

Wow 701

Chapter 701 military exercise_2

The twin burdens of physical and mental exhaustion made it difficult for these soldiers to maintain their most upright postures.

Veteran officers from the barracks, who had come to watch, stood in groups at a distance, pointing and chuckling at the group of new recruits who had just returned.

"Look at them, each and every one looking so pathetic... I've said it before, what's the use of this kind of training? General Bai, still too young."

"He even leads the team himself; I wonder how many died on the way for these people to return in such a miserable state."

Bai E's gaze swept indifferently around. Those whispers and rumors were clearly audible to his ears, yet they seemed as distant as mosquito hums— the difference was but a thought away for him.

On the surface, they indeed looked pitiable.

But the past ten or so days had polished these warriors in an extraordinary way.

Their true transformation was hidden deep within those pairs of bright eyes...

"Sound off!"

"One!"

"Two!"

"Three!"

"..."

The tally was quickly concluded, and an astute, efficient NCO came to Bai E, saluted vigorously, and reported loudly, "Reporting to the commander, 2000 were scheduled, 1982 have returned! Awaiting instructions!"

Bai E nodded and ordered in a low voice, "Dismissed at will!"

Eighteen were lost—a regrettable inevitability.

This era was full of uncertainties, let alone in the wilderness not controlled by humans.

With such a large team, no matter how careful Bai E was, he could never look out for every single person.

Having said this, he turned and left.

Watching the new recruits disperse like mud, the gawking officers were now murmuring in confusion, "What? Only 18 dead?"

"Could they be falsifying numbers?"

To them, used to counting casualties of synthetic soldiers by the hundreds, this number seemed magically small.

These synthetic recruits were slow; they had only undergone three days of basic training before being taken out for more than ten days of grueling exercises without logistical support.

Let's remember the wilds are no friendly place—without clean water, sufficient calories in their food, or adequate medical facilities.

A minor sickness or infection could easily claim a life.

Not to mention the chaos that could ensue in a force of two thousand if command was not strong enough, with any small incident potentially spiraling out of control.

And yet... had General Bai actually taken a battalion of synthetic soldiers, fresh out of the factory for just three days, on an operation, and brought them all back intact?

"There's no exaggeration." An even more seasoned officer shook his head. The military formations made it easy to count, and these recruits who had been taken out for training and brought back managed to maintain their formation despite extreme fatigue.

With one glance, one could roughly tally the number.

"Geez~"

"So it's true... he really brought all these people back intact?"

An officer's expression turned uncertain, "Then the suggestions we made earlier..."

Should we withdraw them?

It seemed, upon reflection, that our General Bai might indeed have his own insights on command and strategy?

Considering that General Bai had previously shown dominating talent as soon as he rose to prominence in many fields, the speaking officer was already envisioning a future where he'd be embarrassed for making suggestions.

"Make them! Just make the suggestions!"

The officer who had first made that suggestion insisted stubbornly, though a serious expression appeared in his eyes, "But we can change some of the details... maybe like not allowing micro-management by the commander?"

In sand table offensives and defense exercises, apart from setting an overall strategic directive at the beginning to provide a context for the soldiers, any and all contingencies that arose during the process were not to be micromanaged by the commander.

He, Bai E, is awesome... well, let's just admit he's awesome! So what?

Can one person's awesomeness make a group of newly born artificial human rookies just as awesome as he is?

Even if you are extremely clever and arrange everything in great detail beforehand, the moment something unexpected happens, these rookies, who can only follow the book, will definitely be dumbfounded on the spot.

When the results of this opposing military exercise come out, won't General Bai have to start valuing us, who can actually get things done, and the system and exemplary role we can establish in the military?

"Let's go! Let's propose it now!"

...

Facing the officers who had proposed the "military exercise confrontation," Bai E's palm rested on top of the paper dossier they had presented, and he asked with an inquisitive look, "Two thousand against one thousand? Is this not a bit unfair for both sides?"

"You still think it's unfair?" An officer bent slightly at the waist, replying respectfully in a tone that sounded neither servile nor overbearing, "That's true... After all, they have only been manufactured for such a short time. Even after going through a training session led by you, sir, their experience is still too little. Well then, eight hundred. Two thousand against eight hundred. A fair fight against the veterans will let them grow faster~"

"Indeed... I also believe that a fair fight has a more effective training outcome," Bai E nodded, casually tossing the proposal on his office desk, "Let's make it two thousand against two thousand, and see how these new soldiers manage to push the veterans to their limits."

"Ah?"

"Ah?"

"Ah?"

Looking at the incredulous faces, Bai E watched them with a faint curiosity on his face, "What's the matter? Is there a problem?"

One officer swallowed his saliva before explaining with difficulty, "The same number of people, veterans would surely win, right?"

Their goal wasn't the military exercise itself but to make General Bai E see the absolute role that these mid and senior-level officers could play within the whole system.

Now it's two thousand against two thousand, veterans against rookies.

Without a doubt, winning would be expected, and how would that highlight their capabilities?

"Isn't it just to urge the new soldiers to progress quickly?" Bai E smiled faintly, concluding with a slap on the table, "A bit of pressure is needed for motivation to improve. I think they will put on a spectacular performance. If there are no other issues, then let's settle it this way."

Even after walking out of General Bai E's office, the officers who had proposed the idea were still in a fog, "He... He agreed?"

"Did he even look at the detailed terms we wrote?"

"Two thousand against two thousand? I think he's gone mad."

"No! It's confidence!" An officer's eyes gradually lit up, "Our General Bai, he really has a lot of confidence."

"But we all agreed not to allow micromanaging, right?"

"So, this confidence isn't limited to himself; even the soldiers he churns out, he believes they can do what he expects them to do."

...

Confidence?

I don't know.

Bai E doesn't even seem too concerned about this matter.

Every challenge is an opportunity for progress, and these officers who've always been cooped up in the barracks don't seem to just be loafing around all day.

The idea of this opposing military exercise is quite good, but as for how to do it, it doesn't much concern him.

He read every word of the proposal submitted by the officers, the name of the commander of the Red force clearly listed as his own, but Bai E can't even be bothered to act as that commander.

Eating a little loss and learning some skills at the hands of their own people is always better than losing blood or even life at the hands of strangers later.

Being the commander meant not commanding at all, leaving it all to the low-ranking non-commissioned officers elected by those artificial human soldiers to discuss and decide how to act, whether capturing flags, occupying positions, or whatever else there was, was all up to them to perform.

During the three days in the small town, Bai E had seen Gong Yan teach these artificial human soldiers some tactics and strategies.

As for her skill level and whether these soldiers could perform to expectation, that was another story.

What Bai E was more concerned about at the moment was something else—

The ten-day period had arrived.

Chapter 702 Turmoil

According to the clues provided by the players, the operation of Wen Jie's "Doctor" battle guild was also tonight.

The night is naturally the perfect camouflage for all operations in the dark, even though The Lower City never sees daylight. Yet the city, still preserving this human habit, always dims the lights everywhere at a set time.

This habit, ingrained in human biological clocks, undoubtedly serves as the best opportunity for those underground forces that prefer to operate in darkness.

Meanwhile, according to feedback from experiences, Wen Jie had already mastered at least Level 3 knowledge — Biological Main Brain Theory.

It was unknown what kind of surprise this battle guild had meticulously prepared for the city, so much so that even technology not yet operational at the Scientific Research Institute had been adopted by them first.

Changing into an unremarkable outfit, Bai E left the camp.

Having a legitimate identity from the Elder Council, coming and going through the city gates at any time was no longer an issue for Bai E.

He wanted to see up close what kind of disturbance this battle guild, appointed by the nobles, could cause and what kind of response it would trigger in the city.

After all, this might be the experience he could use himself before long.

The underground of the city was often shrouded in a thin mist, with gigantic mechanical structures ensuring the operation of this massive urban body.

The city was somewhat restless at night. Wrapped in a trench coat, Bai E walked down the steel avenue filled with the smell of engine oil, with seemingly only the echo of his own heels clicking against the ground.

Sporadic figures were occasionally seen on the road, but in the bleak atmosphere, their steps were particularly brisk.

The place Bai E arrived at was a necessary passageway from The Lower City to the Middle-Upper City District.

Of course, the city was large and there were many such passageways, but in the intelligence reports, they talked about initiating an attack from this C13 entrance.

Having arrived nearby, Bai E's increasingly acute senses easily made him aware of several figures who were different from the usual passersby.

No... or rather, it was not just the senses, but a kind of intuition linked to Spiritual Energy.

Because of this intuition, Bai E easily identified those players among the passersby, who stood out from others.

After mingling in this game world for so long, they had already learned the ability to blend themselves perfectly into their environment.

If it was just a regular routine inspection, it was unlikely that these disguised and infiltrated players would be noticed.

Realizing this, Bai E nodded in satisfaction.

They had indeed arrived first. The players were reliable when it came to tasks.

As the time drew near, Bai E quietly approached a figure huddled in a corner.

"When did you guys get here?"

The sudden voice by his ear startled Dai Lian, but his solid composure prevented him from showing any hint of surprise.

With just a shiver in his heart and realizing it was the voice of the superior, he respectfully responded, "We just got here not long ago. Prowling around nearby could attract the attention of the vigilant, so we've tried once before."

"Hmm," Bai E nodded, "Being cautious is good. Having approached early, did you find any more relevant clues?"

"We... we've lost contact with our insider recently, so we only have some peripheral intelligence at the moment," Dai Lian carefully chose his words, feeling somewhat relieved that Bai E had approached him first.

This large-scale battle campaign's precursor mission definitely had a lot of variables, and depending on the information supplied by him, it could lead to different development paths.

Of course, the overall trend might remain the same, but the differences in the stories that individual players could participate in and the benefits they could gain were substantial.

If possible, he naturally wanted to watch the entire event unfold and easily reap the rewards.

Sure enough, the superior showed a hint of interest, "What information?"

"We've investigated. The city's entrances that separate The Lower City from the Middle-Upper City District are closed every night at about 10 o'clock. Once sealed, brute force or external strength can't open them. Besides waiting for the opening command from the central control at eight o'clock the next morning, there's no way to open it, and if it's tampered with, it will immediately cut off the circuit, including the mechanical equipment, and fall down. It's an insurmountable barrier. If that battle guild really intends to act, they must choose a time before 10 o'clock. The closer it gets to 10 o'clock, the lower the vigilance of the guards."

Thinking about the end of their shift, although people are still on duty, their minds have long flown away.

"Hmm," Bai E and Dai Lian waited quietly in the corner.

"Tick-tock~"

"Tick-tock~"

The patrolling guards had already passed by their corner several times, but under Bai E's increasingly proficient Spiritual Energy techniques, ordinary patrolling guards could not possibly detect the two concealed figures.

"It's time, it's time!"

"Time to knock off, time to knock off!"

"Finally knocking off... Dealing with those security patrols all day has exhausted me to death!"

As the guard leader in the control room, amid a myriad of tedious procedures, unlocked a red switch and, placing his hand on the lever, prepared to forcefully pull it down...

An unexpected turn of events occurred!

Several rockets with orange tails suddenly blasted on the guard booth by the road from The Lower City's direction.

Chapter 703 turmoil_2

The city infrastructure built to ensure public safety and order was, of course, worthy of trust; while the main structure of the building remained undamaged, it was difficult for doors and windows to withstand an attack of this magnitude.

At the same time, several electromagnetic pulse grenades were thrown into the guard post through the shattered windows, one after another.

"Boom, boom, boom!"

The grenades, which had virtually no effect on the human body, were aiming purely at the various tech devices.

The equipment used for issuing commands was instantly paralyzed, and whether it was calling for reinforcements or continuing to close the gates, these became things one could hardly dare to hope for.

They came prepared!

This was a long-planned sneak attack!

The guard post commander, stunned by the successive blasts, finally came to his senses and yelled hoarsely, "We're under attack! We're under attack!"

As his voice rang out, so did the suddenly blaring alarm bell.

Caught unawares, unable to contact the security team, they could only make as much noise as possible.

The guards, tumbling and even seeking shelter under the din of explosions, got dressed once again in the equipment they had taken off minutes earlier, under the deputy commander's orders.

Even simple gear like the half-body bulletproof vests, Blast Shields, and gas masks were technically challenging to prepare thoroughly in the midst of panic.

Clearly, the guards, not having faced real combat for a long time, were too unfamiliar with this kind of attack.

Another dozen tear gas canisters were thrown in, emitting white smoke, and the not-too-large guard post instantly filled with a white haze.

While those guards were still trying to help each other don their gear amidst tears and snot, the tall and seductive Gu Lan had already entered the threshold of the guard post with a group of burly strongmen.

These strongmen from the Caesar gang had no mercy for these city dogs; each received a heavy blow to the back of their neck and were quickly tied up.

Even amidst the chaos, they hadn't thought about killing anyone.

After seizing the only checkpoint near the entrance, Gu Lan signaled to her companions in the shadows behind her that they could now come over.

And then, cargo trucks loaded with unknown goods drove through the narrow pass, one after another.

Looking at the heavy machine guns and cannons modified onto those trucks, Dai Lian's eyes were filled with astonishment, "Wow, a gang in the city is this rich..."

But Bai E's gaze passed over the obstacles, seemingly seeing the guards who were knocked out and tied up, and he sighed softly, "Such a response... too complacent."

The city wasn't without threats, as today's "unrest" was initiated with prior intelligence and for a certain purpose.

But what if it were a real rebellion the day after tomorrow?

Or, what if more gangs were corrupted by those demons, initiating a war of destruction?

These guards, who were supposed to take responsibility, were so negligent; how could the security of the city be assured?

"Maybe it's been too long since they faced an attack," Dai Lian explained softly, "The information we gathered rarely mentions any gangs bold enough to directly assault such a city-affiliated facility."

"..." Bai E pursed his lips, remaining silent.

Even if slightly slow on the uptake, at the very least the procedure had to be followed precisely.

Everything was uncertain before the gates were completely lowered, and these guards had prematurely removed their gear minutes before the gate was set to close, leaving them completely defenseless when attacked, and unable to delay the intruders even slightly.

This showed that the city, from top to bottom, was rotten to the core!

"Let's go, follow them and see," Bai E said.

Let's see how chaotic the so-called unrest they initiated really was.

...

In the silent night, the headquarters of the city security team was in turmoil.

"Report to the captain, checkpoint C11 has lost contact."

"Checkpoint C10 has lost contact."

"Checkpoint C07 has lost contact."

"All C-level checkpoints... complete loss of contact."

The city doesn't usually refer to The Lower City directly as "The Lower City," but simply uses "C-level District" as a euphemism.

The various checkpoints that separate The Lower City from the Middle-Upper City District are known as C-level checkpoints.

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Usually, after the gates at the checkpoints came down, the checkpoints would also manually send a "command completed" message to the central control center.

And now that they had received no information, with no responses to the inquiries they had sent out, it meant that these checkpoints had either fallen... or had temporarily lost the ability to communicate electronically.

"All units, deploy and prepare to intercept!" Caesar ordered through gritted teeth.

The affairs of The Lower City were to be settled within The Lower City, an unwritten rule within the city.

Even as lawless as those war gangs were, their conflicts could only break out in the barbaric areas of The Lower City.

Of course, if civilians in the Central City District happened to get caught in the crossfire from time to time, as long as the situation was resolved quickly, with no severe consequences left behind, and the affected civilians were pacified, aside from a scolding upon return, the problem wasn't considered major.

But if the disturbance reached the Upper City District...

The true nobility could not bear any risk.

If even a single bullet struck any corner of the Upper City District, then their security forces, from top to bottom, would be combed through by people.

It was just unclear whether the current upheaval was just an appetizer or if those insane individuals had gone straight to flipping the table.

Since they were already prepared to face the backlash of those nobles interested only in their own benefits, their security forces wouldn't be completely devoid of their own informants.

They had also received some intelligence in advance that the unrest was expected to happen in these few days, and had even been arranging for personnel to scout the checkpoints swiftly, just to enforce heightened vigilance.

But still, they hadn't expected... a total blackout of communication.

Caesar's fingers ran over the communicator in his pocket, but in the end, he put aside the thought for the moment.

The situation was unclear, and that final measure could not be used for now.

Mobilizing the military stationed outside the city to enter was a significant move, not to be taken lightly until the last moment.

Thinking this, Caesar turned to put on his hat and took bold steps out the door.

With the communication lost, all they could hope for was that the guards at the checkpoints could delay the upheaval of the war gangs just enough to give them ample time to position their forces for the interception...

Civilians in the Central City District woke from their slumber, puzzled, as the sounds of engines and gunfire led them to believe they were in the hellscape of The Lower City.

The city harbored many contradictions, and those war gangs were used to settling things among themselves with fists.

So, hearing such noises in The Lower City wouldn't surprise them, and on the occasional visits there, they could even encounter stray bullets whizzing past their scalps as they walked down the streets.

But what time was it?

It was night!

The gates were closed; the conflicts of The Lower City were to be settled within The Lower City. However loud, the noise shouldn't reach here, right?

In a half-awake, half-asleep state, civilians pulled back the curtains and peered through the small windows with uncertainty.

"Whoosh~"

A rocket, trailing flames, zipped past the glass and smashed into the wall of a house at the end of the street.

"Boom!"

The ground trembled, and rubble flew.

"Shit!"

'What the hell are those security officers doing all day!?' the waking resident cursed inwardly and immediately turned to find the emergency shelter in the room - a sturdy and heat-resistant large metal box stocked with some resources.

In these chaotic times, who didn't have some preparations at home?

"Looks quite lively..."

Dai Lian's companions returned from all directions, meeting up with him.

But they didn't expect to see a familiar figure beside Dai Lian, "My lord."

"My lord!"

"Hmm," Bai E nodded calmly, "Anything you have to report, just say it."

"Yes, my lord!" Gu Lan responded resolutely, "Our investigation found that it's not only the 'Doctor' organization that started the unrest. They acted alongside at least several dozen other war gangs..."

Chapter 704 Camp Strife

"It seems like all these warring factions had an agreement, launching their attacks simultaneously around the same time tonight, catching the guards at the checkpoints completely off guard. Some are still putting up a fight, but they won't hold out much longer," Gong Yan quietly reported the information they had gathered, her eyes seeking Bai E for instructions, "My lord, what do you need us to do?"

"No need for now," Bai E shook his head, "The city's security forces haven't made a move yet. Acting rashly would likely result in us being targeted by both sides."

His plan was to wait and see. Considering only the "Doctor" faction they were currently following, it appeared their objective was to move forward... or more precisely, to advance to the upper levels of the city.

They showed no interest in anything on either side of the road. The troop of over a hundred vehicles and people rumbled forward openly and covertly, so much so that civilians peeking out of their windows to watch the commotion were barely harassed.

It was as if tonight's chaos had nothing to do with them...

Unfortunately, it was only here that they were not involved.

Gong Yan gripped a communicator in her hand, clearly in constant contact with other players, the ones who had been pushed out of Grey Iron City with her were now their best targets.

Right now, collecting information on the entire city was needed, and those players were helping everywhere.

"These warring factions started wreaking havoc as soon as they got to the Central City District!"

"Murdering, looting, committing all sorts of atrocities, these bastards are truly beasts!"

"These people seem insane, their every action filled with a venting rage... it's like... like there's no tomorrow."

[You have entered the territory of factional strife. From this moment on, you must choose to join one of the factions: The City Security Force or the Chaotic War Clans.]

[Will you be a law-abiding citizen upholding order, or a self-indulgent thug embracing chaos? The choice is yours.]

The sound that played out loud, along with the prompt from the information panel, rang directly in everyone's ears. Bai E knitted his brow slightly, making his decision, "Stop them!"

This was a task for the players as well as a choice for them.

[You have chosen... Order!]

[You have joined the City Security Force faction. From now on, you must do your best to reduce the chaos value that this unrest brings to the city. The wider the affected range, the more people involved, the worse the impact, the higher the chaos value. Current chaos value: 1539. Note: Be careful! If the chaos value reaches 10000, your factional strife will be deemed a "failure"!]

[The "losers" will be permanently hunted by Blackwater City. Please proceed with caution!]

While the punishment for failure was severe, the rewards for success were even more tantalizing.

"Permanent whitelist for Blackwater City," "Universal experience +20000," "Blackwater currency +1000."

It's worth noting that most players who mixed into the city didn't use the most honorable means of infiltration.

It's just that the city's census wasn't rigorous enough, otherwise, a fair number of people would be sifted out every day.

Seeing the slightly dazed expressions on the faces of a few players, Bai E knew they were assessing the newly sprung up factional strife panel prompt.

Being half a player himself, with his own panel, Bai E wasn't surprised by the players' reactions.

And without a doubt, under Bai E's command, all the players associated with Kuang Xin and others naturally joined the embrace of the Order Faction.

But there are always some players in this world who crave chaos.

Ren Fengxing, leading a force large enough to rival a warring faction, eyed the new factional strife task with eager anticipation.

They had mingled in the Lower District of Blackwater City for a considerable time to realize that mere manpower and weapons weren't enough in this locale.

The number of battle clans in the underworld was beyond counting, with schemes and conflicts among them, but at the same time, none wanted to see the rise of a new power that could replace their own.

So unless one was a dominant dragon who could subdue the local snakes, it was background and connections that were the key to establishing one's own battle clan here.

Now, if they could make a name for themselves in this large-scale mission and gain the recognition of the game's NPCs, who really didn't seem like fake characters, and thus establish their own battle clan, it would lay a solid foundation for their guild in this game.

At this thought, Ren Fengxing ordered with trembling excitement in his teeth, "All units, join the turmoil, let the revelry begin!"

[You have chosen... Chaos!]

[You have joined the Chaotic War Clans faction. From now on, you must do your best to increase the chaos value that this unrest brings to the city. The wider the affected range, the more people involved,

the worse the impact, the higher the chaos value. Current chaos value: 1539. Note: Please be aware! If the chaos value is cleared to zero, it will mean your factional strife is deemed a "failure"!]

[The "losers" will be permanently hunted by Blackwater City. Please proceed with caution!]

If successful...

"Official Blackwater City battle clan accreditation," "Universal experience +20000," "Blackwater currency +1000."

Killing, setting fires, negotiating, and recruiting.

Doesn't that sound pleasing to the ear?

...

"Shall we start taking action then?" Dai Lian asked for the last time.

After all, the current situation was a bit strange.

While other districts were in complete upheaval, the "Doctor" faction that they were primarily following seemed to have no interest in the Central City District. Their procession was headed straight in one direction, inevitably raising suspicions about their true intentions.

Intuition told Dai Lian that following the "Doctor" faction might lead to more interesting events to witness.

But that was all it was.

This game never made the difficulty of any task explicitly clear; one wouldn't know if something was a pitfall until they stepped into it.

The game's storyline wasn't created for the players but merely coincided with them.

What roles different players with varying strengths could play in these coincidental events, would depend on individual on-the-spot decisions.

For now... continued following might lead to parts already out of their league.

"Then we're off!"

"Go," said Bai E, his eyes narrowing slightly.

The voices coming from the players' communicators and the screams and roars beside them during the conversations were enough for him to roughly envision the chaos the other war factions were unleashing elsewhere.

Those people had indeed gone mad.

Cast aside as pawns, they had almost no chance of survival. As the first batch of battle clans to cause trouble, no matter who won in the end, they were sure to meet a dire fate.

Having been doomed to die, they might as well indulge in one last bout of madness!

Chaos?

It's what ran in their very bones!

Chapter 705 "doctor

When it came time to decide who would go to which district, several players gathered again, and within a few sentences, they had determined their respective operational areas.

Now, each of them was strong enough to stand on their own and no longer needed to stick closely together in order to be effective in such chaotic conditions.

The players' participation instantly made the already chaotic situation even more disorderly and incomprehensible.

"Report! An abnormal situation has occurred in BA03 district, a small group of unidentified forces are engaging in a firefight with those disruptive gangs before our guards could arrive. It is because of their firefight that the range of the incident has expanded, with more casualties... We request instructions on how to handle both parties on the scene."

"Report! An abnormal situation has occurred in BF07 district, a bunch of unknown assailants suddenly ambushed our support guards, but they scattered and fled just as we began to counterattack. We ask for instructions on whether to pursue the new target or continue with the original plan to provide support?"

"Report! ..."

Listening to the intelligence reports from his subordinates, Caesar pinched the bridge of his nose, feeling his head buzzing.

At such a critical juncture, where on earth were these assorted troublemakers coming from?

The gangs in The Lower City were not fools. The news that the noble-backed gangs were planning to stir up trouble was no absolute secret; the gangs that could get wind of this did not dare to take action rashly.

Even if they wanted to sneakily reap benefits from others' chaos, they wouldn't dare to jump out at the very beginning, before the situation was clear. Those gangs were more cunning than ghosts.

As for those who wanted to help quell the disturbances... emmmmm

Could such gangs even survive in this city?

Not adding to the chaos was already Caesar's greatest expectation of the other unrelated gangs; he did not count on those guys to be of any help.

So, who exactly were these anomalous people mentioned in the intelligence reports?

Ordinary residents of the Central City District with an overflowing sense of justice?

Independent Rangers acting out of personal grudges?

Only such existences could possibly create the increasingly chaotic situation at hand.

What to do?

"Arrest them all! There's no need to chase the ones who got away for now; our primary objective is to suppress the turmoil."

It would not be difficult to investigate those who had acted tonight afterward.

Rather, the immediate priority was to put down this uprising and prevent even bigger problems.

Caesar, who had personally rushed to the scene of action, had already roughly discerned that this riot was merely an appetizer from the opposition.

The riot itself wasn't the goal but a signal released—if you don't compromise, next time things will get serious.

Force wasn't the means by which the opposition would achieve their ends, but just a tactic in the process. The real victory, they would secure at the negotiating table.

But that would be a matter for later. Right now, the only thing to do was to press down on these gang members who had become dispensable and utterly deranged.

"Also, tell the front line forces that those who surrender may be spared and conscripted."

"Yes, Commander in Chief!"

"Report! An abnormal situation has occurred in BC district; our nearby detachments moved out immediately after the incident, but instead of finding large-scale disturbances in their assigned areas, they only saw a convoy of a hundred people heading towards the Upper City. We ask for instructions on whether to make arrests or to dissuade them on the spot."

The opposing force is large and powerful; attempting arrests at this juncture would merely be a waste of manpower.

If turning back the intruders on the spot was possible, it would be the most appropriate choice under such circumstances.

Caesar instantly judged the merit of the choices and could only wave his hand in resignation, "Regardless of their intent, try to turn them back first."

He could invite people for a chat over tea on another day, but at this moment, he really didn't have the time to get entangled with targets harboring various odd intentions.

...

"Sorry, we... have no road to turn back on," the old man leading the way and in charge of negotiations gently raised his head, his aged but firm square face flickering in the dim light of the players.

As he spoke, the sturdy men behind him surged forward.

By now, most of them no longer concealed the traces of their cybernetic augmentations.

Forearms, palms, thighs, calves, eyes, bodies... nearly every one of them bore clear signs of external cybernetic modifications.

What is a "doctor"?

A group of people who had been saved gathered together, collectively recalling the entity that initially redeemed each one of them.

That was the former "doctor" who had once saved them...

The old companions at his side surged forward, brandishing their Blast Shields. They confronted the roaring firepower unleashed by the guards, forcefully advancing forward.

Bullets whistled past their ears, and personal weapons unleashed their fiercest roars at such moments.

Yet the veteran leading the gang seemed as if he was in a realm of tranquility, approaching the woman who, dressed in a qipao, had been following him all along.

"Wolf-Scorpion, now... you can still take him and leave," he said.

The old man's gaze flicked to the fleet of vehicles behind him, where that young man was still fiddling with something.

He was merely clinging on to a final hope by letting this "miracle boy" give it a try, never expecting that the "ultimate weapon," which had shown no progress before, would seem reborn in this boy's hands.

With such a powerful tool at their disposal, they sought to enter the Upper City, to penetrate the most central area of the city, to let those people see... to let them all see! To see these retired artificial veteran soldiers, forced out of service, still harbored what kind of loyal heart for the city... for humanity.

Did they really think the money from those old soldiers on Black Street was coveted by many? The manufacture and linking technology that allowed fully-integrated cybernetic limbs to be controlled by will was considered a high-end technique in the city.

The ones providing services to those old soldiers did so out of respect for a shared identity as retired vets.

Batch after batch of artificial soldiers, 2000 at a time, over twenty to thirty rounds—though the majority perished on the battlefield, not a few survived and retired due to injuries.

Where did those people go? There weren't that many old veterans in Black Street.

Many more veterans, under the guise of seeking opportunities in the city or elsewhere, were absorbed by the "doctor" gang within the city.

He was the earliest of them.

A rare tender smile spread across Wolf-Scorpion's face, "Father, this is the first time I have addressed you this way. I won't leave, and he... doesn't want to leave either."

For that young man, the allure of seeing his creation dazzle under everyone's gaze was too tempting to refuse.

A... little madman.

"..." The old man pursed his lips, then after a moment shook his head and chuckled, "Fine! Then let's go to the Upper City together! Let those old geezers in the Upper City see! See what we have brought them!"

Chapter 706: Start!

"Report! Report!" The right hand that could still move clenched tightly around the communicator in his palm, shouting hoarsely into it, "The target won't turn back, forcibly breaking through! Central City District has fallen! Central City District has fallen!"

"Snap!"

A metallic alloy boot kicked away the communicator held tightly in the man's palm.

The cuboid communicator instantly flew apart, hitting the wall and shattering into pieces.

The tall figure squatted down and, with a swift hand chop, struck down the last member of the security team before rising up and catching up with the convoy that was always moving ahead.

Bai E withdrew his gaze, which was fixed on the "Doctor" Battle Gang's convoy at the center. Intuition told him the reason for the "Doctor" Battle Gang's actions, so distinctly different from the other gangs', was right there.

Yet, he had no idea when they planned to reveal their true intentions.

The city security squad sent to stop them was no match for these soldiers, all of whom had undergone cyborg modifications.

However, with the advantage of overwhelming strength, the "Doctor" Battle Gang had no intention of harming lives.

Their methods were so much gentler than those of other riotous gangs elsewhere that it was incomparable.

Watching the convoy become distant, Bai E started to follow from afar.

The actions of the Doctor Battle Gang were anything but a bluff, and this abnormal behavior did not lack for other folks who had come up from The Lower City to follow, keen to see what exactly this bunch was up to.

They indeed had no intention of intervening in this upheaval, but they were always in the mood to watch the excitement.

And the people of the Doctor Battle Gang were clearly aware of the watchers and spies trailing them but had not turned back to drive them away.

Presumably, whatever they intended to do was bound to be exposed to everyone, so there was no point in hiding it.

Bai E was happy to blend in and see where this gang was ultimately headed.

If it was based on information from the players, then their mission was already complete.

Arrive in Central City District, and then start their revelry.

This was the information gleaned by that one player.

But now, the Central City District seemed insufficient for them, and they were not content to stop their rampage there.

In the darkness, questioning eyes began to glimmer, "Where exactly do they intend to go?"

"Looking at that direction, it can only be headed toward the upper city area."

"Who let them go to the upper city area? Wasn't it agreed that this operation was just a preliminary pressure? Stirring up trouble in Central City District would have been enough, but if they really make it to the upper city area, who knows how things will develop!"

"Do we need to stop them now?"

"No!" A gaunt hand suddenly extended from the darkness, "Let them continue onward... We can use this opportunity to probe the old man's tolerance."

...

The interrupted signal caused Caesar to rise in fury, grabbing his gloves and heading straight for the vehicle parked outside.

"Emergency combat team, follow me to Central City District to stop the target's advance!"

The force scattered across different departments in the city was just the regular permanent presence, only the emergency combat team based at headquarters constituted the real core of the security team.

The motorbikes' engines roared in unison, and Caesar's eyes blazed with raging fury under the glaring lights.

What on earth do these gangs want to do! What!

Based on the trajectory inferred from the intelligence reports, the final target of this band of unusual folks was apparently gate B13, the barrier between Central City District and the upper city area.

Just as there is a barrier between Central City District and The Lower City, naturally there is also one between the upper city area and Central City District.

Although the floodgate had already fallen, external forces within experience were all hardly able to open it.

But this group of people was heading straight in this direction—surely they couldn't just be going to the gate to write "Been here" in urine, could they?

They wanted to make a scene in the Upper City!

Who gave them such audacity!

Based on the increasingly subdued reports of battles coming from all directions, it seemed that tonight's unrest was just a bit of pressure thrown by the opponents.

It was like an appetizer, with the main show still to come, and they naturally wouldn't flip the table right from the start.

But now it seemed... could it be that the disturbances elsewhere were just a blind by those old things, and their true aim had actually been this troop heading straight for the Upper City from the beginning?

What... exactly did they want to do?!

...

In the convoy that was being speculated by various forces, Lang Xie came to the slightly shaky carriage and found Zhou Wenjie crouching in the middle of a circle of metal islands.

Touching Wenjie's soft hair with a hand, Lang Xie smiled gently and said, "It's almost time for you to take the stage. We just dealt with a group of regular security teams blocking the road, and soon it might be the real elite of the security team coming. You must deliver your father's and his comrades' work to the highest stage yourself, letting all the people in the Upper City see what my father and his partners have achieved!"

Wenjie rubbed his face actively against Lang Xie's slightly callused palm, responding gently, "Mhm."

"Buzz buzz buzz~" The piercing sound of motorcycle engines came from afar, the convoy slowed its pace slightly, and in the blink of an eye, a glaring white light blocked the spacious eight-lane steel highway ahead.

Leading the way, Caesar dismounted from his motorcycle and stood in front of the convoy, spreading his palms.

Spiritual Energy fluctuations condensed between his hands, and in the blink of an eye, a huge "Notice Board" appeared in the center of the highway.

"This road is closed!"

"As the name of the chief of the security forces, this is the final ultimatum to you all, anyone who dares cross this line will be sent into the Soul Furnace, never to rise again!"

...

"Wenjie... it's up to you now," Lang Xie said affectionately, leaving a wet kiss on Zhou Wenjie's forehead before she turned and stepped out of the carriage to the very front of the convoy.

Ignoring the "Notice Board" formed by Spiritual Energy, Lang Xie stepped over the boundary with one foot.

And at the moment she crossed over, some sort of invisible Spiritual Energy marking attached itself to her body, to her soul.

No matter how skilled the cosmetic surgeons were, they couldn't help her disguise herself before the security forces.

"I'm sorry." Lang Xie lifted her skirt and pulled a pair of daggers from the strap on the side of her thigh, "I don't want to be your enemy, but this is my father's last wish!"

"Shua!"

The shadowy figure leaped forward, and behind her, all the brothers who had followed the leader of the Doctor Battle Gang, an old man, also collectively ignored the prohibition that would brand their souls, crossing together the area demarcated by the illusory "Notice Board".

All of them... including the drivers of the vehicles.

And in the most central carriage, pale blue pipeline patterns were lighting up one by one.

Wenjie rapidly entered commands, confirming the final activation program.

Looking at the countdown numbers on the monitor, Wenjie also felt a bit anxious.

"3..."

"2..."

"1..."

"Demon God armament, activate!"

Chapter 707: I refuse

Under everyone's watchful eyes, the previously still trucks suddenly began to emit faint sounds of twisting metal.

At first, it was just a trickle, then a stream, and then... visible deformation occurred.

In the grating, teeth-clenching noise, the dozen heavy trucks brought by the Doctor Battle Gang seemed to have developed their own will. With chilling changes, they twisted into bizarre entities, amalgams of contorted steel and tangled wires.

They resembled weapons, yet also resembled human arms...

The drivers of these trucks had long since left their cabs, yet these twisted heavy trucks moved as if each one possessed its own consciousness, beginning to act on their own.

Under the control of some invisible will, these seemingly actionless twisted entities started to converge in the same direction.

"Click!"

"Click!"

"Click Click Click Click!"

The more these abnormal entities merged, the more intense the interlocking sounds became.

When the last sound of connection went silent, a giant steel figure that had been lying on the ground now stood up like a colossal giant.

As the "giant" revealed its true form, red and blue lights in the pattern of wires coursing throughout its body began to dart around, as if... neural signals were being transmitted through a neural network.

The giant began to truly control its body.

Its height of several dozen meters even gave the impression that the giant could touch the top of the rock walls that isolated the Upper Middle City District with a mere stretch of its hand.

Its size, at least two to three times larger than the largest mechas of mankind, meant that even a casual movement could whip up a violent windstorm.

Witnessing this monstrous "creature" that had emerged in just tens of seconds, security team members standing close at its feet could not even discern its true form.

Although they had encountered countless strange events, they had never anticipated witnessing the scene before them, but still, they tried to keep their minds clear.

"Is this the work of those demons? It must be the work of those demons!"

Look at that twisted abomination and the red and blue lights coursing through it; it must be the devilish trickery of a demon's shriek!

"No!" Caesar's gaze hardened as he looked up along the twisted yet aesthetically imposing colossus, only to find that he could not penetrate the fog in the high darkness above.

As a graduate of the Spiritual Power Managers Center, although he wasn't as professional as those enforcers from the Demon Arbitration Court, he did have his own understanding of detecting the presence of demons.

"It has nothing to do with demons... it's just..."

...

"... just an ocean of pure sincerity."

Unlike mechas, the giant moved without a hint of awkwardness.

But it still cautiously crouched down, its steel arms bristling with weapons, and swiped towards the security team engaged in a fight with the Doctor Battle Gang.

As the pressure of its motion caused their garments to billow, the fearsome steel hand, covered in barrels and gun muzzles, suddenly stopped just above their heads.

"Creak~"

The machine gun's cylinder rotated without firing, but the menacing intent was clear.

"Move aside."

The elderly leader of the gang watched through tears as he gazed up at the end of the enormous giant that seemed endless.

Though he could not see his old comrades, he knew that they must be able to see him.

They were watching themselves.

Everything done to this date was in the name of a promise made long ago.

...

"I heard that tomorrow they're planning to have the new batch of artificial human soldiers go up against the old vets in a military exercise, two thousand against two thousand. Who knows how it will turn out..."

Under the warm glow of the barracks' lights, Carlos leaned close to the elderly man lying in bed, his hands firmly clasping the man's carelessly draped left hand, speaking in a clear and quiet voice, "Which side do you favor more?"

The old man smiled and shook his head, "Either side is fine, after all, they are both soldiers of the barracks. But if the numbers are equal, the new soldiers couldn't possibly beat the veterans, could they?"

"But I feel that these two thousand new soldiers, after Bai E's special training, must be somewhat different."

"General Bai E..." The elderly man murmured the name softly, his eyes looking somewhat unfocused.

"He was the first one you discovered. Forgive me, but when I first met him, I even failed to notice what made him different..."

"In truth, I didn't really understand either..." the old man said with a smile tinged with helplessness, shaking his head, "I still don't know why I made such a decision back then. Perhaps, it was just a feeling."

"Your feeling wasn't wrong, today he is indeed the first one who might truly change the status of artificial humans," Carlos said with an intense gaze, looking at the old man, "You have given so much for these newly born children..."

'Given so much?'

The elderly man muttered inwardly, laying back against the pillow and closing his eyes.

In a daze, it was as though he had returned to that afternoon years ago—

"Report! The results of the first batch of artificial human combat tests are in! These artificial human soldiers adapt to the battlefield incredibly well. They showed no fear of life and death on their first foray to the front lines, each one courageous and commendable!"

"What about the severely wounded individuals, how should we handle them?"

"Severely wounded?" The elderly man, a marshal at the time, casually answered, "As per usual, give them a sum of money and send them home."

But on second thought, what home did these artificial humans have?

With a sigh, he instructed, "Let them stay in the military hospital to recover."

At that time, the barracks were not yet influenced by any old notions about these fresh artificial humans, and everyone was genuinely curious about these new comrades joining them.

No one had any objections to his order.

But eventually... the natural humans in the barracks realized something—

They did not possess the boldness and bravery of the artificial humans. Even though the artificial humans suffered heavy casualties, there were always some lucky enough to survive.

Those artificial humans who fought bravely and survived nearly monopolized all of their promotion opportunities.

Even though their fighting was for defending their homes and country, they too needed to have some hope for their own future while defending their country.

Now, all those hopes were monopolized by those artificial humans.

So, murmurs started to arise in the barracks concerning the group of artificial humans, until... the day came when the beds in the military hospital were almost fully occupied by artificial humans.

"There was a mutiny in the hospital this afternoon, forcing us to start paying serious attention to the handling of these disabled artificial human soldiers."

"I propose that we simply recycle these incapacitated artificial human soldiers. After all, the production lines only need biomass, and we can make good use of the remaining heat from these disabled artificial humans."

"I second the motion!"

"I second the motion!"

"I refuse."

Chapter 708: Old Fellas' Promise

Marshal, standing firm against opposing opinions, straightened his body with a stern face, "They too are human; if they didn't die on the battlefield, we can't let them die by our own hands."

He was curious about the first batch of artificial humans as well.

For this reason, he deliberately spent over a month interacting personally with these artificial human recruits, and during that training period, he trained with the artificial humans and endured hardship together.

They chatted together after meals, and did their favorite things during their free time.

They all had their own different preferences.

Some liked sweet and sour food, some preferred strong and stimulating alcohol, some liked to make handcrafted flower arrangements, and some preferred to just bask in the sun...

He could sense, clearer than anything, that these artificial human soldiers also had their preferences, their thoughts, their souls, their lives.

They too are human...

When the city was in its toughest times, no one ever mentioned abandoning all the old, weak, sick, and disabled in the city.

Now that it came to artificial humans, how could one easily talk about "destruction"?

But he knew that forbidding their destruction was probably the limit of what these people could accept; to ask them to expend even a little more resources on these 'obsolete' artificial humans would be like cutting their own flesh.

"Just exile them..." the Marshal's eyes drooped, "Those who have lost the ability to serve will be expelled from the camp, left to... survive or perish on their own."

"..."

The atmosphere was silent; most of the officers were reluctant to accept the decision made by their long-standing superior, but none was willing to contradict him to his face.

However, after the silence, a voice gently asked, "The Scientific Research Institute did mention that these artificial humans actually all have certain hidden defects. We can manage and control them while they serve in the military camp, but if we just let them go and they cause some terrible consequences... whose responsibility would that be?"

"Mine," the Marshal replied calmly.

Since then, regardless of discovering that these artificial humans had exceptionally strong adaptability, requiring only a minimum of three days to be combat-ready, thus shortening training time for new recruits; or with the increased pressure of casualties, gradually shortening the production cycle for artificial humans year by year, that regulation remained unchanged.

Any artificial human soldier who could no longer serve due to injury or illness was directly discharged.

And this first batch of discharged artificial human soldiers were fortunate to learn the truth about being "left behind" before leaving the camp—

"Remember, it's only because of our Marshal's personal protection that you are able to live in this world like a real person, rather than being pulled into a meat grinder to be churned into a mess of flesh! Once you're out there, live well! Present yourself as a person, don't make the Marshal regret his decision! And remember, never do anything that harms humanity and this world! The world gave birth to you all, and the world also loves you deeply!"

The young officer named Carlos shouted out to the group with all his might and then turned to vanish into the shadows.

It was clear that his actions were unsanctioned, without permission.

But this first batch of exiled artificial human soldiers would forever remember this moment of parting.

They all kneeled together, bowing three times to the slowly closing gates of the military camp, and collectively made a vow they dared not forget for the rest of their lives—

"We won't disappoint the Marshal!"

However, genetic defects do not shift with willpower.

The shot fired many years ago finally crossed time and space to strike the future selves many years later.

Controlled by the awakening beast genes within them, the soldiers lost their own wills, and, driven by instinct, attacked and killed a noble heir within the city. That promise once made by Lawrence was finally manipulated by those with ulterior motives.

The elderly Lawrence became the biggest prey of those factions that held conservative views on artificial humans and thus became the first Marshal to be dismissed.

The one to succeed him was Weslin...

But in truth, insiders know their own affairs.

With his increasing age, it was evident that the rapid decline in his capabilities and thinking meant stepping down was inevitable.

Moreover, since he was not one to engage in party politics for personal interest, his removal would not implicate others, naturally resulting in no one willing to stand up for him.

The promise of that year was just the catalyst that triggered it all, not the core reason.

Shades of gray memory fragments passed through Lawrence's mind like silhouettes on film, and Lawrence slowly opened his eyes.

"These grown-up past events... let them be past."

He didn't want to bring it up again, nor did he want the old soldiers to keep dwelling on it.

...

But the old soldiers would not forget.

Through various channels, they learned that the old Marshal, who had given them a real life and allowed them to live "like a person," had been implicated and removed from office because of their "fall."

A deep sense of guilt lingered in the heart of each of them, and they resolved to show everyone in the city that they, the artificial humans, were not an unstable factor for the city or for humanity.

They were reliable, trustworthy.

Marshal Lawrence should not have been implicated by them!

This is the last word we, old soldiers who should have turned into a pile of rotten flesh, want to say to the world!

At the top of a colossal mechanical giant, where one couldn't see the end, a mechanical sphere reminiscent of a human head contained a full circle of green fluorescent lights forming a ring.

Chapter 709: Old Fellas' Promise_2

The perimeter of the circle was connected to countless bundles of cables that pulsed like flesh and blood. All the systems of this giant's body, including power, weapons, and movement, were connected to this "center", subject to unified control and management by this "central" hub.

Within those green fluorescent lights, resembling green light bulbs, and through the pale mist, one could vaguely make out one after another... human heads.

The numerous feedback signals from the "giant" Mecha's body inputted continuously into this processing center, just like various sensory stimuli. All the "human heads" existing in the center were unique processors, each handling different signals.

At the same time... their wills were, to some extent, interconnected, which ensured that the computing power of each "human brain" could be stacked together.

And it wasn't just a simple addition.

The mysteries of the human brain remain unsolved by humanity to this day. When these brains are fully connected through some peculiar technology, the computational power they can generate is no less impressive than that of those large computer centers.

Before the city had opened up its electronic networks, using a large number of human brains as core processors was the only way humans had conceived of as an exit on the path to "intelligence".

But this required the owners of these brains to be without defenses against each other and possess pure, unified, and harmonious wills.

Finding even one such person in this city was difficult enough, let alone a group whose combined mental prowess could rival that of computer mainframes.

Moreover, human nature is complex, thoughts jumping wildly and without boundaries.

Could there really be some technology capable of binding the flightful thoughts of humans, making them process every received "data information" as accurately as a computer?

But those old fellows who had been driven out of the military... wanted to give it a try.

This was the only and genuine possibility for their broken bodies to be of great help to the city, to humanity.

"Step aside!" the leader of the fighting faction waved his scepter and shouted loudly at those blocking the way, "I don't intend to cause slaughter, I just want them to know... the marshal, he didn't make a mistake!"

The cold light on the machine gun barrels reflected a chilling glare, and every member of the security team could feel the sharpness as if a blade was resting on their necks.

The giant's body was armed with a multitude of different models and types of guns and cannons in an eerie setup, with no apparent user for each one. Yet the security team members could feel that each of the primed weapons could fire a deadly bullet at any moment.

What kind of heavy weaponry could the city's fighting factions possibly acquire?

These small arms were all they had accumulated over the years.

But in today's world, no one dared let such a relentless barrage of firepower hit them squarely.

Even the strongest metals have a fatigue limit, and even the strongest people have their own limits.

To ensure the accomplishment of their goal, even without the intent to harm, they needed to retain the capability to do so.

"I feel like I'm being targeted by at least a dozen guns."

"Same here."

"Same here."

"There's no way to dodge them all..." A drop of cold sweat quietly slid down the forehead of a security team member.

The true elites who could enter the security team were the city's top fighters.

These battle-hardened elites were extremely sensitive to danger, and those undisguised gun barrels were pointed straight at them, impossible to ignore.

What was most important was... that the guns were evenly locking onto each of them, without duplication or omission.

Before individual strength was enough to destroy a star with a single punch, numbers were always at the heart of a fight; after all, one more person meant one more weapon.

As for the reserve of weapons... as many houses can't be occupied at once, as many weapons can't be used all at the same time.

The intelligence reports had said that this fighting faction had only about a hundred people. The full deployment of their elite squad meant a sure victory.

However... no one expected this faction to possess such lethal weaponry!

The squad leader glanced sideways at Caesar, the overall team leader next to him, and suggested softly, "Caesar, why don't we just back down for now... It looks like these guys don't have any bad intentions. Maybe they just want to show something through this opportunity."

"No!" Caesar refused flatly, his cheeks firm, eyes fixed straight ahead, "We are the benchmark of the city's security force; we can be broken, we can be benched, but we cannot be twisted. If we allow them in today, does that mean we let in bugs and beastmen tomorrow?"

"Pass my command, fight to the death! No retreat!"

Caesar's voice, accompanied by a ripple of Spiritual Energy, spread out as the members of the security team shouted in unison, "Yes!"

"Good." The leader of the War Group cast a downward gaze, yet a hint of joy flickered within.

He also wanted to see if, in the city to which he and his old comrades were so loyal, there were truly any trustworthy people.

Fortunately, there seemed to be some.

"Just step over them!"

The towering giant did not need to bother with these insignificant ants.

When the difference in size reaches a certain extreme, ordinary people's attacks are irrelevant to a giant who can freely control its entire body to repair and mend the damage.

At the same time, the other members of the War Group were not just loafing around!

The giant took a large step forward, each step causing the steel to tremble.

The War Group members lunged at the security team elite squad once again, using their bodies to delay these minions of the security team who wanted to thwart their leader's intentions.

And the giant who had easily crossed over the security team's area was only a few steps away from the closest point to the gate that had already fallen.

As the last barrier of the upper city district, this gate and the hardest breastplate on the Mecha were made of the same material, which to date was very difficult to breach quickly with any human weaponry.

However, there was no need to break through.

The giant bent down, and its hand full of firearms reached for the theoretically thicker wall beside the gate.

As its palm embedded within, an endless stream of information flashed rapidly through the glowing green ring. Sitting at the very core within the giant's body, Wen Jie frantically tapped on the keyboard.

The system controlling the city gates was an early creation, from a time when the city had not yet rebooted its electronic network and the performance and computational power of the mainframe used within the city were limited.

Although this technology had been rebooted by now, updates to the system and even the hardware involving the entire city required a long time.

The thought of breaching an unbreached system was very low on their list of priorities for updates.

Right now... facing a biological master brain center that was a notch higher in computational capacity, it was like an average person caught in an avalanche, shattered in an instant.

The loss of control over the gate system also rendered this indestructible barrier meaningless.

Yet, the giant seemed interested in the gate as well, casually fastening it onto its chest.

The mechanics surged like a living entity, and the foreign gate panel, in an instant, harmoniously became the toughest chest plate on the giant's chest.

"Boom!"

"Boom!"

The giant approached the entrance.

A tunnel entrance barely ten meters high was not adequate for a creature tens of meters tall, yet before everyone's eyes, this enormous behemoth swiftly split into the original dozen heavy-duty trucks that

drove in, morphing back into its other form as it passed through the gate, the whole process so smooth and flawless that it was nearly indefensible.

When the giant expanded its limbs within the domain of the upper city district, a glaring red alert instantly lit up on the panels of all players who had received the task.

[Warning! Warning! Current chaos value: 9999! Please stop the situation from worsening immediately!]

...

The same message flashed three times.

"Huh?" Kuang Xin and the others expressed their puzzled confusion.

The battle they were participating in was going very well, and other areas were gradually clearing up the remnants via voice communication. How did the chaos value that had just been suppressed to no more than two hundred points suddenly spike to the max?

Chapter 710: Incident

No more watching from the sidelines!

Bai E's heart grew tense as he received the same prompt on his panel.

He hadn't expected the contraption devised by the combat group to be so capable that it could actually make a beeline into the upper city district.

The city's security forces were generally equipped to deal with regular humans, at most carrying individual firearms.

Once it involved a mechanical giant of this caliber, it wasn't something the security team could handle; it would have to be an organization like the Mechanical Court, which specialized in high-end enemies.

And if the Mechanical Court got involved, refusing to negotiate and starting a fight with this mechanical giant in the upper district, the unrest could spiral out of control.

If the mission failed, all players who had chosen the side of Order would be expelled from the city due to their failure.

And even if one didn't consider the mission, they would have to think of the many residents in the city.

A fight between mechas and giants in the city, who knew how many areas would be affected.

Thinking this, Bai E shot forward, leaping into action.

With a flash, he plunged directly towards the small-scale battlefield where the combat group was entangling with the security team, and Bai E slammed his fist onto the steel road beneath him.

Under the mighty blow, the steel dented, and shockwaves rippled outward.

"Stop!"

The stern voice, propelled by Spiritual Energy, reached the ears of everyone present. Even the elite members of the security team who had been close to wrapping things up stopped in confusion and looked at this unfamiliar figure, halting their actions temporarily.

Caesar recognized the newcomer at first glance, and his eyes lit up with a hint of surprise as he called out, "General Bai!"

"Mhm," Bai E nodded at him, then turned to look at the old man from the combat group, "Are you the leader of this combat group?"

The old man, unsure of the newcomer's identity and motive, asked with a face full of confusion, "You are...?"

"He is General Bai E, a major general of the military district, currently in charge of military power, and also holds a position in the City Senate," Caesar quickly explained, "He has unobstructed access to the Hive and the high-dimensional space, and now that he has arrived, I advise you to surrender without resistance. Perhaps I can even request a reduction in your sentences."

There was no need for violence if persuasion could suffice—the longer the chaos lasted, the more the city was at risk. Quick resolution was the priority.

"A major general?" the old man murmured, gazing at Bai E with eyes full of doubt.

To be wielding current military power?

Weren't such generals typically the oldest and most capable among the military, those with long-standing credentials?

This man... shouldn't be someone who had just emerged on the scene, right?

It had been many years since he had left the barracks, but he remembered the faces from his time – if not by meeting them, then at least by name.

Bai E... why didn't this name ring any bells?

Still, coming from a military background, he couldn't afford to neglect someone possibly related to Marshal Lawrence.

After all, everything they had planned up to this point was for two reasons: one was to vindicate their existence as artificial beings, and the second... was to seek justice for Marshal Lawrence.

Both were equally important, without primary or secondary distinction.

"What is your relationship with Marshal Lawrence?"

Bai E's gaze flickered slightly.

These people hadn't caused wanton destruction along their path; he had stepped in wanting to see if there was a peaceful solution.

Now that he had a topic that might open discourse with them, he wouldn't let it slip away.

"It was him who oversaw our batch of recruits' shooting proficiency test and selected me out of protocol to join the special forces squadron to begin my service. So, what's your connection to him?"

Batch of recruits?

Shooting proficiency test?

Such familiar terms?

In the ranks of naturalborn humans... there were no such regulations, right?

Only their kind, the artificial beings, required ability testing. The recruitment of natural human soldiers was almost always via voluntary enlistment, except for those criminals who were conscripted as a form of punishment.

But these criminals also had their own talents; the military wouldn't suppress their strengths and had no need to test them.

The old man's eyes flashed with a moment of surprise, "You're an artificial being, too?!"

"Yes," Bai E nodded.

Even though everyone looked down on artificial beings as inferior, and all those who had promoted him thought that giving him the identity of a natural person was the greatest cover-up, he himself never avoided mentioning the fact that he originated as an artificial being in front of others.

"You're an artificial being?" the same question was asked again, but if the disbelief in the voice just now was mixed with astonishment, now it was pure shock.

If what the captain of the security team hadn't lied, then an artificial being had become the highest commander of the current military district and also secured membership in the City Senate—what an achievement!

Having been away from the barracks for so long, who would have expected the military to have become so enlightened?

If an artificial being could become the top commander, then the status of the common artificial being should at least be on par with that of an actual person, shouldn't it?

For a moment, the old man was overwhelmed with emotion.

He hadn't expected that, after so many years, the will of the old Marshal was completely carried through.

But if that was the case... what did their years of effort amount to?

The world had already reconciled with them.

The old man's eyes moved rapidly, his gaze fixated on Bai E as if trying to etch his image into his soul, "Is what he said just now all true?"