling equally infuriated. However, there was an existing limitation before her.

"The current biomass storage isn't enough for the production of artificial humans you need, and this is a problem I also find difficult to solve."

The technological component of the production line allowed for the rapid mass production of soldiers, but there were other restrictions.

Rapid production required a substantial amount of biomass to provide nutrients, and the artificial humans produced were living beings indistinguishable from natural humans, requiring the same materials for sustenance of life.

The city was certainly large, and it had no trouble supporting countless "tens of thousands."

But the city was already sustaining countless "tens of thousands," and the sudden addition of another "ten thousand" might just be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

To support these suddenly increased "ten thousand," Bai E must come up with a solution himself.

"Lacking biomass?"

Bai E was stunned and then, "looking" at the piles of meat stacked in his explosion rate warehouse, a bold idea sprang to mind.

This idea, fleshed out quickly, could even kill two birds with one stone by making all the people in the city believe in the brainwashing effects Helen had previously applied to him, thereby truly starting to trust him.

"I'll find a way for this," Bai E said ponderously, "Also, there's another thing that I'm sure you've already noticed."

Helen had already mentioned that the mecha combat blade she used in the battle at the Black Rock District Hive had come into her possession.

Others might not know the secret of the blade, but she certainly would.

She hadn't said anything, probably waiting for him to take the initiative.

Since it was already a known secret, it was better to be proactive and reveal it, "The mecha combat blade I used contains a technological system that the city doesn't currently have."

Power-type weapons.

Or, to be more precise, force field-type weapons.

The efficacy of the power swords and shields from the Mechanoids was quite impressive, and Bai E, having used them personally, coveted such technology even more than Helen, who regarded any new cutting-edge technology as her lifeblood.

"You're finally willing to tell me," Helen's gaze at Bai E burst into a visibly joyful smile, "The armor used by the Mechanical Court is also produced in collaboration with our Scientific Research Institute. I've been involved with their high-frequency cutting weapons, too, but their weapons shatter upon contact with the Sovereign's bone blades. I suspect there must be some other special augmentation to the blade you used."

Helen was also a Spiritual Energy user and had a basic understanding of some commonly accepted knowledge within the field of Spiritual Energy.

Indeed, Spiritual Energy could conjure all sorts of special augmentations, but first, the user must have a certain understanding of the technology being used.

In other words, the technology must truly exist in the world and be known to the user.

Using Spiritual Energy to forcibly apply the concept of "invincibility" was certainly another way to achieve such enhancement, but that would be a pure Spiritual Energy confrontation.

For Bai E's Power Sword to match up to the Sovereign's bone blade, his level of Spiritual Energy would have to be on par with that of the Sovereign's first.

What kind of existence was the Sovereign?

The ultimate BOSS of the battlefield, who integrated the collective Spiritual Energy of all the bugs within a hive. If Bai E had that kind of overwhelming Spiritual Energy, his real performance on the battlefield would probably be much more exaggerated than the Sovereign's.

So, Bai E's combat blade being able to counter the Sovereign's bone blade definitely meant he either grasped or was aware of some weapon enhancement form different from high-frequency cutting!

To earn Bai E's trust, Helen never pressed him.

She believed that as long as she showed enough sincerity, this completely self-enclosed artificial human warrior would sooner or later reveal his entirely vulnerable side to her.

Right now, it was finally time for her to see the payoff.

"Hmm," Bai E nodded, affirming Helen's guess, "I've clashed several times with those Mechanoids who inherited the technology of the Golden Age. In the midst of combat, the mecha I piloted seemed to sense their technological forms, transmitting to me some vague notions akin to 'mumbling' through the link of Spiritual Energy—even though I don't quite understand the detailed specifics of those technologies, I could use them directly with the assistance of the mecha."

Bai E had indeed upgraded the core technology of the Power Weapon—the Force Field Generator—to level 3.

However, the blueprint for the Dynamic Source Sword had many other technical details and knowledge that were difficult to reproduce quickly with my own knowledge reserves alone.

Why not find someone to collaborate with? I could provide the key technology, and leave the rest, the minor details, to Helen to handle.

"Perhaps we can try to reverse-engineer it?" Helen's eyes lit up.

I could deduce the nature from the performance, while Bai E had a vague understanding which could help ensure the direction of my research was generally correct.

As long as we worked together, we could rediscover the lost technologies of the Golden Age, one by one.

Even humans today covet some of the technologies used by the smart machinery.

"That's exactly my point. If we could mass-produce those weapons, or even just equip some elite warriors with them, it would greatly enhance our combat capability."

"But we can't activate that weapon..." Helen stared at Bai E with longing.

Privately, they had conducted countless studies on that blade, and if it weren't for Helen's intervention, some insanely obsessed researchers would have already dismantled the sword for study.

The laboratories in the city could already synthesize and mold sixteen-element alloys, so how could they not understand a typical alloy sword?

Even if it was an enchanted sword.

"Only I... and Rose can activate it."

Bai E, seizing the opportunity, added an extra slot.

There might be a lot of miscellaneous matters bothering me later, and if Helen wanted to research, she could ask Rose for assistance.

After all, anyone I authorized could unleash the true power of the Star-devouring Blade.

"Good!" Helen was thrilled.

High-Frequency Cutting had already been proven to be a promising approach and had been used on a small scale in high-end combat units similar to the Mechanical Court, but why would humans ever complain about having too few points on their technology tree?

If the new power weapons proved to be cheaper to produce, more powerful, or could work in conjunction with High-Frequency Cutting, they would undoubtedly offer more options in terms of cost, variability, or upper limits of combat capability.

"Where's the weapon? I'll call Rose now, and we can go over together."

"All right! I'll have someone bring it right over."

The sword had been transported to the Scientific Research Institute early in the morning, where more precise equipment was available. Sadly, faced with a weapon that appeared ordinary when unactivated, even Helen was at a loss.

...

Inside the exclusive hangar of the Scientific Research Institute, Bai E and Rose exchanged glances and, after a long time, joined hands to start the mecha once again.

"I knew you would come back."

Bai E solemnly entrusted the hilt of the Star-devouring Blade to Rose, reminding her with a smile, "Feel this power; it will be our greatest weapon against the Bug Race."

The moment the hilt was bestowed, Rose's eyes suddenly widened.

The empowerment from the rules made her feel an instant, blood-deep familiarity with the blade in her hands, as if, even through the transmission of the mecha, she had an intuitive sense of control.

"Try it." Bai E, sitting in the adjacent pilot's seat, handed over most of the mecha's piloting permissions to Rose.

With a simple control command, Rose was still able to manage on her own.

Facing a target made of single-element alloy that had risen before her, the blue-and-white mecha raised the sword high...

And then slashed down fiercely!

Chapter 640: Action begins!

Helen stood in the control room of the separate mecha hangar, staring at the power output level the mecha's blade had achieved with a single strike—her eyes nearly popping out of their sockets.

The maximum power output of a mecha is standardized, and the material of the combat blade wasn't anything special, yet the target made from unialloy was instantly shattered by a single hit. It was only in the milliseconds before fragmentation that the hit data was transmitted to the computer in the control room.

But according to the data, it far exceeded the output level of weapons made using High-Frequency Cutting technology in previous laboratory experiments!

Bai E, stepping down from the cockpit, pushed Rose in front of Helen with a smile, "If you use bugs for targets, you'll make some new discoveries, of course... though it won't have much to do with technology. Additionally, if you need help later, you can have Rose assist with the testing. I'm expected to lead a team out in the next few days and won't have the time to assist with your research."

Helen's research progress wasn't so swift; she first had to extrapolate something truly substantial from the weapon before Bai E could offer guidance under the pretext of a mecha spirit and transmit the two techniques he mastered to her.

Before that, he had his own matters to attend to.

"Okay," Helen nodded, "then go attend to your business, and I'll contact you if I need to."

After all, she and Bai E had a private means of contact and could get in touch at any time.

"If there's nothing else, I'll take my leave."

There were other matters to deal with in the military camp. With Weslin asleep, Bai E needed to complete everything he wanted as swiftly as possible!

"Okay, go ahead, and leave Rose with me to help."

Patting Rose on the shoulder, Bai E turned and left.

After leaving the separate mecha hangar, Bai E summoned all the officers in the military camp whose opinions mattered.

In a private room, a projector light shone on Bai E's face as he stood in the light, looking at everyone seated in the darkness.

It was pitch-black and their expressions were indiscernible.

This was once the position Weslin stood in, but now it belonged to Bai E.

Not being able to see the expressions of others naturally made it difficult to grasp their intentions.

Bai E knew standing in this position was fraught with controversy.

Officers like Carlos, who firmly stood behind him, were always in the minority. Even though Bai E could be a leading figure within his own faction during peacetime, when it came to his own influence, not all officers from the faction supporting manufactured soldiers were as openly supportive as Carlos.

Now, within the military camp, besides the preexisting factions divided over attitudes toward manufactured soldiers, there were two new factions over attitudes toward Bai E as an admiral—either for him or against him; this time, there was no room for neutrality.

To make things difficult for Bai E, the opposition presented him with sufficient challenges.

Bai E's hands pressed down on the tabletop, his expressionless gaze sweeping over each officer assembled before him, "I've just discussed with Helen from the Military Department's R&D, and she has agreed to increase the production rate for our military zone. However, she needs us to resolve the supply issue for the new manufactured soldiers. So, about the matter we discussed last time, what are your thoughts on it now?"

The request Caesar and Bai E had mentioned, Bai E brought up immediately upon his return to the military camp and shared with the senior officers in the zone.

But he hadn't gone into detail, simply mentioning that, based on predictions, there could be a degree of unrest in the city and that the urban security forces might request their military's support at a critical moment.

"I'll say it again, what does the city's turmoil have to do with us? Our mission is to repel foreign enemies. Unless the city lord orders it, who is a security force captain to count for anything?" An irate officer, perhaps with grievances against Caesar or Bai E, stood up and burst out in complaint.

"Calm down, calm down, didn't we agree on this? As long as Admiral Bai E can solve our personnel issues, I'll support all his decisions!"

The military was drastically understaffed after deploying to the bug nests, the remaining forces barely able to form the basic combat formations, the daily drill scenes poignant in their desolation.

A general is called so because of the power he holds.

Without troops, they were nothing.

And without Marshall Weslin, their Military Department couldn't even make a splash with the draft requests they submitted.

Some speculated this might be a deliberate play by the city lord, lacking vision, intending to make the military realize the importance of Marshall Weslin.

But if Weslin remained comatose, it didn't mean they could stop living.

"Whoever can solve our personnel problem, I will recognize as our military zone leader!"

"But we can't just say that. Even if we had the troops, aren't we supposed to guard against bugs, beastmen, and other non-human races? Are we still supposed to conduct daily patrols? Should we continue with our strategy of 'small sweeps every three days, major sweeps every seven'? All this requires people. If we are too busy with our own tasks, how can we spare effort for the city's issues? In the end, if we fail in our duties and don't gain any favor there, we'll be blamed on all sides. If someone wants to curry favor, let them do it themselves; why drag everyone into it?" another person added in.

Bai E looked deep into the eyes of the speaker, remaining silent.

The influence of the nobility was not limited to inside the city.

Many of these so-called high-ranking military officers in the camp were not all self-made men who had fought their way up from the battlefield; quite a few... were of noble birth themselves.