

Wow 80

Chapter 80: Scientific Research Institute

[You have persevered through unimaginably prolonged intense physical activity at the peak of your endurance, Physical Energy +0.2, Reflex +0.1.]

[Your body has sensed your burning desire and has rapidly converted a small amount of energy from "Action Energy Reserve," please use it wisely.]

[Physical Energy has recovered by 5%, rapid recovery (unlocked) progress 18%.]

The slanting rays of the setting sun stretched the shadow of the truck, as if the dominator that had finally had its fill trudged towards the depths of the hive with heavy, slow steps.

To humanity, that place remained a mystery.

"Creak, creak~"

The restless noises of agitated limbs began brewing behind, the bloodthirsty desires suppressed by the dominator for so long had built up to a breaking point, and facing the tantalizing flesh so close yet so hard to consume, the bugs had gone mad.

The night breeze of the plains swept through the rolled-down car window, as Bai E's gaze moved from one statue-like body to another on his way back.

Without any surprises, their lives would be permanently fixed at this moment.

Shrouded by nightmares, did they still feel the pain in their bodies?

Having been trapped in extreme fear for so long in their mental world, even if the dominator were to release its suppression, could they wake up and save themselves?

This was Bai E's first experience on a true battlefield.

He had witnessed the bloodied scenes of frontline soldiers and could foresee that these fighters, who had lost their capacity to resist, would ultimately fall prey to the bugs.

The term "human life" seemed to have become weightless in an instant, like a white feather on a scale, unable to tilt the heavy curtain of night.

Night was about to fall, and the dominator would not give him unlimited time.

Four trucks in total had been Bai E's utmost effort.

"Creak, creak, creak..."

The invisible force field covering the vast plains suddenly relaxed at a certain moment, and the unrestrained tide of bugs surged toward what lay ahead, where they yearned for the flesh to satiate their rabid hunger.

"I'm sorry..."

"I did my best."

Bai E took his gaze off the rearview mirror and pressed down hard on the gas pedal.

...

Cleanup operation, failed!

The military camp was serene in the deep of night.

The day's warfare had drained every ounce of strength from all soldiers, except the guards left to watch over the camp, who had all sunk into deep sleep.

However, for some, the trouble had just begun.

Two glaring beams of light tore through the veil of night, and the guards with guns approached, only to see clearly who was below the halo of light as they drew near.

The Scientific Research Institute...

"Open the gate!"

A wave to the soldiers in the tower above, and the guards duly opened the switch.

The vehicle drove straight in.

"Tap, tap, tap, tap~"

Hasty footsteps echoed rapidly through the hallway, and the door to the meeting room was abruptly pushed open with force.

"So soon..."

Weslin looked towards the door.

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A woman in a white lab coat, with brown hair tied into a bun and two curls falling by her ears revealing her slender, long neck, walked in cradling a tablet.

"Helen?"

He knew they would send someone from the city, but he didn't expect the first to arrive would be from the Scientific Research Institute.

Entering the meeting room without ceremony, the woman approached Weslin's side and placed her tablet on the table. The eyes behind her gold-rimmed glasses scanned all the officers present as she asked in a gentle, hoarse voice, "I hear you encountered a new type of bug?"

"Yes... For the time being, we're calling it 'Dominator'."

Weslin remained calm amidst the change, having already prepared himself for visitors from various factions within the inner city.

While speaking, the adjutant by his side promptly displayed the drone-captured screenshots on the screen opposite them.

The creature, which looked similar to but was far larger than a mantis bug, was nearly two-thirds the height of a combat mecha with four formidable arms, an absolute sovereign among the bugs.

"We've caught distant glimpses of this kind of bug once or twice before, but this is the first time it has appeared on the frontline," Weslin commented softly, looking at Helen's fair profile.

"What are its specific abilities?"

"Spiritual Energy Impact."

"The ability of a second-stage Spiritual Energy user?"

"But the range and intensity are inconceivable."

As they conversed, the screen played the moment the Dominator appeared, the silent footage of the battlefield.

"According to Yueying of the Elf Race," Weslin continued, "the Dominator combines the will of all the bugs, and its spiritual energy power is unbelievably strong."

Helen merely fixed her gaze on a part of the tide of bugs and murmured to herself, "Even the bugs themselves can be suppressed?"

"I think this is why the Dominator had never appeared before, its ability is uncontrollable, and if it wasn't threatened to the core this time, it probably would've never shown up."

It was a fairly reasonable explanation.

Helen narrowed her eyes slightly, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

"What else?"

"It doesn't seem to have much interest in feeding."

The video continued to play, showing the Dominator effortlessly cutting through a mecha made of octonary alloy, then standing still as it toyed with the remains of the mecha, studying it for a long time, "Also, its symbiotic weapons seem much more powerful than those of ordinary bugs."

The symbiotic weapons of the bugs are akin to human firearms and combat blades, all removable objects theoretically attachable to any bug.

If every bug were equipped with the bone blade used by the Dominator that could easily cut through octonary alloy, then all of humanity's armor would be virtually as good as waste paper.

Helen shook her head, showing little interest in this speculation, "The likelihood is a Spiritual Energy field, with second-stage Spiritual Energy able to be projected externally, the Dominator naturally could do what human Spiritual Energy users can do."

As for the desire to feed... Lower bugs are controlled by the instinct of hunger, this Dominator that can rule all bugs naturally possesses enough intelligence to suppress its instincts.

Not surprising.

The only noteworthy thing... was that this bug seemed to be studying the mecha structure?

They are learning?

This was an unsettling piece of news.

Helen harbored a vague worry, "How did the soldiers perform?"

The intensity of Spiritual Energy couldn't be measured explicitly, one could only make basic analyses based on the performance of soldiers who have confronted it.

"We've done image analysis..."

The battlefield analysts in the military camp were not to be underestimated, after each battle they needed to learn from their experiences, having already thoroughly reviewed all the key points of this battle on their own.

"Soldiers who could break free from the Dominator's Spiritual Energy suppression almost all did so within five minutes, beyond five minutes it became very difficult to wake on their own. At the same time... the proportion of artificial human soldiers reached 89%."

This proportion was abnormal, the ratio of artificial people to natural people in the camp was about 7:3.

Yet among the soldiers who could wake up by themselves, nine out of ten were artificial humans.

"So our hypothesis is that suppression of sensory and cognitive faculties played a decisive role for artificial humans. We wonder if there's a way to generalize this technology to all soldiers. In face of the Dominator, only soldiers unaffected by its Spiritual Energy field can be effective."

If we don't find a way to tackle this difficult problem, humanity would never be able to eradicate the bug nest that lies within an "arm's reach"; it will be an everlasting threat, one that will be passed on to descendants.

Helen's brows were tightly knitted.

The incubation pod... was actually not a technology developed by the Scientific Research Institute.

It was discovered, not created.

It was an inheritance from the ruins; to this day they could only make limited use of it, without the capability to modify the settings or dismantle and utilize any specific function in it separately.

"What else... What about those soldiers who drove into the suppression field?"

"Through practice we found that soldiers who have experienced Spiritual Energy suppression once gain a certain degree of mental resilience when they enter the field again."

"No..."

Helen shook her head impatiently and pointed at a transport vehicle in the footage that was going in the opposite direction of all the other vehicles.

"What about him? What's his story?"

Looking at that particular transport vehicle, Weslin revealed a helpless, wry smile.

"He... He is a special case."

...

"I think I have a general understanding now."

Helen closed her eyes, briefly organizing all the information in her mind, then opened them again to look at the subordinates waiting by the doorway, "Set up the equipment, prepare for analysis."

She then looked at Weslin, "Notify all soldiers who came out from the suppression field to assemble!"

"They need to rest."

"I need firsthand data that haven't been 'restored' through sleep."

Confronted with Helen's sharp, narrow eyes, Weslin grimaced, "Understood, I will cooperate with your work."

"As for him..." Helen, viewing the artificial human soldier with the designation 95B27 on the screen, said, "Leave him until last. His case cannot be used as a general reference."

"Academician Helen..." Weslin hesitated to speak.

"Is there something else?"

"I've heard some rumors about you..."

"Hmm?"

"..."

Despite being an exceedingly beautiful woman, it was rare for someone to not harbor even the slightest fantasy towards her; Weslin sighed internally and blurted out.

"95B27 is an excellent soldier, we were planning to announce tomorrow his heroic deeds in saving many soldiers. So if possible... I hope your research does not harm him."

Helen was taken aback, then nodded, "I understand... But please keep it confidential until I have finished my research."