

Wow 771

Chapter 771: Empire unification?_2

Especially as Bai E's influence in Blackwater City grew stronger, the bond between the two cities deepened.

However, upon hearing the doctor's question, Bai E's face froze in surprise, not expecting to hear this unfamiliar term, "A messenger from the capital?"

There was no need for Bai E to hide anything regarding this matter. Seeing Bai E's expression, the doctor felt somewhat disappointed, "It seems you don't know... or could it be that the messenger just happened to depart around the same time you did?"

After all, the timing of Bai E leading people to the Intelligent Mechanism Base and the arrival of the messenger from the capital to Grey Iron City seemed to be closely spaced.

Bai E furrowed his brows slightly and took the initiative to ask, "The messenger from the capital, what news did he bring?"

The doctor didn't beat around the bush, but sighed softly with a serious look, "Unification."

Although today all the cities still claim the identity of the "Empire" on the surface, the entity that was the Empire had long existed in name only, with cities governing themselves separately, each clearing the snow from their own thresholds.

Cities with nearby insect nests, Beastman Plantations, or large Intelligent Mechanism Bases, these kinds of natural disaster-like entities, naturally had more difficult lives. They could either go extinct and relocate or, like early Blackwater City, endure hardships while hoping for a counterattack.

Cities without such natural disasters nearby naturally experienced a more peaceful life, but in these times, peace wasn't within easy reach.

Without sufficient external pressure, unity within was hard to achieve.

Not to mention that the distance from the three major disasters was only relative.

The wilderness was never safe, so cities further away couldn't necessarily rest easy either.

Each city's development varied, among them... The "capital," inheriting the most gifts from the Golden Age, was naturally the strongest among the struggling cities of this chaotic world.

And now... this strongest city intended to once again unify humanity, to forge yet another super empire.

"Is it feasible?" Bai E frowned.

The Empire was scattered due to internal strife and external threats, not natural division.

It was because the wilderness was too dangerous that the flights and the wilderness railways were gradually abandoned due to their high loss rates.

Additionally, with the sealing of network technology, the cities couldn't exchange information timely and gradually became isolated.

Under various reasons, the Empire that once was eventually became a mere formality.

No one spoke of "division."

But the communication between each city was indeed shallow, everyone minding their own business.

Now, the capital aimed to restore the grandeur of a great unified era. The first challenge it faced were these inherent difficulties that had invisibly split and dissolved the former empire.

"Nobody knows, but they want to try," the doctor said gravely, "The news of you guys taking down the Electronic Demon is known by most cities now. The reboot of network technology is underway, and I believe the fruits of this labor will soon be seen. With that, communication won't be a big issue. The only challenge left will be the disasters in the wild."

"As for those disasters... the capital's intention is to call upon neighboring cities to cooperate sincerely in the name of the Empire, to consolidate all exploitable forces, and remove every troublesome element that hinders our development! Especially for those cities far from the sources of disasters, without

external enemies, these cities' strength is being exhausted in constant infighting. It would be better to direct their energy against external foes.

As for the cities that have been surviving on the edges of the disaster source until now, they are actually not much weaker than the sources of disaster. If they had the help of allies with equivalent power, even at a great cost, they should be able to remove those dangerous sources."

When necessary, the Imperial Capital would even send out powerful warriors or armies to help, striving to sweep out a vast expanse of territory where humanity could live safely and securely.

The most important thing was that the social structure of cities governing themselves independently had been explored to its limits. The greatness of one or two cities could ultimately not change the fate of all humanity. The Imperial Capital had reached the end of its urban form, and at such a critical juncture, not advancing meant retreating! If humanity did not unite, it would slowly perish over time."

This was the message from the messenger, and it was said to be the intent of that great personage in the Imperial Capital.

The moment to change the fate of humanity had arrived!

"So, what are you worried about?" Bai E looked at the doctor.

It sounded like goodwill, that apart from requiring some complacent cities to send troops to aid their allies, it should be good news for most other cities.

But the doctor's hesitation surely came from his concerns.

The doctor sighed lightly, his gaze distant, "I lived through the time when the Empire had not yet completely fallen. I know all too well the ways those people operate. Where there is help, there is also abandonment. With humanity's current strength, it's very difficult to clear all sources of calamity from the map. At most, vast 'safe zones' could only be established in regions centered around the Imperial Capital or in some important mining areas. That way, it might just barely be possible to return to the Empire's former glory and also gather the power of all cities within the 'safe zones' to achieve another leap in developmental strength.

However... that's only for the cities within the 'safe zones.' As for those outside the 'safe zones,' they might have to give up their own cities, either to be exploited or to relocate because they fall under the jurisdiction of the 'new Empire.'

Whether it's exploitation or relocation, for so many people in a city, neither is a good outcome. The existing cities, no matter how dilapidated, can still provide for most people with some patching up. But with this plan's execution, who knows how many will die on the road to unification!"

And our Grey Iron City, including your Blackwater City, is not close to the Imperial Capital. The mines nearby... for the Empire, they are certainly not rich. Joining this plan could very likely mean being on the side that's exploited. There are uncertainties too, but... it's unclear."

"What uncertainties are you referring to?"

"You," the doctor steadfastly gazed at Bai E, "as the core remnants of the Root Server are currently in your hands, and the electronic demon died by your hand too. If there is any reason for the Empire to take serious notice of us, it can only be because of that Root Server. However, the Root Server differs

from mines and such; it requires only the regular maintenance by its internal staff and the ability to protect that small area itself, not needing frequent material exchanges with the outside world. So, whether the reborn Empire will carve out a large 'safe zone' around this server base, which doesn't actually need much safe space, remains unknown."

Upon hearing this, Bai E fell into deep thought.

The doctor's considerations certainly had their rationale.

But the Imperial Capital's plan was also considered for the future of humanity.

Each city being independent is inevitably detrimental to humanity's future.

The size of the city limits human production capacity.

Throughout history, anything has been done more efficiently through division of labor.

If there is no communication between cities, each city must first satisfy the survival needs of its population before using any remaining resources to produce materials for external expansion.

But if cities could cooperate and communicate with each other, then those producing survival materials would focus on survival materials, those producing war materials would focus on war materials, miners would mine, and experts would refine their craft.

Only this way can the overall level of production be raised, achieving another great revival of human civilization.

Were Bai E in the Imperial Capital's position, he might also wish to implement this plan.

But for the many cities far from the core, such as Blackwater City including Grey Iron City, the plan's impact on the cities is likely too difficult to accept.

Chapter 772: Decision of Blackwater City

Bai E fell into a brief contemplation before raising his head to the doctor and said, "This is a major issue, Blackwater City wouldn't hide it from me."

Indeed, it couldn't be hidden, even if those high-ups deliberately avoided him, there were always their own people in the city whom they couldn't avoid.

Helen, Aglaya, Kiro Lan, and even Caesar...

As long as any one of these familiar figures received the message, he would never be completely oblivious.

Thus, the truth was that when he left Blackwater City, the messenger from the imperial capital hadn't yet arrived at Blackwater City.

And since Grey Iron City was not far from Blackwater City, since the messenger to Grey Iron City had arrived two or three days ago, he estimated that the messenger heading to Blackwater City should have also arrived by now.

If it was such a significant event that could influence the future direction of the entire city, those city leaders who were trying to keep him out of the power center might even consider involving him in the deliberations.

"..."

With this thought, Bai E realized, "I need to go back once."

Although his personal freedom in Blackwater City wasn't completely restricted, it could still be somewhat troublesome if those higher-ups couldn't find him in a timely manner without a reasonable explanation.

Bai E was not afraid of them, but it was indeed quite annoying to be "educated" by those people all the time.

Most importantly, if he managed to return in time, he might be able to catch the response strategy meeting to the imperial messenger.

Knowing the reaction of the Blackwater City leadership, he could also inform the doctor in time, so that Grey Iron City could make plans to move forward or retreat together.

"It is indeed time to return," the doctor muttered in response, "I'll wait for your reply."

"Hmm!"

...

Inside the Blackwater City council hall, a familiar old man heard a report from his subordinate through the earpiece: "The military camp people say he went out on a mission; they didn't say when he'd be back."

"..." The cold gleam in the elder's eyes flared, "Disobedient thing!"

He was told not to enter the city, and he ran off outside the city walls?!

He's the leader of an army; does he always have to personally lead his men on missions?

'It seems the position of Military District Marshal really can't be directly handed over to him. Once Weslin wakes up, he still needs to be there to check and balance this guy!'

With these thoughts in mind, the elder waved his hand and said to the other members of the Elder Council beside him, "We won't wait for him. He's gone off who knows where outside the city, and waiting for him doesn't have any strategic significance."

A mere enforcer, who neither understood the city nor possessed much of a political mind, was only awaited out of respect for his strength and status.

With him not present, it made no sense for so many people to wait for just one man.

An enforcer, having post-event awareness, that would be sufficient!

Clearing his throat, the elder looked around at the representatives of all social strata of the city that had been gathered and said, "Now that everyone is here, let me tell you about something that has just happened. Most of you here must already know about the arrival of the imperial messenger, but I reckon many of you are still in the dark about their purpose. We called everyone here today to hear your respective views on this matter."

"The message from the imperial messenger is a decision from the imperial capital..."

The imperial messenger conveyed the message very clearly; their Elder Council had already had a small internal discussion on their own.

However, given the magnitude of the issue, it was manageable to hear the different views of people from all levels of the city, which might lead to a more suitable response plan.

"...that is the intention of the imperial side. Regarding this proposal initiated by the imperial capital, what are your thoughts, ladies and gentlemen?"

"..."

The room went quiet for a moment.

The news from the imperial messenger was indeed vast, and many representatives who had just heard it needed time to digest this information, think it over, before making a rational judgment.

But there were also some who had known earlier and wanted to influence the audience with their preconceived notions, and spoke up in the midst of the silence, "In my opinion, this is nothing but a blatant scheme by the imperial capital!"

Since the imperial messenger was not on site, this was entirely Blackwater City's own internal discussion without the need for secrets or pretenses.

Someone echoed the question, "How so?"

The person scoffed and explained with a sneer, "This so-called alliance is nothing more than an attempt to use the strength of all our cities to create a super-secure core zone! The global spread of nests, smart machines, and roving beastmen are disasters that even our ancestors from the Golden Age failed to completely eradicate from the Earth. Just with us now, they hope to clear the globe? Dream on!"

"Didn't the imperial capital say they would support every city in clearing the threats from the surrounding wilderness?" someone countered.

The critic sneered again, "Thousands of cities across the globe, can the imperial capital really provide that much support? The sole consequence of joining this alliance is to help them build a grand paradise centered around the imperial capital. As for other places, they will inevitably be abandoned under the threat of natural disasters. The imperial capital only wants to gather strength, not to protect each and every city! That is their true starting point! What do we have here? Nothing! We aren't a rich mining area, nor are we close to the imperial capital. Why would the imperial capital have any reason to spread its resources to protect a city like ours?"

Repeated defeats against these disasters over time had taken a heavy toll on some people's will to fight.

Even if the city now had Bai E, a warrior with heaven-defying strength, as long as the nests remained standing, it signified that humanity could not conquer these natural calamities.

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We can't even say that defeating one Bug nest means we can defeat every Bug nest.

Defeating every Bug nest doesn't mean those creatures with immense vitality will completely disappear.

What the Imperial Capital mentioned about eliminating all threats in the wilderness... just take it as a joke.

Such an idealistic situation, in an ideal world, will absolutely, absolutely not happen!

"In this grand chess game of alliance, we... are just pawns!"

"If that's what you're saying, then we simply won't participate," someone retorted.

"Not participate?" The opposing member sneered again, "Do you think you can just not participate if you don't want to? Cities that don't participate aren't allies of theirs, and when the Imperial Capital Alliance can't kill those disasters, what's to stop them from steering them our way? Will Blackwater City still have a way to survive? Can we just enter or not enter such a hegemonic alliance at will?"

"So what are you saying, we might as well all slit our throats and kill ourselves, there's no point in discussing further!" another member shouted.

"That's why this is a 'blatant scheme'!" The speaker's eyes turned bloodshot, and he pounded the table in front of him with his fist, causing a muffled "bang," "But... there is still a chance!"

"A chance?"

"Yes! A chance," the speaker nodded vigorously, "If we can see through the Imperial Capital's blatant scheme, other cities can certainly see it too. Those cities that benefit from it will of course approve wholeheartedly, but those cities whose interests are harmed will definitely feel dissatisfied. This, this is our opportunity! If we can unite, then perhaps we will no longer fear pressure from the Imperial Capital."

A few old members of the Elder Council exchanged glances, satisfaction in their eyes.

Although the views of this opposition speaker were somewhat radical, and even directly opposite to their internal plans.

The direction he was leading them in was correct.

Hence, the leading elder waited for a moment of silence before voicing out, "Does anyone else have any opinions?"

After thinking it over carefully, another woman with glasses stood up and said in a serious tone, "But I believe this is an opportunity that could change mankind, and also change the future of our city!"

The woman glanced around the room, her voice soft, "Ladies and gentlemen, we are no longer afraid of the Bug nests, are we? The last time our military district launched an operation against the Bug nest, the results showed that with more thorough preparation, there is hope to eliminate the source of this natural disaster closest to our city. Besides this Bug nest, in fact, there are no fatal threats within a large area around Blackwater City. Even if there are, under the leadership of Bai E, we are capable of fighting back."

The woman pushed the frame of her glasses up her nose, her eyes burning with zeal, "For us, the situation can't get any worse. We are not like those cities that are on the verge of collapse. We have the confidence. Even if the Imperial Capital regards Blackwater City as a disposable piece, we... aren't afraid! However, if we join this alliance, we will be able to enjoy shared production capabilities. As long as we have the capacity to maintain the safety of this shared line, it is actually beneficial to our city's development."

The more the woman spoke, the more excited she became, her glasses reflecting a dazzling glare, "Wasn't our city's development plan to gradually expand the city's scale outward after clearing the Black Rock District Hive? This strategy aligns with the Imperial Capital's development plans. Accepting the Union of the Imperial Capital, I think, may not be a bad thing after all."

As the pro-union faction spoke up, the tone of the entire meeting gradually heated up.

In the eyes of the fence-sitters, "Absolute opposition and absolute support are irrational choices, only stage-by-stage adjustments made during observation and development are truly suitable for our city situation!"

"The envoys of the Imperial Capital want an immediate solution, not a decision made through a lengthy process of observation and development. Icing on the cake is far worse than sending charcoal in snowy weather!"

"Icing on the cake is still better than a desperate gamble!"

Seeing the situation becoming more chaotic, an elder from the Elder Council coughed a few times to interrupt everyone's arguments, "As for the response to the messenger from the Imperial Capital, there is no need to rush. Everyone can consider it carefully in private, and for today, let's conclude the meeting. When the time is right, we will invite everyone to make the final deliberation."

After the meeting dispersed, in a corner of the city, a few gathered figures spoke intensely with rebellious words.

"Interests?! Interests?! It's all about interests! Whose city is this after all, the high officials' or humanity's?" Caesar narrowed his eyes, looking at some like-minded companions before him, "Those people talk so much, but it's all because they're afraid that after Blackwater City rejoins the Imperial system, their own interests will be harmed. Are they afraid of the city being abandoned? No! They're only afraid of being abandoned themselves!"

"Yes..." The man to the right of Caesar said with a bleak expression, "Even Miss Furilian doesn't dare to speak so clearly."

The only woman present pushed up her glasses and smiled bitterly, "This is our last chance for humanity to turn things around! I don't care whether Blackwater City becomes the core of the new empire or not, I just want to see humanity be great once again!"

Even if such greatness comes at the sacrifice of countless cities like Blackwater City... they are willing to die a thousand deaths!

To most people in the city, a "loss of control" like General Bai E's, willing to violate military discipline for the sake of humanity, is unacceptable, but for them... it is the ultimate righteousness!

However, they couldn't speak out in the beginning.

...

In another corner of the city, members of the opposition also wore scornful smiles, "Those people only think about humanity's greatness all day long, but they never consider if the city becomes a sacrificial pawn, where will the tens of millions of residents go?!"

"Exactly! They gladly face death alone, claiming it's a noble sacrifice for their ideals. But they never consider whether those ordinary people they sacrifice are willing to give up their lives for the so-called future of all humanity!"

"They're just a bunch of selfish brats, completely disregarding the feelings of so many ordinary people. These people, managed by us and placing full trust in us, they are the true responsibility we must bear! We are the ones who are right!"

...

When Bai E returned to the barracks, he had already heard the lively commotion being discussed by every reputable officer in the military district.

The messenger from the capital had already visited.

As soon as Carlos saw Bai E, he pulled him into a corner, "The elders from the Elder Council have asked us to notify you to see them in the city as soon as you return. You are ordered to enter the city, and the guards will not stop you, so go ahead with confidence."

"...", "Knowing roughly what the city's mainstream opinion was from the officers' conversations, Bai E nodded in response, "Understood, I'll head there now."

Mostly opponents, a few supporters, and even fewer fence-sitters...

It seems that regardless of the time or issue, the parties can always be broadly divided into these three factions.

But up to the moment of his return, the Elder Council still hadn't consolidated a final answer.

He wondered what their intentions were.

Could it be that they wanted to explain something to him about this matter and ask for his opinion as soon as he returned?

With these thoughts in mind, Bai E hurried into the city. The informed guards allowed him through, and in a short while, Bai E arrived at the true center of power in the city—The Elder Council!

Chapter 774: military orders

"Today, I have only one question for you,"

In the Elder Council's meeting room, several elders who had received the message were waiting early by the round table.

As Bai E entered, the elder seated at the head of the table spoke first.

"Hmm," Bai E nodded his head, signaling that he was listening.

"Starting now, with the full support of the city, how long do you need to eradicate the hive in the Black Rock District?"

Bai E's expression paused, displaying evident surprise.

Faced with such an outrageous message, it was only natural for him to show astonishment.

In fact, he certainly hadn't expected that the reason the Elder Council had called him was precisely for this matter.

Full support from the city?

Are they not planning on living a normal life anymore?

So even if they had to give up a fair amount of the stability of people's lives within the city, they wanted to ensure his ability to wipe out the hive in the Black Rock District?

Had this become the highest priority for Blackwater City right now?

Seemingly unaware of the full implications of "full support," another elder sitting to the left of the senior elder spoke slowly, "For this eradication, we can produce artificial human soldiers to the greatest extent and mobilize for conscription throughout the city on a large scale. Even on the very day of battle against the hive, all mech pilots from the Mechanical Court and high-ranking spiritual energy users from the research center can be at your disposal. We just need one answer from you... At the fastest, how long?"

Bai E's eyes flickered slightly as his brain rapidly processed the information.

To eradicate the hive with all his might... The imperial capital's messenger had requested unity...

Despite the Elder Council not explicitly stating the connection between the two, there was clearly an absolute link.

There are only two goals in war: to obtain resources or to display strength.

Eradicating the hive would undoubtedly secure a vast expanse of free land resources, allowing for significant freedom in the city's future development—but that's in the long run.

If they were to pursue this at all costs right now, then there was only one objective—displaying strength!

Towards whom?

Without a doubt.

The messenger from the imperial capital.

They intended to negotiate with the messenger from the imperial capital using the strength of the city!

If it were a confrontation, there would be nothing to negotiate.

In other words, the upper echelons of Blackwater City already had a rough plan in mind, and there was a high probability... that it involved unification.

But they wanted to obtain more say and initiative in this union.

So, they needed an absolute victory to declare their strength.

In fact, unification was also the direction that Bai E favored.

The strength of one city is always limited, and humanity was once great because it utilized collective power to the utmost.

Now, an opportunity to integrate the strength of all humanity was within reach, and Bai E did not want to let it go.

Thinking this, Bai E made his decision, "Five days."

"Five days?!" Bai E's answer was clearly beyond what the elders had expected.

"Five days?" one of the elders asked with a flicker in his eyes, "Are you sure?"

"Do you understand the significance of this battle? We're demanding a certain victory, an eradication, not a retreat if we can't overcome them as in the past. Do you have the confidence?"

Bai E nodded expressionlessly, "Five days is enough."

His confidence in eradicating the hive had formed after returning from his last mission.

As long as he wished, after he completed the beheading, what was needed were countless soldiers to clean up the aftermath.

In fact, as long as the bugs didn't flee and he had enough time, the current hive... was no longer an insurmountable enemy even if he were alone.

The only reason he had waited until now to act was that he needed time to develop.

After all, with the military's routine cleansing around it, the hive no longer posed the threat to the city it once had.

And once the hive was gone, the city might very well cut back on its support for the military.

At the moment, it wasn't much different from the ideal time Bai E had in mind for action, and he was already prepared to make his move.

Even in the larger context of global change, the city was unlikely to cut back on military resources, and they could take this opportunity to strengthen the existing soldiers. What better opportunity could there be?

Five days was merely the time needed to ensure the latest batch of artificial human soldiers were born and undergone basic training.

His acquaintance with Helen provided Bai E with insight into the production schedule of the newly created artificial human soldiers.

"Good! Five days it is," the senior elder said expressionlessly. "Put it down in a military order. If the hive is not eradicated in five days, you die. Within these five days, all resources of the city are at your unconditional disposal!"

"...Alright!"

Upon returning to the military camp, the first thing Bai E did was to notify Helen to dispatch staff from the Scientific Research Institute to conduct a comprehensive health check-up for all soldiers in the entire camp.

Everyone who qualified for the Gene Optimization Solution, regardless of whether their military achievements met the standard, would be injected!

Since he had been given resources by the higher-ups, he was going to make good use of them.

The production of the Gene Optimization Solution in the city wasn't vast, but it was certainly not meager.

In the past, the city had been reluctant to distribute such precious resources, which were only for the elite, to the cannon fodder who could die at any moment.

A high threshold was set merely to give more soldiers something to look forward to.

Now with resources freed up, Bai E didn't care about who was or wasn't cannon fodder.

In his view, there were no naturals.

The rule that mass casualties must occur in a large battle should be broken starting with him!

"Next..."

It was time for his second dose of the Gene Optimization Solution.

[As a result of feedback from commissions, your physical fitness has increased by +1.7, reflex by +2.3, and insight by +2.0.]

Under the tireless efforts of players who were either reborn or advanced, his own attributes were growing rapidly.

Physical fitness had the smallest increase not because of slow growth in players.

But because physical fitness had reached its limit.

[Physical Fitness]: 24/24

[Insight]: 20.6/24

[Reflex]: 23/24

These were Bai E's current base attributes.

One maxed out and two nearly maxed out, he was already close to the injection standards set by the Scientific Research Institute.

More meticulous physical condition checks, requiring in-depth core examinations, would be needed to make further judgments.

Helen, being far away at the Intelligent Mechanism Base and busy with the production of new weapon systems at a critical time, couldn't afford to waste so much time going back and forth. So she contacted another trusted institute member to both inject Bai E with his second dose of the Gene Optimization Solution and oversee the first genetic optimization of all the soldiers in the camp who met the criteria.

Five days with all resources provided unconditionally.

Requests from Bai E himself were met at the first instance.

Less than half an hour after Bai E made contact, a tall man with golden facial hair wearing a white lab coat arrived at the military camp.

Chapter 775: second injection

"It hasn't been long since your last injection,"

The man held all of Bai E's body data in his hands, "With such a short interval, is she really okay with you having consecutive injections?"

For them, it was just work, early injections were the same as late ones, but not for the person receiving the injections.

If the time gap was too short, the body might not have fully stabilized from the transformation by the previous dose of Gene Optimization Solution, easily causing total gene collapse.

In less severe cases, one would turn into a monster before disintegrating into rotten flesh; in the worst cases, one would directly become a pile of rotten flesh.

Though Helen was young, she was always cautious in her actions.

Now... how could she allow a soldier to rapidly receive two injections in succession?

And particularly Bai E, the current absolute pillar of combat strength within the city—Major General of the Military Zone?

"Before we officially start with the injection, I need to conduct a full-body examination on you," the man's voice was gentle, with a delicacy that completely mismatched his appearance, "Would you please undress and lie down on the bed."

"Okay," Bai E, having gone through this once before, was already familiar with the procedure, "You make the assessment based on the indicators."

In truth, Bai E wasn't certain whether he met the standards for injection.

If the personnel at the Scientific Research Institute deemed his critical core data insufficient, he would simply have to wait for the right moment.

Genes were not something he dared to mess with casually; it was best to heed the advice of the professionals.

With Bai E's cooperation, the results were quickly available.

As the man looked over Bai E's body data, he glanced incredulously between the report and Bai E's face.

"What's wrong?" Bai E asked softly.

"Your attributes..." the man's mouth hung open, unsure of what to say.

[Physical Strength]: 24/24

[Insight]: 20.6/24

[Reflex]: 23/24

Bai E's previous injection attributes were still on record; it had been just a few months since the last injection, and the numbers had jumped from 15 to 24?

To his knowledge, there had never been such an outrageous rate of growth in any recorded case of gene optimization!

Seeing no action from the man, Bai E frowned slightly, "Is there a problem?"

He was, of course, aware of his attributes; what concerned him were the other standards required for the Gene Optimization Solution injection.

"No..." the man shook his head subconsciously, "No problems!"

But there were no problems at all!

Not only were almost all physical attributes nearing the current upper limits of genetic optimization, but gene stability was also perfectly up to par.

All the indices that needed to be referenced were incredibly stable, indicating that the human before him was fully prepared to undergo another round of gene modification.

"You can proceed with the injection," the man said efficiently.

"Then I'll be troubling you," Bai E lay down once again, suppressing the slight restlessness in his mind with self-control.

"No trouble at all, no trouble at all!" The man's eyes burned with fervor, reminiscent of the three junior staffers who administered Bai E's first injection, "Being able to witness a miracle is my honor!"

One vial of Optimization fluid, two vials of nutrient fluid, this was the standard configuration for an injection package.

Before the injection, the man gave one last reminder, "Although this is your second injection, I must repeat the same crucial points to you once more—maintain composure, occasional variations in bodily sensation are normal..."

After a not particularly lengthy set of precautions, Bai E nodded slightly, indicating understanding, "Understood."

"Then I'll start now."

Inserting the drugs into specialized equipment, the man began operating each step with a solemn expression.

"Injecting needle number 1."

"Injecting needle number 2, starting the timer."

"...3 minutes."

"Injecting needle number 3."

As the three drugs were successively injected into Bai E's body, every cell's double helix structure began its violent transformation.

Snipping, replacing, regenerating...

The imperceptible changes took place deep within the genes, as a mystical aura gradually emanated from Bai E.

"Click~"

"Click~"

Sounds like locks being opened echoed one after another at the cellular level.

Certain genes, either newly formed or now manifesting, revealed their formidable effects, bringing earth-shattering changes to Bai E's body.

[Latent Trait—Bloodthirst Instinct, awakened.]

[Trait—Tamed Bloodthirst Instinct: The blood flowing in your enemy's body is all you pursue. From now on, facing any target with "biological" characteristics, you can enhance your own movement and attack speed based on the proportion of life the opponent has lost. When the target is below 50% health, your movement speed +20%, attack speed +50%; when the target is below 20% health, your movement speed +50%, attack speed +100%.]

[Latent Trait—Hive Mind Will, awakened.]

[Trait—Tamed Collective Will: All those who deeply believe in you will receive your care. Starting now, when in the midst of your troops, your "protective" Spiritual Energy strength will be boosted by 200%, perfectly guarding every unit in the troop.]

Bai E's consciousness began to blur.

The explosive internal alterations were too much for even his current physical condition to bear with clarity.

However, the moment his consciousness plunged into darkness, losing perception of his physical body, a profound clarity lit up vast swathes of light within the dark sea of awareness...

[Gene Optimization completed, your attributes have undergone significant changes...]

[Gene Optimization level has not changed drastically, template remains unchanged.]

[Gene Optimization level from "3.3/100 (tendency:none)"→"7.2/100 (tendency:none)".]

[Due to the increase in Gene Optimization level, the upper limits for the three basic attributes of physicality, insight, and reflex increased from "24"→"36".]

[Your body, guided by the damage it has recently sustained during the Gene Optimization process, has undergone a change in traits: "Trait—Resistance to Death" effect strengthened; "Trait—Regenerative Blood" effect added and strengthened.]

[During the Gene Optimization process, you have absorbed enough power for a transformation of your "Talent" proficiency: Proficiency—Rapid Recovery (unlocked) progress "39%"→"89%", and additional effects to be determined once proficiency is fully unlocked.]

"Odd?" The research fellow with golden-flecked stubble stroked his chin, looking at Bai E, whose vital signs and various physical data were gradually stabilizing, eyes filled with bewilderment. "It looks like another successful optimization. But why... why hasn't he woken up yet?"

...

In his consciousness, Bai E gazed at the bright white light before him.

It seemed to contain countless figures, yet also appeared utterly void.

A premonition deep within made him feel as though he too had originated from there.

So, is that the "homeland" from before I crossed over?

Chapter 776: The third encirclement!

Under a less glaring light source, the embryonic form of a certain "world" seemed clearer.

But that was it.

There appeared to be some kind of eternal divide between them, a vast chasm that spanned dimensions and barriers such that Bai E could never touch anything within the white light.

As time flowed indefinitely, Bai E found himself unable to "approach" the light any closer.

'Is it a soul black hole?' Bai E wondered, but immediately dismissed the thought.

He had encountered soul black holes before, and they did not present such an insurmountable barrier.

The white light he was now in contact with must be due to the changes brought about by his Gene Optimization Solution... a level he had not experienced before.

As consciousness drifted, Bai E gradually began to feel his limbs again.

The white light receded abruptly from his view, like a giant light source moving away in his field of vision.

Darkness began to fill the space, the light retracting into a distant orb until it disappeared from view.

"Huff!" With consciousness returning to his body, Bai E, as if awakening from a long dream, suddenly sat up.

"It's alright, it's alright," the male scholar, although unsure what had transpired during the abnormal slumber, quietly consoled Bai E as he sat up suddenly.

Bai E had a clear gaze, looking at everything before him.

Soft white light enveloped the metallic instruments, the male scholar's face holding a touch of worry as he stared at him, "How does your body feel?"

Bai E frowned slightly as he felt around, then nodded, "There's no abnormal sensation."

The man's face relaxed a bit, glancing toward the machine's display screen, "According to the examination report, there should be no problems."

Saying this, the man became gradually excited, "Do you know how many points of optimization you've increased this time?"

Bai E shook his head, seemingly clueless.

Such data could only be detected by machines; normal humans could not perceive it so finely.

Even though he knew he had gained nearly 4 points, he kept silent.

Of course, the other party was just playfully withholding information, not actually expecting Bai E to answer accurately.

"3.9!" The scholar's complexion turned exhilarated, "For the same tier, the effect of the second injection for normal people usually isn't as good as the first, yet you've managed to grow against the trend, something which even the War God we're currently recording has never achieved!"

Being the first case to break the record appeared right before him, and the scholar's mood was ecstatic, "No wonder Helen kept insisting that I come in person, your case is unheard of! I wonder if General Bai has some free time? If possible, I would like to collect some more data from your body for research."

Bai E smiled faintly and nodded nonchalantly, "Of course, it is part of our duty to contribute to science."

"Beep~ Beep~ Beep~"

As the device emitted a regular beeping sound now and then, time within the room trickled away.

However, at a certain moment, a more urgent ringing reached the scholar's ears, snapping him out of his engrossed research state.

"What's wrong?" He picked up the communicator and asked the other side, puzzled.

When working in the laboratory, unless absolutely necessary, the assistants outside should not disturb him.

"Professor, if you're free, you might want to come outside and take a look. These new recruits... So many of them meet the requirements for the injection," the communicator conveyed.

The timing of Bai E's injection by the scholar was synchronized with the collective physical examinations of the ordinary soldiers.

As Bai E was receiving his injection, the collective evaluations outside were being conducted in full swing.

However, after testing many new recruits, the frontline research personnel who were responsible for the examinations began to panic.

Although they were simply researchers devoted to data, the unusual proportion and number still made them anxious.

They feared there was an issue with the instruments that they couldn't resolve; they also feared that if the data was correct, they would really have to prepare Gene Optimization Solutions in those numbers.

According to the current ratio, the quantity needed by the military camp might reach into the thousands... a figure that the camp had never used in total over many years.

And such a large number wasn't within the authority of the lower-level personnel to provide.

"I understand," responded the scholar as he nodded and disconnected the call.

Turning to Bai E, he explained, "General Bai, I have nearly finished collecting data regarding your body. There's another matter at hand, so I won't take up more of your time."

"Hmm," Bai E had also heard the voice from the communicator, "Is there a problem with the physical examination of our soldiers in the camp?"

"It shouldn't be anything serious," the scholar replied cautiously, not having been on site, "If General Bai has time, you could also come and take a look with me."

"Then let's go together," Bai E accepted readily, "I would like to see how many of our soldiers qualify for the injection."

Under the research with Helen, Bai E implemented higher-level physical training across the entire military camp, completely replacing the inefficient Body Refinement methods previously used.

Also, the nightly combat competitions held within the camp helped the soldiers improve their insight and reflex attributes.

He knew that the attributes of today's soldiers in the camp must be quite good, just not exactly how good.

Chapter 777: The third encirclement!_2

Following the male Academician's lead, the two arrived at the testing site.

Time was tight, and the task was heavy.

Because nearly ten thousand soldiers in the military camp had to be tested within a short period, and those who met the requirements needed to be injected.

The Scientific Research Institute, upon receiving the order to fully cooperate from their superiors, could be said to have emptied its coffers, moving all available devices capable of testing whether the body data met the standards to the military camp's site.

More than a dozen machines started working together, with soldiers lining up and completing a comprehensive body check one batch after another.

However, when Bai E and the male Academician arrived, the site seemed a bit quiet.

"What's the specific situation?" the male Academician glanced at the somewhat quiet site and then asked his assistant student, "Why has everything stopped?"

"It's like this, teacher, we have already tested about three hundred people, but based on the current testing ratio, nearly 10% of the body data meets the injection requirements. This is a ratio that is very difficult to achieve normally." The assistant student glanced at Bai E following behind the Academician, and cautiously reminded, "And according to the list of personnel they provided, the final number needed will likely exceed a thousand... Could that be a bit...?"

"I understand," the Academician interrupted his student, striding toward the machines that had momentarily stopped, "Let me see what the issue is."

However, after several checks and additional testing manpower, the machines did not show any signs of problems.

That is to say...

"Everything is normal?"

The Academician looked at Bai E, then his thoughts turned to Helen, who was entrusted with the task because he did not know where she had gone.

Because of their familiar relations within the institute, he had heard of the topics Helen had previously researched.

Among them was a plan named "Advanced Physical Training 3.0," which was said to be far more powerful than the earlier promoted 2.0 plan.

Perhaps it was that plan that had greatly improved the average physical fitness of the soldiers in this batch.

And in fact, regardless of the reason, he needed to comply with orders.

The requirement from his superiors was to fully support all the demands of the military camp.

All he had to do was to strictly speak according to the data, and no one could find the slightest fault with him.

As for the "slightly" higher numbers...

Full cooperation looked like this.

"There is no issue with the machines; proceed according to standards."

"Yes, teacher!"

...

Two days later, the last batch of artificially created soldiers came into being.

Three days afterward, all of the basic training for the last batch of artificially created soldiers was also completed.

At dawn, the fluttering flags led the way.

Many of the higher-ups from Blackwater City who accompanied the troops looked at the Eagle Flag with strange expressions in their eyes.

Since when did their military camp of Blackwater City carry such things when they went on a campaign?

These were only seen in the days of the Empire, among the battle groups that held the glory of the Empire as their life, which would use this as their flag.

What did it mean to display this flag now?

Could it be that someone among the higher-ups, who knew about their plan to ally with the Imperial Capital, had informed the military camp to give a sign to the messenger?

Sitting in the armored vehicle at the rear, the various higher-ups exchanged glances, but no one spoke up.

The messenger was on the side; they couldn't conspire in his presence.

Clearly, seeing the banner of the Blackwater City military leading at the front, a few members of the messenger squad looked at each other, satisfaction flickering in their eyes.

This kind of display was without a doubt a form of sincerity.

In situations where other squads were not being very cooperative, it was rare for Blackwater City, with whom they were in contact, to show such sincerity.

But since there was such sincerity, why delay them until now?

Although the man who proposed this mission did not demand a specific timeframe for each squad to complete their tasks before they set out, who would want to linger in a place far from their hometown if it wasn't necessary?

After exchanging glances, a gentle-voiced woman from the messenger squad asked, "Excuse me, my Lords, may we know where we are preparing to go now?"

These high-ranking officials from Blackwater City clearly didn't want them to know too much about the local internal affairs; even the so-called guides only took them on meaningless strolls around the city.

As a result, during the days they had been here, they had hardly received any useful information, nor had they received any feedback on their intentions.

But today's mobilization of the army must be intended to convey some message to them.

"To the Black Rock District Hive," replied the Blackwater City diplomat with a smile, opening the electronic map inside the car, and highlighting their destination on it.

"The Hive?!" echoed through the messenger squad with some surprise.

The messenger woman covered her mouth, asking in astonishment, "What are you going there for?"

Each squad had its own fixed mission objectives.

Naturally, every member of the messenger squad memorized all the details about the target city and its surroundings before setting out.

Of course, much of that intelligence was outdated and vague.

But a fixed disaster like the Hive wouldn't change too much even over decades, if not a hundred years.

The Hive, that was a terrifying enemy!

Inside it dwelled the "Dominators," giant insects that even the Imperial Capital found troublesome.

Even with the strength of the Imperial Capital, up to now, they had only managed to clear two Hives closest to the Capital.

And it cost them dearly.

According to the intelligence, the Blackrock District Hive near Blackwater City seemed to be no smaller than those two Hives destroyed by the Imperial Capital.

With an adversary of that magnitude, why would Blackwater City provoke them for no reason?

"The envoys are not aware..." explained the Blackwater City diplomat with a smile on his face, "The reason we left this Hive intact previously was to observe their habits and racial characteristics, in the

hopes of developing effective ways to strike against their racial traits. Recently, we have obtained comprehensive information about the Bug Race, so there's no need to leave this harmful Bug Race Hive any longer. Coincidentally, it happens to be at the same time the envoys are visiting Blackwater City. We were making final preparations for the campaign a few days ago, and now that we're ready, we invite you to witness the complete destruction of this Hive."

"..."

The words of the smiling Blackwater City diplomat undeniably sent shock waves through the hearts of every member of the messenger squad.

Say keep, and you keep; say annihilate, and you annihilate.

Even the Imperial Capital wouldn't dare to assert such confidence with every Hive; how could this small Blackwater City pronounce such bold words?

Was it an exaggeration, or did they truly possess such strength?

Instinctively, they were reluctant to believe that these peripheral small cities could have power comparable to the Imperial Capital.

Yet the other party took them directly to the scene...

Did they intend to flex their muscles to gain a more important position in the upcoming alliance?

This was a reaction they had anticipated before they set out.

But to choose the Hive as an opponent to display their power...wasn't that a bit overconfident?

The five of them exchanged glances, reaching consensus with their eyes—

Seeing is believing, hearing is uncertain.

The real cannot be faked, and the fake cannot be real.

Since the high-ranking officials of Blackwater City had brought them to the front line, they would watch closely how they managed to win this battle.

Even if Blackwater City lacked the ability to manipulate the Bug Race as they claimed, and could only eradicate the Hive after incurring heavy losses, it would still be worth their respect and an important report to return to the Lord of the Imperial Capital.

In this day and age, there weren't many cities that could independently battle a Hive!

They had already braced themselves for the lowest expectation—

No matter how dire the fight, even if only the last soldier remained, as long as the Eagle Banner could finally be planted atop the Hive, that would count as... Blackwater City's victory!

Chapter 778 The Commander is warming up.

The army marched directly into a position almost face-to-face with the Bug hive.

The fungal mat laid down by the Bug Race extended all the way there, the ecology atop it starkly different from the heavily bombed land outside, the border between them visibly clear.

The distant army began deploying their lines, as the enemy's Bug hive also started to spew out large and small bugs from all around, readying themselves for a tight defense.

Under the command of higher-tier bugs acting as node commanders, even those bugs crazed by the scent of flesh and blood were held firmly in place, vainly flashing their teeth and claws.

Two members of the messenger squad, granted permission by the Blackwater City high command, swept past the city's front, middle, and rear armies before finally returning to an armored vehicle at the very rear.

The returned squad members of the messengers had a strange look about them.

"What did you find? Speak freely, in the face of the Bug Race, all of us humans are forever on the same front line," the squad leader waved his hand generously, signaling the members to speak their minds.

The two messengers who had gone to observe the troops exchanged a glance, one of them swallowing nervously before boldly saying, "We noticed that our army's heavy firepower doesn't seem to be very plentiful?"

To fight the bugs, isn't it normal to first use heavy firepower to cleanse the area, eliminating at least eighty percent of their living force, and then send in the infantry to face-to-face charge and clean up the remainders?

In the two hives they took down in the imperial capital, they had massive firepower that was plugged straight into the mouths of the hives.

If it weren't for the fact that the core areas of the hives, including some strong units, had the ability to ignore artillery fire, they would have wished to simply blast all those bugs to death from a distance!

And even so, the bugs, also possessing long-range counterattack capabilities, could still inflict terrifying damage on their human armies.

In an era without the internet network, including related Intelligent Technology, the coverage distance of artillery fire was limited.

When humans could hit the bugs, the bugs could also hit humans.

It was for this reason that the efficiency of exterminating Bug hives in the imperial capital was limited.

All those cannon shells and munitions fired needed time to be replenished, right?

Not to mention, the loss of various manpower and resources also needed time to rest and recuperate before launching another assault on the Bug hives.

And now, Blackwater City was planning to take down a Bug hive of no lesser scale with far less long-range heavy weaponry than their imperial capital... wasn't that a bit too fanciful?

If initially the expectation for Blackwater City was to consider victory as planting the flag when down to the last soldier, now they felt that if the Blackwater City's army could retreat alive with some important generals, it would already be a victory.

That's far too short of the required firepower standard, isn't it?

The high command of Blackwater City present in the vehicle fell silent upon hearing this.

As a matter of fact, what the messenger squad members said was correct, Blackwater City did indeed prepare not much heavy weaponry this time.

Let alone compared to the scale of the imperial capital, even compared to the previous two offensives, it was far from enough.

This was unavoidable, after all, the last two offensives had nearly drained all of Blackwater City's heavy firepower.

And with Blackwater City's limited production capabilities, it was only natural that the amount of newly produced weaponry in a short time was less than satisfactory.

But at this moment, it was impossible to confess that it was because they had already launched two full-scale assaults on the Bug hives that resulted in the heavy firepower depletion.

So they could only brazenly respond, "This is enough."

Really enough? No one knew.

They had also worried about this issue before, so they did not arbitrarily give General Bai E, fully in charge of this expedition, a deadline they set, but instead left the decision entirely in his hands.

But if General Bai E said it took only five days, then they could only trust him.

Though General Bai E's behavior in personal interactions was not quite satisfactory, in battle, he had never disappointed anyone.

After a brief silence, an Elder from the Council wore a confident and mysterious smile, "Honorable envoys, please be patient, let us... just watch."

"..."

The messenger team and others did not speak further.

Since the other party had said so, to question any further would be impolite.

Still, they exchanged glances, each with a sense of strange emotions flowing between them.

What was the source of Blackwater City's confidence?

They couldn't beat the firepower.

When it came to equipment... Those dozen or so large metal shells certainly had some appeal but were technically a step behind the advanced models of the imperial capital.

Without mentioning anything else, aside from the one at the forefront, the movement of the other Mechas was not as smooth as those from the imperial capital.

Or maybe... the personnel?

How big can the gap be between elite soldiers?

The gap in high-end combat strength... could it be that someone was mightier than the "War God" of the imperial capital?

No matter what aspect was considered, Blackwater City's configuration just didn't cut it!

With a head full of doubts, the messengers finally saw through the drone footage a sea formed by countless bugs surging towards the army line deployed by Blackwater City.

The endless bugs, like a pitch-black tide, surged unstoppably towards the camera's direction.

No matter how many times one saw this sight, it would always be terrifying.

That ferocious, bloodthirsty aura seemed to be right in front of one's eyes, even from a thousand kilometers away, overwhelming!

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

Chapter 779 The Commander is warming up_2

The heavy firepower weapons located within the central and rear army formations opened fire, missiles of various sorts streaked across the sky in arcs, falling into what seemed like an endless sea of bugs.

Even the much-depleted array of weapons managed to unleash a far from sparse bombardment across the battlefield.

Different from the first two strikes, the troops, under Bai E's command, went all out as soon as they engaged.

Only a swift attack could minimize the losses to our own soldiers.

Watching those missile vehicles recklessly blast away their limited ammunition in one go, without considering the possibility of encountering stronger enemies later, the five members of the messenger squad in the rearmost armored vehicle nearly laughed out loud.

They even thought about grabbing the people in their vehicle and making a quick getaway to avoid being devoured in one bite by the counterattacking bugs.

'Have these Blackwater City people never really hurt these bugs before?'

Knowing that the main force of the Bug Race has never been these numerous but actually dispensable worker bugs, wasp bugs, and mantis bugs.

If one just considers this lowly bug tidal wave to represent the full strength of the bugs and therefore uses all their firepower on it, then there's little point in continuing this expedition.

We were just half-convinced that Blackwater City might have their special tactics or some special understanding.

But now it's clear they're just country bumpkins who have never fought a major head-on battle with the bugs!

You don't fight the Bug Race like this.

You need to keep enough reserve firepower to deal with the big ones that show up later, deploy super soldiers with strong breakthrough and entanglement capabilities, and have a large number of elite fighters to stabilize the central and rear army formations.

Only the soldiers filling in at the front line have the right to be mediocre.

As for Blackwater City, apart from the last point, it seems they're lacking in all the others, right?

We might as well retreat early.

But as the high-ranking city officials of Blackwater City excitedly watched the battle on the live screens, the five messengers could only forcefully suppress the urge to voice their opinions.

After all, their armored vehicle was at the very rear of the rear army; even if the entire army were wiped out, those bugs couldn't touch their heads.

Letting these country bumpkins broaden their horizons and see the gap in strength between their city and the imperial capital would be beneficial.

Only in this way, when the great armies of the imperial capital might come to their aid in the future, could everyone in this city willingly join the new empire, offering up their complete devotion to become a cog in its machine.

Lost in thought, the battlefield on the live feed pushed forward.

The directions given to the artillerymen in the rear were to fire off their ammunition as fast as possible; anyone who couldn't finish would be shot on the spot.

Under such orders, every cannon, every rocket vehicle, summoned their full strength to shoot all the ammunition on board toward the Bug Race's encampment.

Amidst the explosive barrages, countless bug limbs and bodily fluids flew chaotically through the air.

Human tanks, armed infantry vehicles, and so on, advanced swiftly, pushing the frontline perilously close to the core of the bug nest right from the outset.

"Good! Well done!" Inside the armored vehicle, some high-ranking city officials witnessing their first battle clenched their fists, feeling exhilarated.

That's how humans should fight the bugs—boldly and with determination, pushing onward.

The messenger squad leader sneered silently, without making any comment.

The arrogance now would be paid for with lives!

Sure enough!

As the human army advanced, the low-level bug sea got pushed back to their home by artillery before they could even mount a push.

The behemoths that might have been planning to watch for a while began to reveal themselves.

Thick cannon barrels brewed up deadly attacks, targeting the vulnerable belly of the human formation from a great distance.

The human front had pushed so quickly that the sand worm units hadn't even reached their positions, making a direct launch less profitable.

They awaited those burrowing sand worms, planning to wreak havoc on the human army's rear in conjunction with the bombardment's chaos.

Seeing the emergence of the so-called "Thunderbeasts" starting their assault in the drone surveillance footage, the messengers subconsciously looked around, expecting to see a hint of panic on the unenlightened faces of these Blackwater City bumpkins.

Unfortunately, whether dumbstruck or utterly clueless, the high-level officials of Blackwater City showed no reaction whatsoever to the newly appeared "Thunderbeasts" or even the three crimson "Nest Guardians" that followed close behind them.

They were still solely focused on the images of their own troops in the feed, seemingly waiting for something—they didn't know what.

Waiting to die?

The messenger squad leader couldn't help but speculate in his mind.

At least four Thunderbeasts, three Nest Guardians.

Those who haven't experienced this kind of insect army will surely take a big loss at their hands!

Even when their imperial capital first encountered these behemoths, they lost quite a few men and horses.

How will you Blackwater City respond?

The next moment, he knew what these people were all waiting for—

A blue and white Mecha stride out from the front lines of the army.

The messenger team leader remembered him! It was the leader of the Blackwater City Mecha armed forces, and the only one whose movements felt somewhat fluid on the road.

He had taken action!

Was he going to lead the Mecha troops to charge and decapitate the enemy?!

It seemed like the wisest choice.

It was also the contingency measure they had taken when the imperial capital first encountered this sort of behemoth.

It must be said, as a city, Blackwater City does have some depth of strength.

But not much...

They think a mere dozen Mechas can break through the sea of insects, break through the guard of the three Bug Race nests, and forcibly decapitate the Thunder Beast?

They must be dreaming... No, wait!

"It's not a team!" the five-man messenger squad shouted, their eyes widening as they watched the live broadcast.

"It's... one!"

"Has he gone mad?"

Watching the Mecha cross their own battle line alone and rush into the depths of the insect sea, the messenger team leader could no longer suppress his urge to criticize, "Has your commander gone mad? Isn't this sending him to his death?!"

Although a dozen Mecha armed forces could only be considered average for the imperial capital, here it was already the strongest force Blackwater City could muster.

Even if they couldn't win, at least there would be something to see.

But just one... Isn't this sending him to his death?!

"Fuck! The banner is in his hands too!" another messenger noticed the Eagle Flag being tightly held by the Mecha, unable to help but complain, "It's bad enough to be sacrificed, but what does it mean to send the one carrying the flag to die?"

The Eagle Flag is the faith of the imperial soldiers.

Once that faith falls, the morale of the entire army will be more than just slightly affected.

What on earth are these people of Blackwater City thinking?!

From the top down, not one of them has a sane mind.

Officers dare to give any commands, and soldiers dare to follow any orders.

This is just feeding the insects, isn't it?

Being human themselves, the messengers could no longer bear to watch people of Blackwater City throw their lives away and waste resources like this.

After all, won't the resources wasted now be part of the new empire after they're integrated?

"Have your commander order a retreat! There's no way to fight this battle," the messenger team leader stood up and said seriously.

However, the old man he was addressing just stared intently at the screen, without blinking, and replied bluntly, "That person is the commander."

"..."

"..."

Inside the messenger squad, silence fell.

After a while, they mechanically turned around to look at the largest screen broadcasting live.

Watching the huge blue and white figure stepping over the sea of insects, the messenger team leader swallowed hard, then somewhat frantically yelled, "Since when does a commander charge into battle like this?!"

Sending subordinates to their deaths wasn't enough, he had to send himself to feel satisfied, is that it?!

Who fights the Bug Race like this?

Wait! Since ancient times, there hasn't been a battle where a commander of an army gave his life away like this, has there?!

Chapter 780 The commander-in-chief is swimming with dragons.

The blue and white mecha silhouette was like a moth to flame as it crashed headlong into the heart of the bug nest.

What awaited it was doubtlessly a fate of being torn apart and destroyed by those bugs.

Too reckless!

Too foolish!

To regret its misfortune even as anger rose at its lack of struggle.

To think that a commander of an entire army would...

would...

The messenger squad captain blinked, watching the sudden turn of events on the screen, and even the criticisms in his mind were unable to continue.

What did he see?

The blue and white mecha that had easily crossed the sea of bugs went straight for a thunder-beast that was charging up for a cannon blast the moment it broke into the bugs' rear.

The three crimson "Nest Guardians" whose duty it was to ensure the thunder-beast's cannon fire went uninterrupted naturally moved to confront the intruding mecha right away.

Seeing this scene on the video, the female messenger couldn't bear to watch and tightly closed her eyes.

After all, no matter how many times one has seen it, the bugs' slaughter of human compatriots is always too unbearable to witness.

But in that electrifying instant, the blue and white mecha drew a trail of afterimages, slipping through the gap surrounded by the three Nest Guardians in a flash.

The colossal beasts that normally shook earth and sky seemed like mere toys being capriciously juggled, helplessly watching as the mecha of human origin rapidly broke through to the thunder-beast's side, raising aloft its alloy war saber gleaming with cold light.

The outstanding performance of this mecha caused the members of the messenger squad to stare wide-eyed, riveted to the screen as that war saber fell, their thoughts freezing in place.

'Such fluid control.'

'The synchronization between the mech pilot and the machine, impressive!'

'But can it really work? The thunder-beast's defenses... they're not so easily broken.'

Breaking through the thunder-beast's formidable defensive carapace with just a saber was a task of monumental difficulty.

"Pfft!"

"Pfft pfft pfft!"

The war saber unleashed a maelstrom of chaotic light.

Slashing freely within the colossal beast's body, each swipe tore away chunks of enormous flesh.

Before this mecha, the thunder-beast's once proud defenses seemed utterly nonexistent.

Roars from the behemoths echoed across the battlefield.

Even inside the armored vehicle, far removed from the front line, it seemed as though one could hear the whale-like cries emanating from afar.

The members of the messenger squad looked at each other with vacant faces.

"Did you see that?"

"Did you see that?"

"I couldn't have seen it wrong, could I?"

"That's a thunder-beast!"

Hearing her companions' voices, the female messenger carefully opened her eyes and glanced slowly at the screen.

On it, the blue and white mecha had already abandoned its initial target, the thunder-beast, and set its sights on the next.

There were too many of them, and the thunder-beasts had substantial health reserves; Bai E couldn't possibly finish off each one before switching to another target.

For each moment he delayed, another thunder-beast launched an unstoppable, fatal cannon blast toward the army's position!

As soon as a thunder-beast targeted by him temporarily lost its ability to fire its cannon, he had to immediately switch his target.

"Swish swish swish!"

The blade danced wildly, and the second thunder-beast couldn't escape its fate.

The three chasing Nest Guardians trying to intercept seemed to be pursuing a shadow they could never grasp, unable to surround it with any strategy as it found a deadly gap to breach through their cordon in the blink of an encounter.

"That's a thunder-beast, right?"

The messenger squad began to doubt if the bugs from Blackrock Bug Nest were underdeveloped, only having the characteristics and size of thunder-beasts but actually fragile like silver guns with wax heads, easily defeated.

"Though I think I heard them say that the thunder-beast's lower body defense isn't as strong as the armor on its back; perhaps this mecha is exploiting that weakness," mused one of the messenger squad members softly.

Squinting his eyes, the messenger squad captain watched the surveillance video feed and intuitively felt that this explanation might not be entirely accurate, but the distance wasn't close enough for them to clearly see where each stroke of the mecha's blade landed.

So, he turned to ask the senior officials from Blackwater City, "Your forces have encountered thunder-beasts before, haven't they?"

The diplomat nodded emotionlessly, "Of course."

As for anything else, it was inconvenient to elaborate.

More words could lead to more mistakes; they were merely there to show their strength.

What mattered was the present, not what had happened in the past!

Reassured by the answer, the messenger squad captain nodded.

That's more like it.

It seemed that Blackwater City wasn't entirely useless.

They must have had intelligence on these thunder-beasts and even the Nest Guardians to have made such a daring move.

So the foundation of their bold actions was this commander who could dance among the behemoths like a dragon?

"..." The messenger squad captain pursed his lips, still finding the whole affair quite fantastical.

Five thunder-beasts!

Oh... now only four.

No, that's wrong... only three remain.

Hmm... down to two.

"..."

"..."

As the last thunder-beast fell with a great cry, those creatures that under normal circumstances could have inflicted massive casualties on a human military, lay grievously wounded after hardly firing a few shots.

The cannons that coexisted on their backs were individual bugs themselves, but once the thunder-beasts carrying the cannons were down, the cannons lost their ability to aim.

The invincible thunder-beasts, now fallen!

And the one who had done all this was the blue and white mecha that, after the final cut, skimmed the ground with one hand as its entire frame carved a gully and sped away.

"Swish!" The mecha stood up, flinging the blade to throw off the clinging bits of flesh and armor, instantly cleaning the blade.