

Wow 751

Chapter 751: The True Camp_2

"This is good, isn't it?"

"Of course it's good! But for the city..."

It's a completely different angle.

The district generals had secretly contacted the Spiritual Power Managers Center and the Arbitration Place, spiritual energy practitioners had gathered illegally and acted on their own, and there had been a large-scale loss of personnel...

Each and every incident was a provocation to those high-ranking officials who saw the city only as their source of wealth.

What specific benefits did this operation bring to the city?

An unexpected assault on the higher-dimensional space, a blessing for the descendants and even the world?

What does that have to do with Blackwater City?

With the power to strike at higher-dimensional spaces, defending Blackwater City would be just as impenetrable; there would be no need to venture into the higher-dimensional space for distant battles, resulting in the needless deaths and injuries of so many frontline elite enforcers.

Furthermore, the loss of many enforcers and reserved spiritual energy talents meant the city would be left in a passive position when guarding against demons.

The demons that were killed weakened the entire world, yet the enforcers who died were essentially depleting Blackwater City's own strength.

A truly intense argument erupted in the city's parliamentary chamber at midnight.

There was no appeaser in this debate, no muddying the waters, nor was there any room for fence-sitters.

It was one or the other!

One side, centered around the Spiritual Power Managers Center and the Heretic Arbitrators, insisted that the operation was necessary and a tremendous achievement.

It held extremely important significance for the future of all humankind.

There were also many enlightened individuals who harbored concern for the grand cause of humanity; setting aside their own affiliations, they joined this camp.

But procedural errors still resulted in severe punishment for the core individuals involved in the incident.

Franca was stripped of all her actions rights and ordered to stay home and reflect, forbidden to leave for three years.

Bai E was not allowed to enter the city unless on official orders and was henceforth only responsible for internal military affairs.

Morphie and Kiro Lan were confined for harsh meditation, cut off from all contact with the outside world.

Beyond the main leaders involved in the operation, all related personnel received some degree of punishment.

Even several high-level officials from the Spiritual Power Managers Center such as Aglaya, as well as the Judgment Chief of the Heretical Arbitration House, Nolanitz, and the Chief Instructor, received warnings for reasons such as "poor oversight" and "lax discipline."

Once everything had settled and everyone was about to be escorted away, Franca, sitting in her seat, turned her head towards Bai E not far away and whispered through spiritual energy, "Any regrets?"

Bai E, with an expressionless face, swept his gaze over the dispersing parliament and replied calmly, "Regrets about what?"

"Regrets about the operation?"

She could see that Bai E had certain ambitions.

However, because of this reckless operation, he had lost all the privileges he had fought for, and had even attracted quite a lot of special attention.

The many "previous offenses" he now carried on his back were of course very inconvenient for his future actions.

"Not at all," Bai E said, smiling slightly and shaking his head. "In fact, it couldn't be better..."

If not for such a matter of great right and wrong, how could he have clearly seen the true face of every person in the city?

Some people always tried to get along with everyone and always wore the mask of a smile, but inside they were selfish scoundrels living only for themselves.

Some people were always very wary of him because of his artificial human origin, yet in their hearts they aspired for a true human future.

Without this incident, how could he have clearly seen the nature of each person beneath the many masks they wore?

It could be said that before this, each and every seemingly rule-breaking action of Bai E's had never been able to provoke such an absolute ideological dispute.

He secretly noted every name and corresponding figure that had firmly opposed the operation, dismissing all of its meaning.

When the time for reckoning comes, he would start with them!

And from this moment onwards, the hearts of the people of the city... became clear!

...

Bai E, escorted all the way back to the barracks, saw the military commanders of the district already waiting.

As their gazes met, a moment of silence ensued.

In the midst of cheers led by Hamilton and Carlos with a chorus of "General Bai E is awesome," everyone escorted Bai E back amid a raucous celebration to the military district.

"The General is truly badass! To think he could attack the demons' stronghold with just a handful of men!"

"Yeah, totally! General, when can you lead us to the bugs' homestead?"

Besides demons, the greatest threat in this world is the insects.

Bai E had demonstrated terrifying strength on both fronts, especially during the recent expedition into high-dimensional space.

In the unanimous narrative of the so-called expeditionary forces, it was General Bai, sword in hand, who had slaughtered his way through the entire Eternal Garden!

The carnage was such that high dimensions altered their hues, and great demons were annihilated.

It was said that the entire high-dimensional space feared this god of slaughter so much that they stirred up an unquenchable storm to sever their path of return.

Yet unbeknownst to them, the General had made arrangements long before; the once-persuaded spawn of demons had now become the heroic guide leading the army back home.

Fighting demons might be a fool's errand, but surely battling bugs couldn't be the same, right?

If General Bai could lead their military district to utterly defeat the entire insect nest, wouldn't the shared glory have everyone in the district strutting around?

"That calls for serious training!" Bai E laughed as he addressed the fervent generals, "Our soldiers can no longer be mere disposable pawns; in the next assault on the insect nest, I demand an absolute crushing victory!"

"Under the Great General's leadership, we will definitely crush them completely!"

"We'll follow the Great General's commands to the letter, with his will as our guide!"

Bai E, sitting among the crowd, knew this was the first time these proud generals had completely revealed their loyalty.

As he had expected, this incident had probed many hidden sentiments.

"By the way, Great General, the Elves visited before your return. Their Prophet wished to speak with you, apparently having heard about your high-dimensional expedition and desiring to consult you on matters of high-dimensional space. Are you available?"

'Prophet?'

Bai E was momentarily taken aback, "Are they still here?"

After establishing diplomatic relations, the Elf Delegation hadn't left the city, but obviously, they couldn't stay in the military district.

Even though Bai E had been confined, beings like Elves were not governed by the city's laws.

And the pretext for their visit was entirely justifiable—they came and went as they pleased.

"They are waiting for you."

Bai E immediately stood up, "Take me there."

...

In the drawing room, two delicate silhouettes waited quietly.

The voice of the guard at the door let them know instantly who had arrived.

In truth, they had already sensed that familiar presence from even further away as it approached.

"General Bai."

"Prophet, Miss Yueying."

After a brief greeting, the guard at the door shut it of his own accord.

"May I ask what gains you made on your journey, General Bai?" the air spirit inquired candidly after lifting her white hood, her voice gentle.

This was Bai E's first time seeing the true face of the Prophetess of the Elf Race.

Just like the first time he saw Yueying, the Prophetess's delicate and otherworldly beauty caused Bai E to be momentarily lost in thought. Her translucent skin seemed to ripple with a soft white glow, and she exuded a holy and serene aura.

But looking at her face, why did she look somewhat similar to Yueying?

Especially when Yueying, wearing a black robe, took off her black hood and revealed her unmasked face, two extremely similar faces appeared before Bai E at once.

The only difference was that the air spirit's features were slightly more mature, exuding a sense of wisdom.

Perhaps noticing the hint of confusion on Bai E's face, the air spirit explained with a smile, "As you see, we are sisters."

"..."

Bai E nodded in understanding, his gaze shifting to Yueying, who remained silent beside her. Without wasting words, he began to discuss the matter at hand, "If we're talking about gains, there's no doubt—the expedition has confirmed some speculations that were previously uncertain..."

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For instance, the indomitable demons, or the undying essence of high-dimensional space...

Listening to Bai E's words, the wind spirit nodded thoughtfully and speculated, "So, will there be a need to regularly purge the demons from high-dimensional space in the future?"

As long as the high-dimensional demons were in a "dormant" state after being slain, their initiative to tempt beings in the material world would greatly diminish.

During this time, humans, of course, would be much safer.

"But purging those demons is no easy task," murmured Bai E.

This time, it was because Fernandi had sacrificed himself that they were able to successfully enter the Eternal Garden.

Under normal circumstances, even just finding the existence of those demons was an extremely difficult task.

Where else would there be a chance to solve everything in one fell swoop like this?

Not to mention that such a task would need to be continued long-term in the future.

No one knew how long the "rebirth" of those high-dimensional demons took relative to the material world, let alone whether those high-level demons would retain their memories after revival.

Using the same tactics against them a second time would be as difficult as ascending to heaven.

Moreover...

"In fact, I also find this sudden storm quite strange," Bai E said.

Could the world have such coincidences?

No sooner had the demons died than a high-dimensional storm arose.

Taking into account how the demons had seemed to willingly approach their own deaths during their execution, Bai E felt even more that their willing deaths served more than just the purpose of transferring all their power to the final demon.

With eyes tinged with a hint of a smile, the wind spirit calmly stared at Bai E and said, "So, you think that the dormancy of those demons gave birth to this storm?"

"I have such concerns."

After all, if the collective dormancy of the demons could cause a high-dimensional storm, then thinking back on trying to purge the high-dimensional space of demons again would necessitate consideration of this problem.

One cannot always rely on the active sacrifice of a select few great beings.

The wind spirit listened quietly to Bai E's thoughts and experiences, and finally nodded gently and softly in admiration, "General Bai, you think very far ahead."

"But no matter how far ahead I think, I can't completely solve this trouble for future generations."

"Yes..." the wind spirit sighed softly, her gaze empty as she glanced over Bai's shoulder into the distance, murmuring softly, "The future... who can say for certain?"

The research on high-dimensional space was never as supported by detailed data records as the technologies of the material world are, almost always based on personal, subjective perceptions with great randomness and bias.

The short exchange only deepened Bai E's understanding of his current knowledge to a certain degree.

Watching Bai E's departing figure, the wind spirit blinked after a long while, as if waking from a lengthy dream, "He really did it..."

Her tone slightly wistful.

Although she had long foreseen this vague day, when it actually came, she still felt as if it were a dream—

"The barrier... has truly been opened."

That so-called high-dimensional storm that had surged forth was not the work of those so-called "demons" during their dormancy, but rather, a larger tempest sealing this slice of space-time had been torn open.

The roots of the four "false gods" were the pillars supporting this massive storm, and should any pillar be destroyed, the perfectly operating superstorm would lose its perfection.

With the storm collapsing, chaotic auras seeped out, causing the high-dimensional space corresponding to this time-space continuum to fall under the influence of the chaos.

The high-dimensional storm that Bai E and the others encountered had originated from this.

Of course, while the barrier may have been opened for a moment, the chaotic high-dimensional storm would continue for a substantial period of time.

Only once everything has settled down will this independent piece of space-time finally merge completely with the main timeline in the high-dimensional space.

At that time... the so-called demons and present-day "false gods" known to current knowledge will cease to exist!

Yue Ying was amazed by such a perfect structure and exclaimed in wonder, "Who knows whether the storm chose this space-time or this space-time chose the storm..."

The wind spirit gently shook her head, "To use the roots of the four 'false gods' as the core support for the storm, shielding this world from even the slightest influence of the main space-time. And only when 'someone within' possesses the power to destroy any 'false god' pillar, would this perfect storm be broken. If such a perfect design was the work of nature, then one can only marvel at the formidable power of nature."

Yue Ying opened her ruby lips slightly in astonishment, "Sister, you mean... everything here is man-made?!"

"I don't know..." the wind spirit looked into the distance but found the future unclear.

The original storm ravaged everything, magnificent warships shattered and in ruins...

She could not see any useful information, only countless fleeting, blurry moments.

After the barrier fell, the visible future birthed innumerable possibilities.

...

In the Eternal Garden, now littered with wilting greenery, the once yellow-green earth was filled with charred remains.

The immutable authority continued to draw on the connection between high-dimensional space and the beings of the material world, extracting the energy needed for its revival, and specks of yellow-green, like mold, began to emerge from all over the garden.

The revival spheres of those demons scattered around, and the upturned black cauldron lay lonely among the patches of void-like aura.

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A thick, bloated, rotting, ghastly green foot stepped onto the ground next to a black cauldron, bent down to pick up the simple-looking pot.

Gently patting the bottom of the pot, the figure sighed affectionately, "So rough..."

...

Having left the company of the Feng sisters, Yue Ying, Bai E recalled that there seemed to be a group of souls still needing attention.

Last time, when facing the full might of the unclean Sogros, she had achieved a breakthrough to the third tier of Spiritual Energy with the help of those wandering souls, and for the first time, realized that her skill 'Soul Black Hole' indeed harbored a bunch of homeless souls.

But back then, with a formidable enemy ahead, she had no time to communicate with them.

Now that she had a moment to spare, it would be possible to ask how these souls were faring in the space created by 'Soul Black Hole'?

Bai E returned to her room, sat cross-legged, and concentrated in silence.

In an instant, her consciousness shifted from the material world to the space within her personal 'Soul Black Hole'.

The initial perspective was like watching over all living creatures from high above, where each soul resembled tiny ants scurrying around in this endless and pale space.

Among them, one group stood out. While other souls ran around aimlessly, only those heading in that direction were like a dense army of marching ants, moving in an orderly fashion, seemingly with some purpose.

From this perspective, Bai E herself did not manifest.

The souls below also seemed unaware that Bai E had once again arrived in their world.

With a single thought, Bai E, who was closely connected to this space, locked onto the targets she wished to contact—

Glatis and Feier Ade were together, and just happened to be en route with that dense procession.

Bai E did not want to draw the attention of all the souls every time she descended, so she quietly landed on an uninhabited patch of ground, while using her Spiritual Energy to transmit her thoughts to the two girls.

"Lord, have you come?!"

"Lord..."

The two girls received the message and came before Bai E. Feier Ade's face lit up with joy, while Glatis bowed her head softly in greeting.

"Yes..." Bai E nodded, glancing around, "How is it going here for you?"

"Not bad," Feier Ade replied, tilting her face, identical to Nova's, with a hint of pride, "Much more comfortable than the life before."

Living a daily routine of seeking out demons to fight was far more exhilarating than the past.

Glatis pursed her lips and responded while looking down, "We found a one-way path to a higher-dimensional space in that direction, and we occasionally head out to try to clear some demons."

"A higher-dimensional space?" Bai E was taken aback and looked towards the direction of the marching souls, surprise flickering in her eyes, "It actually leads to a higher-dimensional space?"

However, with Glatis' comprehensive explanation, Bai E wasn't worried for the safety of these souls.

"But have any of you been injured when venturing out?"

Glatis nodded almost imperceptibly, "As it is combat, injuries are inevitable. But if demons are humanity's enemies, then those of us who can no longer return should find something to do..."

'Even if it means dying at the hands of demons.'

Bai E frowned slightly, looking at the girl before her who was shorter than herself and unwilling to meet her gaze, "Your future may not be without hope."

If this kind of thinking was mainstream in this space, Bai E didn't want them to adopt a defeatist attitude toward fighting demons.

Finally, the girl lifted her gaze and looked earnestly into Bai E's eyes, "Lord, even if we continue as humans, we must find ways to do something for humanity. Demons are humanity's enemy, and each demon we slay reduces the likelihood of them encroaching upon reality. And now, since we possess an essence similar to those demons, we should all the more use this special ability to fulfill our duties as humans! This is not pessimism regarding the future, and you need not feel sorrow for our current situation. Lord... You have far too much to bear."

"..." Bai E pursed her lips.

Realizing that these soul bodies all possessed their own souls, their own thoughts, and were living beings, they still maintained their human pride, which continued to drive their actions, despite only their spirits remaining.

Given that...

Bai E extended a hand, and a familiar longsword instantly appeared in the palm of his right hand.

The past nobility's ornate longsword, with repeated nourishment and elevation from demonic essence, now bore a tinge of malevolence on its blade.

Even without being unsheathed, there existed some sort of soul-piercing shriek within it.

Blade of Lawful Heart.

"This sword, from now on, I entrust to you," he said.

[Blade of Lawful Heart Authority Transfer: Glatis.]

Unlike the initial authority transfer to Yue Ying, Bai E's intention back then was purely to free Yue Ying from a state corroded by the demon of desire.

But now... Bai E genuinely entrusted the Blade of Lawful Heart itself to this unwavering girl.

From life to death, her demeanor had proven her to be a trustworthy leader.

Moreover, her life now consisted solely of battling demons, and possessing this sword would enable her to better combat those demons wielding various powers and authorities.

Additionally, an understanding he had previously reached with the Spirit of Wind was that the demons of high-dimensional space must be regularly purged to slightly reduce the threat they posed to all living beings.

He couldn't constantly take the entire city's Spiritual Energy wielders on risky ventures, perhaps these soul bodies within the soul black hole could persist in doing so.

As for himself, having given away the Blade of Lawful Heart...

What he had entrusted was merely the object itself, not the ability to enchant an ordinary longsword into the "Blade of Lawful Heart" on a whim.

Not to mention, compared to his own divided attention, entrusting the Blade of Lawful Heart to these souls, whose lives revolved around fighting demons, would probably accelerate the sword's upgrading process.

By the time, the Blade of Lawful Heart he would call forth would always be an "enhanced version," constantly on the path of upgrade.

After having players initiate character leveling, Bai E had found another path to leveling up weapons through proxies.

Of course, no matter his underlying rationale, acknowledging the intrinsic nature of Glati remained the indispensable core of his decision.

Looking at Bai E handing over the longsword sideways, Glati was slightly taken aback.

Having absorbed a trace of "eternal" Divine Power, she was capable to a certain extent of sensing the might of the sword before her.

It was a powerful Divine Artifact, nourished by the slaying of countless demons.

And now... such a Divine Artifact was being entrusted to her by the trust of her superior?

Glati's bit her lip, stepping forward respectfully, and held her hands high over her bowed head to cautiously receive the longsword that would from then on be more precious than her own life.

"This sword will provide a considerable boost in fighting demons, and it will also protect the warriors under your command from several types of demonic corruption. It is currently more effective against demons of the 'desire' and 'eternal' kinds; however, when facing demons of other authorities, you need to be extra careful," Bai E gently cautioned, as if he was explaining trivial usage details.

Glati's just held the sword tightly to her chest, silently observing all the advice coming from the superior, and finally lifted her eyes. For the first time, that typically soft gaze held an unwavering resolve, "I shall not fail in the trust you have bestowed upon me!"

Watching as Bai E's figure slowly faded from before her eyes, Glati's gripped the sword's hilt and raised it high towards the sky.

Her thoughts swept through all the soul bodies in the space, and Glati's voice echoed in the heart of each one.

"Today, under this sword we must swear our oath!"

"We shall not return until the demons are vanquished!"

"We are known as the 'Holy Oath Army'!"

Chapter 754: "Real Game"

Three whole days! Three whole days!

Do you know what it's been like for me these three days?

Without "Galaxy Online" to play, I felt like I was about to die!

As midnight approached, Kuang Xin picked up his long-missed helmet. As his consciousness grew dim, he also connected to that magnificent and tumultuous world.

[Detected that the player will enter the game world with a second identity. Hidden option "True Game" activated. Do you wish to initiate?]

[True Game: Everything you experience in the game will be exactly like the real world, without any player privileges such as "Pain Distortion," "Digital Soul," etc. However, you will also experience more novel game content that is only available in this mode. (Note: This choice is irreversible. Once initiated, all subsequent rebirths will proceed with this choice. Please make your decision carefully!)]

A fresh setting, unlike any other entry into the game before, suddenly struck Kuang Xin's eyes, and the phrase "True Game" instantly filled him with excitement.

Feelings indistinguishable from the real world?

It reminded him of that strange sensation he sensed several times before the end of his first gaming life.

Although everything in this game is already almost too real, there still seems to be an invisible barrier that prevents him from feeling the deepest joys or the deepest pains in the game world.

This feeling wasn't serious, but every time he noticed it, it was always a bit uncomfortable.

He hesitated once, twice, thrice...

Kuang Xin gritted his teeth, "Damn it! Choose!"

I want to see what this "True Game" is really like!

[Loading the "True Game" expansion pack, please wait...]

[Detected that the player has initiated the "True Game" option. Character templates will no longer offer independent planning, and character models will not be randomly generated.]

[Now loading into the game, please wait...]

"Buzz~"

As his vision blurred and refocused, the scenery before his eyes gradually became clear.

The scenery in the game was, as always, tinged with a dim undertone, and Kuang Xin couldn't shake the feeling that this entry into the game felt even more bone-chillingly real, whether due to the tangible sensation or because of the psychological effect of choosing the "True Game."

The breeze blowing from the distance seemed capable of seeping through the seams of his cloth garb and into his very bones.

How distant was this feeling?

Ever since his physical attributes had reached 15 points across the board, he had long stopped feeling the natural environment's assault against his body.

Just thinking about the many attributes and abilities he had lost before his death, Kuang Xin felt a heart-wrenching pain.

What was he thinking to have gotten so carried away and performed such self-sacrificing deeds?

"Hmm... I would probably do it again, right?" After evaluating himself for quite some time, Kuang Xin cheerfully reached this conclusion and pushed his heartache aside to start checking out this gaming life's starting panel.

"Wonder what attributes I have this time?"

Last time, I meticulously crafted my game birth attributes, specializing in charisma.

But now...

[Name]: Kuang Xin

[Race]: Human

[Template]: Player

[Health]: 84/84 (Base 60 + (Physical > 10 when -10) * 12)

[Physical]: 12 (Current) / 15 (Trainable Limit)

[Insight]: 10/15

[Reflex]: 10/15

[Mystery]: 10/∞

[Genetic Optimization]: 0/100

[Skills]: None

[Traits]: Well-Rounded

[Specialty]: Brute Force Body (Locked)

[Mastery]: None

[Spiritual Energy]: Unknown (Undeveloped)

[Technology]: None

[Mutation Risk]: None

[Assets]: 0 (Second time and still asking for money? Have some shame!)

"!!!"

Kuang Xin rubbed his eyes, and then rubbed them again.

Only after confirming that he wasn't seeing things wrong on the panel before him, he let out a howl like a banshee, "Awoooooo!"

If I had known that the base attributes would be so high after starting the True Game, who the hell would bother making custom birth attributes?

Oh right... after dying once and being reborn into the game, this option didn't pop up before, did it?

Looks like this is a small consolation for a player like me who met an untimely end?

"This is... awesome!"

Watch me quietly cultivate and climb to the top again!

Looking down at the dark pool of dirty water on the ground, Kuang Xin struggled to discern the quivering reflection of his face in the water.

He wondered what his default appearance and physique would be like this time.

Clapping his hands nonchalantly, Kuang Xin looked towards the quiet human settlements in the distance.

It was Black Street as expected.

You could see how orderly and bright Black Street was now, completely different from the last time he spawned, even under the gloomy backdrop of the weather.

Only because it was sunset did the surrounding area of Black Street appear devoid of the figures of weary manual workers.

But no matter what, relying on his reputation from having been around Black Street for so long, he could easily reclaim everything he had left behind!

A five-person patrol squad walked past the outer periphery of Black Street and, seeing Kuang Xin who had just arrived, immediately went on alert: "Stop! Who goes there?"

"Me? I'm Kuang Xin! I know your boss, Xu Ruoguang, quite well," said Kuang Xin with a smile, scanning these NPC guards and regretfully noticing that none of them were characters he was too familiar with.

As Black Street developed and expanded more properly, the security area Xu Ruoguang needed to oversee grew too, of course, meaning he couldn't be everywhere and handle everything personally anymore.

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And the only NPCs he was familiar with were the important ones like "Ji Lande," "Nova," and "Fernandi." To him, ordinary NPCs all looked the same and he never bothered to memorize them.

But clearly, the name "Kuang Xin" had provoked further hostility from this five-person squad.

How could someone like you, a pathetic weakling, compare to the succubus-like beauty of Kuang Xin?!

Not to mention Kuang Xin had returned to the soil, anyone standing surely couldn't be Kuang Xin!

"How dare you! Who are you to impersonate our sacred Kuang Xin?!"

Hearing this raggedly clad fellow brazenly impersonating, every guard in the patrol squad was filled with righteous indignation!

Back then, Kuang Xin was so pure and noble, who sacrificed his Spiritual Energy and offered himself to bring back the human heroes from their expedition to the higher-dimensional space when no one else could step forward.

How could we allow his name to be so casually sullied by a nobody, it's a disgrace to the sanctity of the name "Kuang Xin"!

"..." Kuang Xin remained silent.

He didn't know how to prove the absolute dilemma that "Kuang Xin is Kuang Xin."

The squad's vigilance was annoying, but their respect for "the former Kuang Xin" was secretly pleasing to him.

'I didn't expect to have such a high status in these NPCs' hearts,' he thought.

In the end, he could only spread his hands and give up, "But my name is Kuang Xin! Ah! It's no use explaining, just take me to see your squad leader Xu Ruoguang, and I'll talk to him."

Seeing Kuang Xin's grave expression that didn't seem to be faking it, the squad's leading guard cautiously took a step closer, "Is your name really Kuang Xin?"

"Genuine and guaranteed for a replacement if fake," Kuang Xin said, strutting with his chest out high.

"Then I suggest you change your name in the future," the squad leader took a step forward, and clapped Kuang Xin on the shoulder, "Since you want to see our squad leader, I'll take you to him."

At the same time he spoke, other members of the squad stepped forward and began patting down Kuang Xin from behind.

The squad leader explained with a smile, "Don't mind the search, it's a necessary check, otherwise I wouldn't feel safe taking you to our boss."

Xu Ruoguang wasn't a real big shot in Black Street, his status not so exalted that anyone who asked by name to see him couldn't do so.

But the external forces had not only probed Black Street once or twice, and it wasn't impossible for them to send suicidal bombers to swap lives with high-ranking Black Street figures, so necessary security measures had to be in place.

Kuang Xin had no guilty conscience and had the utmost trust in Black Street folks, letting them check him without hesitation.

"Alright!"

Receiving a confirming glance from his team that everything was in order, the squad leader half-coerced, half-led Kuang Xin forward, "Let's go see the squad leader."

Kuang Xin was guided along until he arrived at the familiar office of Xu Ruoguang. Even before they entered, he heard some familiar voices coming from inside.

The squad leader stepped forward to ask, "Squad Leader Xu, we caught someone claiming to be 'Kuang Xin,' and he says he's here to see you."

The voice inside paused for a moment before Xu Ruoguang's voice came through, "Let him come in by himself, and you continue with your duties."

"Yes." The squad leader gave Kuang Xin a push on the back and turned to leave.

Everyone knew the strength of their squad leader, with the person in his grasp, even if heavens fell, they wouldn't be responsible.

Whatever the squad leader said, they naturally followed.

Pushing open the door, Kuang Xin's eyes quickly scanned the several figures in the room.

Xu Ruoguang, Dai, Gu Lan, emmmmm...

Who's the last one?

The back suggested a girl, with hair just reaching the shoulders and a petite frame.

Could it be Yanzi?

But why had her hairstyle changed?

And her figure didn't seem quite right either?

After all the time spent together in the game, he could recognize her in the bustling market of The Lower City at a glance; she shouldn't be unrecognizable when so close.

Or was it... that while he was away, these guys had lured another female player to join their den of thieves?!

The next moment, Kuang Xin found that Guang, Dai, and the others were looking at him with a strange expression, a mix of teasing and envy.

The petite girl slowly turned around, revealing a face that was gentle and endearing. She smiled with her lips pursed, calling out in a slightly hoarse voice, "Dummy~"

"Damn it!" Kuang Xin stood frozen on the spot.

He stared at the girl in front of him, his lips trembling before he managed to stutter out a few words, "You... you... you're Yanzi?!"

"What else?" The corners of the girl's mouth held a slight smile.

Her appearance was not the stunning type that could dazzle with a single glance, yet it seemed to strike right at Kuang Xin's aesthetic preferences.

From the first glance, he felt that being with her must be very comfortable...

"..." Kuang Xin just stood there dumbfounded for a while.

Gong Yan also stood there, allowing him to gaze at her for a while.

It was only when Kuang Xin suddenly remembered an issue, "Why did you also change your appearance?"

Could it be, Yanzi also died?

"Who did this?!" Kuang Xin turned his head and glared angrily at Dai and the others.

How could you let Yanzi die before your very eyes?

Who dared to kill Yanzi?! Aren't you going to avenge her fiercely?

"Dummy~" Gong Yan couldn't help but giggle, her eyes always on Kuang Xin, the corners curving into a gentle crescent, "I died together with you, didn't I? You could only enter the game today, and isn't this my first day in the game too?"

If she died after Kuang Xin, then Kuang Xin, who had just entered the game, wouldn't be able to see her.

Having realized this, Kuang Xin suddenly grinned, "Heh heh," scratching his head cheerfully, he asked, "Why did you follow me, I was just..."

"Because you are my hero, silly!" Gong Yan suddenly interrupted Kuang Xin, her eyes intently fixed on him, pupils brimming with laughter, "I really admire you."

"..."

The girl's straightforward declaration hit Kuang Xin right in the heart, leaving him as if he had lost all ability to speak in an instant.

The complete trust and admiration from a girl with no blood relation was undoubtedly the gentlest poison for a man.

Kuang Xin felt that for the rest of his life, he probably wouldn't be able to pull himself away.

'If I ever make her frown, I'll be a damn beast!' Kuang Xin swore to himself grimly.

Dai Lian couldn't stand this blatant public display of affection. Being in the same team, he too had harbored some thoughts about Gong Yan.

But she had always seemed more inclined towards Kuang Xin.

As a result, he had long since let go of the idea, and now he could only offer his sincere blessings from the bottom of his heart.

But he couldn't continue to be choked by the public displays, "Let's go, I'll take you to see the chief. Our Kuang Xin has saved the whole 'Expeditionary Force.' The chief will surely value you even more this time!"

"Where to meet?"

"Right here. We can't enter the military camp, so we can only wait here for the chief to come."

While waiting for the chief, Kuang Xin wasn't very optimistic about this attempt.

"It's no use, the patrol just now didn't recognize me." Kuang Xin knew their intentions, but he was also aware of the game's limitations, "The chief will definitely ignore me even more."

"The chief is the chief, and the patrol is the patrol. How can you know the outcome without trying?" Although Gu Lan also knew the difficulty, she still tried to offer comfort.

Even though as NPCs, the chief couldn't recognize both of them who had been reborn and changed faces, with the backing of Dai Lian and herself, including Xu Ruoguang, these seasoned organization members, the chief might also see the reborn Kuang Xin and Gong Yan in a different light, right?

Even if they didn't immediately regain their previous positions in the organization, merely starting this "affection leveling" mission by taking one or two tests from the chief was not a bad idea.

After all, it costs nothing, might as well give it a try.

"...Whatever." Kuang Xin let things take their course.

After all, it's just a game, no one is indispensable.

But then he looked at Gong Yan beside him, whispering confidentially, "Yanzi, is this appearance now what you look like in real life?"

Chapter 756: Development

Gong Yan gave a sly look and teased, "What, would you be disappointed if it weren't like this?"

"Not really," Kuang Xin rubbed the back of his head and chuckled, "I just think the face you created this time looks really good... It must be as beautiful as you are in real life."

"..." Gong Yan pursed her lips and smiled, then leaned in close to Kuang Xin's ear and whispered: "I also started a 'real game'."

Everyone already knew that Kuang Xin had enabled the "real game" option. Although people like Dai Lian, who had never died, were envious of the initial attributes after starting the real game, they were not so envious once they realized it could only be used after dying.

Having good basic attributes is great, but trading all current accomplishments for it obviously isn't worth it; at most, it could be considered a consolation in case of accidental death in the future.

Upon hearing Gong Yan's admission, Kuang Xin immediately beamed, "I knew you should look this good..."

"Silly~"

"The boss has arrived," Dai Lian warned in a low voice.

From afar, Bai E, dressed in military attire, was striding over.

Reborn Kuang Xin felt a bit excited.

He wondered what kind of attitude the boss would have after seeing the current him.

"Boss." As the person with the most seniority in front of the boss, Dai Lian took the initiative to step forward and greet him.

"Did you call for me for a reason?" Bai E asked straight to the point.

"Here's the thing." Dai Lian gestured to Kuang Xin and Gong Yan standing behind him, "Recently we've encountered two like-minded friends. They've heard about our organization's philosophy and deeds, and they greatly admire you, boss. So they wish to apply to join our organization. Coincidentally, their names are also 'Kuang Xin' and 'Gong Yan'..."

Bai E glanced at the two silent individuals with a hint of amusement.

Their looks had nothing in common with their previous selves, not having the slightest relation.

One had transformed from a handsome gorilla to an ordinary one, and the other from a gentle lady to a delicate beauty, which just goes to show that players always compensate for what they lack through character creation.

"Sure," Bai E agreed without hesitation.

"Ah?"

Bai E's sudden response clearly caught the players off guard. Everyone knew about the boss's strict recruitment standards, and now he had so readily accepted two totally unfamiliar faces... Was it because their names were exactly the same? Or because they were introduced by an old member like Dai Lian?

Bliss had come so unexpectedly that several players were staring at each other, seemingly unable to react.

Bai E gazed at Kuang Xin and Gong Yan, his eyes filled with visible encouragement, "I sense a familiar aura on you both, perhaps this is the beginning of our fate. I only hope that you will not disgrace the great achievements that these two names have once accomplished for humanity. Welcome to 'Li Ming', the dawn is coming."

[You have been invited to join the faction: Li Ming (Prestige Level: 2), do you accept?]

"..."

"..."

Stepping forward, Kuang Xin bowed his head and pledged, "I will not let you down, boss!"

"However, I see that you both still need to work on your strength. I hope you'll focus on your training and be able to stand on your own as soon as possible."

[Generating mission description automatically...]

[Side Mission - Talent Crafting (Resource Commission): Improve your strength as much as possible, to ensure you have the power to control your own destiny and even change the human condition in the upcoming era of change.

Mission Requirements: At least enhance one of your basic attributes (stamina, insight, reflex) to 15 points.

Mission Reward: Technology Points*1, Gene Optimization Solution*1.]

(Note: "Auto-complete" allowed; once the commission is confirmed, "rights" and "expenses" will be deducted and locked.)

[Would you like to post this commission?]

During the days since Bai E's return from the high-dimensional space expedition, he had not been idle.

He had already fully mastered the manufacturing knowledge of the Gene Optimization Solution with Helen's assistance, and in his own town of Li Ming, Bai E had created the first precision production line for the "Gene Optimization Solution."

The many "Bug Tribe Essence Extracts" he had were just right to be used in the production line.

However, the sole production line had limited throughput, able to make only one dose a day, meaning Bai E had just three low-grade Gene Optimization Solutions in hand until today.

Of course, these were Gene Optimization Solutions entirely under his control, to give to whomever he wished.

Seeing the task received by the reborn Kuang Xin and Gong Yan, Dai Lian and Gu Lan's eyes widened in shock.

"This this this..."

Gene Optimization Solution!

Before he was reborn, Kuang Xin had nearly maxed out all three basic attributes, but due to the difficulty in acquiring something like the Gene Optimization Solution, his progress had stalled.

Who would have thought that right after their rebirth, they immediately had an easy way to obtain the Gene Optimization Solution!

Enhance a basic attribute to 15 points? It might have seemed insurmountable when they first entered the game, but for them now, isn't this just free for the taking?

"Boss..." Dai Lian and Gu Lan stared at Bai E with pitiful eyes.

Bai E smiled faintly, not willing to disappoint the players who had always followed him.

As the most senior among them, Dai Lian had already learned all the skills available and suitable from the level four shop. But without an updated level four Faction Shop, there were at most three skills he needed to learn; other skills were out of reach due to prerequisites, and it would be hard to meet them anytime soon.

Chapter 757: Development_2

Now, Bai E directly added an option to the fourth level that they could not refuse—

[Item—Gene Optimization Solution (Requirement: At least one basic attribute must reach 15 points),
Price—1000 Contribution Points.]

The pricing far surpassed anything before, but no one's path to growth could do without this item's assistance.

Moreover, 1000 contribution points was not an unaffordable price for Dai Lian and Gu Lan, who had always been mingling in the organization.

As soon as he saw the option, Dai Lian confirmed the exchange right away.

"I want this, my lord!"

Bai E pursed his lips into a smile and casually tossed a bottle of Gene Optimization Solution to him.

The first to exchange at least four items from the fourth-level store, Dai Lian, then saw the contents of the fifth-level store.

[Faction Shop Level Five Unlocked...]

[Service—Gene Optimization Solution Injection Set (Requirement: Own a Gene Optimization Solution), Price—200 Contribution Points.]

...

"It seems like the Gene Optimization Solution isn't as simple as just sticking a needle into an artery?"

Bai E explained with a smile, "Technology that concerns the secrets of human genes certainly requires the use of other supporting items as well as real-time monitoring of the body's state."

Just like the two bottles of Energy Supplement Liquid that were used in combination while Bai E was overseeing, to replenish the vast amount of energy consumed by the body during evolution.

Also, with Helen's help, the monitoring equipment for injecting the Gene Optimization Solution was completed in the Dawn Town, which was wholly owned by Bai E.

If one wished to inject, they could only do so there.

Of course, there were unorthodox methods as well. Anyone who had spent time in the Lower City would have heard similar rumors, but those methods certainly did not have as high a success rate as the official one.

Dai Lian, with a heavy wallet, didn't hesitate and exchanged right away.

His insight and physical attributes had also reached 15 points in these two days. He was troubled by the lack of news about Gene Optimization Solution.

Bai E casually threw him a personalized "token," which was the message prearranged with Wang Wenyan, who was staying in Dawn Town.

Anyone who held his token and went to Dawn Town would be under Wang Wenyan's care to provide the injection procedure of the Gene Optimization Solution.

When Helen went to Dawn Town, it was Wang Wenyan—who served as the head of the Production Department under Bai E—learning the relevant knowledge for injections.

"I'm off," Dai Lian said impatiently and quickly pulled the door open, hopped on his motorcycle, and was ready to take off.

Gu Lan, who lacked 15 points in all attributes, specialized mainly in mystique and reflexes, which were hard to improve. With only reflexes reaching 14.3, she needed to work harder.

Envious of the optimization fluid, she could only pat Kuang Xin on the shoulder and say, "Come on, I'll take you guys to level up!"

She needed actual combat, while Kuang Xin and Gong Yan also needed to improve their attributes as quickly as possible.

They all had the same goal.

Watching the players leave full of motivation, Bai E then sought out Xu Ruoguang, who had been serving as the "Security Captain" of Black Street.

Looking at this young man with a calm and composed expression, Bai E patted his shoulder, "You've worked hard during this time."

["Dawn" leader has perfectly passed your evaluation and now extends an invitation to join 'Dawn.' Do you accept?]

The new mission slot gained from leading the troops to Dawn Town for the first time had been given by Bai E to Xu Ruoguang, who had been longing for this opportunity.

Need you even ask? Accept!

[Xu Ruoguang has joined your faction.]

"To compensate for the outstanding contributions you have made to the organization during this inspection period, this is a welcoming gift for joining the organization."

[Side Mission Triggered—Inject the Gene Optimization Solution.]

[Side Mission—Inject the Gene Optimization Solution (Resource Type Commission): You have received a Gene Optimization Solution bestowed by the leader of Li Ming, who wishes for you to train your strength to its peak as soon as possible, to meet the requirements for the injection of the Gene Optimization Solution, and to complete its injection as soon as the requirements are met, in order to possess even greater strength to continue working for the organization.]

Mission Requirements: At least increase one of your basic attributes (physical fitness, insight, reflex) to 15 points, and bring the "Gene Optimization Solution" and "Mandate" given by the leader to Li Ming Town to complete the injection.

Mission Reward: Technology point*1, Gene Optimization Solution (settled in advance), Li Ming Mandate (settled in advance).]

The person had worked with such pride as the "Security Captain" on Black Street for so long, and although the strength and resources gained would not be few, it was somewhat of a restraint on the player's nature, so a reward was necessary.

The surprise came so suddenly that Xu Ruoguang was completely taken aback, then he quickly responded, "Thank you, my lord, for your trust!"

"This is what you deserve," Bai E said with a smile as he patted his shoulder, then turned to say goodbye, "Do well, and you will have what's due."

While walking back to the camp, Bai E hadn't even reached the camp when he received a message from Helen.

"Manufacturing successful."

The message was simple, yet it was the thing Bai E was most concerned about recently.

The blueprints he had obtained earlier—the Energy Gathering Rifle and the Dynamic Source Sword—had both been turned into freshly made samples.

If there were no issues, it would be possible to mass-produce these arms.

And if a large number of soldiers equipped with these high-tech weapons were to possess extremely high personal abilities, they would be an army that completely surpassed the conventional meaning of mortal angels!

Upon receiving the message, Bai E stretched out his hand to summon his motorcycle from his storage space, wanting to ride it straight into the wilderness.

But after hesitating for a moment, he still returned to the camp to pick up Rose before he quietly left the camp and rode his motorcycle directly toward Li Ming Town.

The new weapons research base was located in Li Ming Town.

No matter how high Bai E's position was in the camp or the city, it was ultimately given by "others."

The moment they wanted it back, a single word could make it so Bai E was "not allowed into the city without orders."

Therefore, on his own land, Bai E could release the core cutting-edge technologies he controlled with peace of mind.

After all that had happened before and the most important stance taken during the last expedition, Helen had consistently demonstrated her position, allowing Bai E to truly trust this female academy member of the Scientific Research Institute who was single-mindedly dedicated to the restoration of humankind.

His knowledge and blueprints that floated in the sky could only be turned into actual technology products and reveal their intended effects with her comprehensive knowledge as the foundation.

The motorcycle roared through the journey in silence.

The wilderness, once perilous for humans, was now like a flat land for the present Bai E.

The creatures of the wilderness were not foolish, even those wild creatures contaminated by various messy genes.

If the roar of a motorcycle was heard on the most direct and fixed route between Blackwater City and Li Ming Town, it meant "the Grim Reaper has come!"

The wild beasts, including various insects and beastmen, had already become part of nature as the most basic elements decomposed by bacteria; there was not a single being that dared to anger the absolute ruler on this path.

The city prohibited Bai E from entering, but it didn't say Bai E couldn't leave the city.

Speeding all the way, the distance, which was not particularly far to begin with, was crossed even more quickly with Bai E using Spiritual Energy to boost the motorcycle.

Since his Spiritual Energy had reached the third tier, the external use of Spiritual Energy allowed Bai E to do more things—for example, to enhance the inherent uses of some non-weapon items so that they exceed their theoretical limits in use.

The familiar town grew closer in sight, but its appearance had changed drastically from the past.

Various mechanized devices made the town now resemble a city of steel, and even the guarding turrets were filled with a cold threat.

Chapter 758: Intelligent Mechanism Base

Building a steel town was no easy feat, even though the town of Li Ming had a complete steel production factory and even the freedom to exploit the northern ore veins.

The limitations of their production capacity prevented them from quickly handcrafting an entire steel town, but the fact had already emerged that the intelligent mechanisms had contributed the most to the effort.

That's right, if you lack something, you go borrow it from the great mechanoids.

With the expertise of mechanoid creation in hand, as long as you bring the mechanoids back, they can become your own.

The rise of the town of Li Ming came at the expense of three Smart Machinery Factories being leveled to the ground.

Rose, who hadn't visited Li Ming for a long time, couldn't help but widen her eyes at the sight of such a grand steel metropolis standing amidst the wilderness.

"It's... changed so much!"

"The changes inside are even greater."

Bai E smiled as he greeted the hidden sentry on the outskirts of the town, who only relaxed the alertness of the many sentinels controlling the town's artillery batteries after recognizing Bai E.

If a stranger approached the city, they would definitely be interrogated by the artillery.

The motorcycle roared through the town's main streets, where remnants of the past had regained some of their pre-desolation luster.

Within the steel barriers, there still lay its tender internal structures.

The town's research and development department was located underground where they once combated those giant spiders. The vast subterranean space provided Helen with an ample experimental foundation, and its location, far from the main residential areas, ensured the townspeople wouldn't be too greatly affected by any tests.

Upon arrival with Rose, Bai E found Helen waiting quietly with several town participants.

And beside them, a humanoid mechanical creation, hollowed out in the middle with just a skeletal frame for its limbs and a bulky backpack, stood silently upon the earth.

Stepping off the motorcycle, Bai E approached the conspicuous mechanical creation, "Is this it?"

"Yes." Helen's palm gently caressed the mechanoid beside her, "This is just a preliminary experimental model. There are lots of optimizations to be made in structure and detail, but for the core parts, I've reached the limits of what can be seen in a short amount of time."

The core parts were two crafted items from the blueprints: the Energy Gathering Rifle and the Dynamic Source Sword.

In each of the humanoid mechanoid's mechanical hands, it held a weapon—one rifle, one sword—both absurdly large, seemingly unusable by ordinary humans.

They could only be wielded properly with the help of the mechanoid's grippers.

And because of this, the firearms occupied such an overwhelming proportion of the mechanism's structure that it looked as though the entire body existed solely for these two weapons.

In fact, that was indeed the case...

"I've tried my best to reduce the size of these two weapons, but given the current stage, I can only minimize the core components to this extent. That's why they may look... a bit large. To balance the weight of the two weapons and prevent the body from becoming unbalanced, I've added a jet system to the Miniature Power Furnace on the back. While it balances the weight, it also allows the body to achieve brief instances of levitation and rotation. That's the basic model thus far; you can give it a try."

Helen looked exhausted as she discussed the two core weapons.

Only once you truly handle them do you realize the difficulty of constructing such massive things. It's already tremendously challenging to stabilize such a large-scale Force Field Generator, and even the resultant creation is quite unstable.

Making it smaller is even more difficult, as it's impossible to compress it to fully fit a human body for use.

The weapons, now roughly twice the size of a normal person, are her final product... Rather than being intended for human use, they seem more apt for orcs.

Their stature would be just about right...

Helen, having said her piece, looked at Bai E with anticipation in her eyes.

Individual tests on the Energy Gathering Rifle and Dynamic Source Sword had encountered no problems, but this was the first time the two types of weapons would be tested outside of a laboratory setting, as a single combat unit integrated with the Miniature Power Furnace.

The coordination among the three systems and the stability of the entire structure were yet to be tested, and Helen was not utterly confident about it.

Seeing Helen's expression, Bai E curiously asked, "What's wrong? Haven't you tried it out?"

A peculiar look immediately crossed Helen's face, "We can't try it."

"Can't try it?"

"It's too heavy..."

Without auxiliary drive modules, even though the mechanical structure already transfers the body's weight through its skeleton to the ground beneath its feet, simply wanting to freely wield both weapons was impossible without Divine Power or the help of a few capable individuals.

Among the refugees from Grey Iron City in Li Ming, no such talents had emerged.

If they wanted to add auxiliary drive modules, they would have to inevitably increase the overall scale of the machine, affecting many aspects.

The Mechanical Court in Blackwater City actually has similar experience with small personal mecha that they could draw upon; however, because of previous energy technology limitations, the smallest mecha in the city was several meters tall.

Not to mention the addition of two new weapon systems and a new energy source, which necessitated many more changes. Even Helen couldn't offer a perfect solution for the time being.

And so, the current rudimentary machine was the first experimental model.

Chapter 759: Intelligent Mechanism Base_2

"Okay."

Bai E hesitated for a moment, then turned to Rose beside him and said with a smile, "It's your turn to perform."

Bringing Rose was with this intent.

His own strength was relatively exaggerated; this weapon module might have its boosting effect overshadowed by his own abilities. Only a scientific creation that could enable even an ordinary person to wield great power was a meaningful technological artifact.

Although the initial test model had a threshold for use by truly ordinary people, Rose's individual strength wasn't to that outrageous extent, was it?

It was most appropriate for her to test this freshly produced experimental model.

"Sure." Rose looked at the crude mecha with great interest, and cheerfully agreed upon hearing his request.

She had been eager to try out the new weapon system Bai E had been mentioning.

"I'll help you put it on." Helen personally helped Rose don the suit of weaponized exoskeleton mecha.

Rose cooperated by entering the interior of the mecha, her limbs aligning with the framework; with Helen's assistance, she completed the whole system binding, and while doing so, she asked, "What's the target?"

A test naturally needed a target to aim for.

"Let's choose this one." Bai E pointed to a corner of the map in his hand, where the words "Intelligent Mechanism Base" were marked vividly.

For the development of Li Ming Town, the surrounding Smart Machinery Factories had been basically wiped out, and many of the Intelligent Mechanism Outposts, it seemed, had received orders from their superiors and were all contracting.

In the task of patrolling and sweeping by those synthetic soldiers in the military district, there was almost no sign of Intelligent Mechanisms on the map anymore.

Only the last stronghold belonging to the Intelligent Mechanisms in the vicinity of Blackwater City stubbornly stood in place.

Taking this opportunity, Bai E also wanted to completely eradicate it.

The rise of a city necessarily required clearing all obstacles in the surrounding area.

Intelligent Mechanisms, beastmen, bugs...

Bai E might not be able to pay attention to the situations around other cities for the time being, but around Blackwater City, Bai E would not allow any source that could threaten the city to emerge!

"You're playing big?" Helen was startled and looked at Bai E with some disbelief.

"We need a strong opponent to demonstrate the true power of this combat equipment," Bai E said with a smile, "besides, you have me, don't you?"

The test was one purpose, fulfilling his strategic objective was another.

Otherwise, how could he waste so much valuable time on just one test?

Rose was fearless, her eyes flashing with a strong fighting spirit as she quickly agreed, "Okay!"

Finally clad in the full exoskeleton combat mecha, Rose tentatively moved her shoulders a few times. The exoskeleton on the exterior, together with the arms and the mechanical palm holding the Dynamic Source Sword, followed suit with exaggerated motions.

Helen looked at Rose's body, which had no protection in front of the mecha interior, with eyes full of worry, "You have the weapons now, but I haven't had time to install the defense module yet... I thought you just came to test the performance..."

For instance, military mechas used simple stacking of Yuan series alloys, or like those of the Mechanical Court, enhanced their defense functions with Electromagnetic Field Shields... But right now, none!

Was she supposed to resist the Intelligent Mechanisms' guns and cannons with her bare body?

It was hard to imagine that being something humans could accomplish.

Even Bai E's own records showed he could only move freely in and out of the Intelligent Mechanisms' armies while piloting a mecha.

"What's the big deal?" Rose lifted the Dynamic Source Sword in her right hand, as she was quickly becoming accustomed to the overall performance of the exoskeleton combat mecha.

"Isn't this thing invincible?"

If its force field could be invincible, then it probably shouldn't be a problem to destroy anything it encountered.

The Dynamic Source Sword, in Rose's "delicate" stature, was like a perfect door panel. Apart from using it to chop down foes, it seemed to be a good choice as a shield as well.

"..." As a pure researcher, Helen had never thought her product would have special usage techniques developed by the user even before it was properly utilized.

"Let's go."

At this point, there was nothing left to say.

Perhaps just like Bai E said... there was always his backup plan, wasn't there?

Watching Rose control the mech towards the transport truck specially prepared for her, Bai E gave the command, "Depart!"

Departing wasn't just Helen's observation team, but the entire transportation crew of Li Ming Town.

When the adults said to purchase goods from Intelligent Mechanism Base, that meant they were going to purchase goods from Intelligent Mechanism Base!

Having grown accustomed to this rhythm of purchasing, they were gradually beginning to feel familiar with this new aspect of the world—

Turns out, this world wasn't as hopeless and terrible as they thought, was it?

...

"Report, Captain! A large convoy has been detected passing five kilometers ahead. Shall we approach for investigation?"

"Large-scale? Is it the people from Blackwater City?"

"Not sure... at least they aren't the military from Blackwater City. Their equipment looks sophisticated, but it's not uniform; it's more like a private armed force."

"A private armed force?" The man with a stubble chuckled silently to himself, "A large-scale private armed force would probably not escape the attention of Blackwater City's higher-ups. Maybe it's the private army of some of those people."

In this era, it was a common occurrence for some of the top brass in the cities to foster unofficial forces for tasks that were difficult to accomplish publicly, especially in cities without any significant external threats.

Blackwater City shouldn't have had the luxury to allow for such conditions, but if something exists, it has its reasons. Don't get hung up on why it exists in the first place.

Thinking this, the captain waved his hand dismissively, "Avoid them, keep moving forward, and carry out the original mission. We are messengers; we don't need to make unnecessary complications."

No matter how many messes and hidden troubles Blackwater City had, it was still a part of the Empire.

You solve your own internal issues.

The unification of the Empire was imminent, and that was the mission carried by them, the messengers.

...

The Intelligent Mechanism Base was nestled in a mountain range.

The grey-black steel merged almost seamlessly with the mountains, and from a distance, it was hard to distinguish between them, giving the impression that the mountains themselves were shimmering with a ponderous sheen.

This was a research and development base established by humans during the Golden Age, highly automated internally.

It fell to the Intelligent Mechanism rebellion at the very onset and has since been the main base of Intelligent Mechanism in the region, quite naturally.

As times changed, even though many of the original creations within the base had aged, Intelligent Mechanisms, having perfectly inherited human technology and developed their unique tech, had already made large-scale replacements and optimizations to its structure.

Now it was even more defensible and difficult to attack, a tough nut to crack.

The reason humanity maintained a cautious stance towards Intelligent Mechs lay here; the outlying Intelligent Mechanism outposts and factories could actually be dealt with, if one was willing to pay the price.

But the problem was that the spoils from attacking Intelligent Mechanisms were hard to assimilate, the cost was high, and it was easy to invite retaliation from the Intelligent Mechanisms of the main base.

The key issue was that once they retaliated, they just retreated back into their defensive shell like a withdrawing turtle.

It was like dealing with higher-dimensional demons; only they attacked humans, and there was no opportunity for humans to strike back.

As time passed, humanity's approach towards Intelligent Mechanisms was like selective blindness; as long as their mining vehicles weren't digging right up to their doorsteps, they generally left them alone.

Fortunately, the wisdom possessed by these Intelligent Mechanisms allowed them to rationally maintain this tacit understanding with humanity, which is how they managed to be "neighbors" peacefully for so many years.

But today, Bai E wasn't very willing to continue being "neighbors" with them.

For this reason, he had even made full preparations!

"Don't rush." Bai E, looking at the distant iron-grey mountains and knowing the whole area was the Intelligent Mechanism Base, stopped the transport convoy following him.

Then he began pulling out metal parts from his storage space, "I'll create a mecha first, and then we'll talk!"

Chapter 760: compromise?

Every mecha of the military required a detailed usage log, including exact times of entering and exiting the storage, and it was forbidden to remain out of storage for long periods during non-combat and training missions—regulations that not even Bai E, now a general and the de facto controller of the military, could violate.

Therefore, his mecha was not officially recorded in the registry.

Using the power almost equivalent to that of a marshal, under the guise of routine wear and tear, Bai E gradually embezzled parts to slowly assemble a complete set of mecha components, which for him was only a matter of time.

The only thing he had taken out of the hangar without authorization was the mech's insignia, which bore the mecha's number.

Now, before the eyes of the entire Vanguard Team that had arrived earlier, Bai E manually assembled the various large components, which were still in parts, into a brand-new mecha.

Helen, who silently watched everything, no longer wanted to delve into the strength that Bai E displayed by moving such gigantic mecha parts by hand. She found Bai E's blatant behavior both irritating and amusing, "You're using these things stolen from the city right before my eyes?!"

Bai E, busy with his task, replied without looking back, "Aren't we all friends now?"

"In fact, with your current status, it wouldn't be a problem to have one specially assigned to you if you really wanted it."

"Those that are specially assigned are still out in the open..."

Such a large object would be too obvious if it went missing.

Everything about him that was public was probably under the strict surveillance of those in the high echelons of the city.

No matter how much it was "his," it ultimately belonged to the city.

What Bai E needed was absolute ownership that truly belonged to him.

"That's true," Helen said, pulling down her gold-rimmed glasses on her face with a slight sense of resignation.

The glasses, designed for physical analysis, were now completely meaningless to Bai E, who had activated his Spiritual Energy abilities. Perhaps at times like these, the pure enjoyment with the naked eye was more meaningful.

As the mecha began to take shape, a distinct commotion emerged from within the Intelligent Mechanism Base, which seemed to be in a slumber.

At the very peak of the highest cliff, a long crack suddenly split open, and a metal door slowly unfolded, revealing a pure white figure rising into the air from within.

After a brief hover in the air, it charged directly toward the Vanguard Team where Bai E was.

Rose had just stepped down from the transport vehicle, outfitted in her exoskeleton armor, and with her excellent vision, she immediately spotted the rapidly approaching object, "First-generation Intelligent Mechanism!"

Having followed Bai E through campaigns north and south, she had seen much, and knew that the pure white Intelligent Mechanism, graceful and agile, and even capable of freely flying and circling in the air, was nothing like the ordinary, cumbersome models.

"They're launching an initiative!" Rose tensed, trying to control her exoskeleton armor to quickly move forward, attempting to stand in front of everyone and block the first-generation Intelligent Mechanism's attack.

"Don't be nervous," Bai E said, frowning slightly while still assembling the mecha, stopping Rose's next move.

He was not quite clear on what the other party intended, but at least they didn't seem to come for an attack.

This first-generation white Intelligent Mechanism before him was the same one that had fled from the Intelligent Mechanism army that attacked Li Ming Town last time.

If it had been able to flee after leading an entire army to encircle Bai E last time, how could it now launch a solo assault?

"Let's see what it wants to do before we act."

"...Yes," Rose replied, still standing in front of Bai E but slightly to the side, warily watching the approaching figure at a not-so-rapid speed.

"Human~, what~ are~ you~ pre~par~ing~ to~ do~?" A mechanical female voice with a heavy electronic tone emitted from the Intelligent Mechanism, reaching the ears of everyone in the Vanguard Team.

The voice simulated by the first-generation Intelligent Mechanism consisted only of simple sentences and lacked any tone indicating emotion, making it impossible for anyone to discern the meaning behind its question.

However, everyone in the Vanguard Team, who had come with the mindset of destroying the opposition, tensed up, thinking the enemy had likely come to reproach them and felt somewhat intimidated.

But the next moment, they reconsidered—

'Wait! Aren't we mortal enemies of the Intelligent Mechanisms? What does it matter if we're here to fight them?'

With that thought, they once again stood tall and proud, each looking at the silver-white body suspended in mid-air.

"Try out new weapons, and by the way, take some stuff from you," Bai E said, pointing at Rose and looking sincerely at the newcomer, divulging his intentions.

"For your expansion, I have already ordered the proactive withdrawal from every factory and outpost outside this base, leaving the entire world to you humans. Is it still not enough to satisfy your human greed?" The silver first-generation Intelligent Mechanism stared at Bai E, the flickering electronic eyes seemingly reflecting confusion.

"This is not about satisfaction. It's merely about what we need to do. This world inherently belongs to humans, and we are simply reclaiming what is ours, step by step," Bai E explained seriously as he looked back at the Intelligent Mechanism, "Of course, I don't need the approval of your kind, beings under taboo. Feel free to try and stop what I am about to do."

"Or you could cooperate."

"..."

"..."

"???" Bai E looked at the other party, momentarily puzzled.

Frankly, this was something he had not anticipated.

"What... what did you say?"

It was not just Bai E, the entire Vanguard Team, including Helen, stared somewhat absentmindedly at the silver-white first-generation Intelligent Mechanism that had shown up to negotiate.