

### Chapter 631 Paying the price for reporting the truth

Jiang Xu looked at Ren Xiaosu and said, "Yang Xiaojin is a good girl, but she's a little antisocial." Ren Xiaosu grew unhappy at the words. "How could you say that she's antisocial? She is a nice person. Besides, what she said was true. Don't these Qinghe University students lead a really pampered life?"

"Why are you arguing with me?" Jiang Xu stared at him and said, "And why are you accusing my students of leading a pampered life?"

"When I came to Qinghe University last time, the students were debating whether nuclear weapons should exist in the world or not." Ren Xiaosu scorned, "Living in a sheltered environment like this, they go on and on about the important global matters like it affects them. Can y'all tell them to not act so highfalutin? They might as well think about how to survive in this chaotic world. Just look, y'all immediately placed them under protection when something is about to happen to Luoyang City. These students have no idea of what kind of threat they're facing."

"No matter how huge the threat is, it doesn't concern the university since there isn't anything they want here," Jiang Xu said.

"Chief Editor, " Ren Xiaosu said with a sigh, "I admire your views on current affairs, but you and the others have made the same mistake. That is, you've underestimated the role and power of supernatural beings in this era. I watched a massive earthquake get triggered in front of me and also saw with my own eyes how someone manipulated 5,000 people like they were puppets. If those politicians think that this world is still their stage and everything's under their control, they're gonna die as well."

Jiang Xu was a reasonable person. He said, "The one who can manipulate 5,000 people like puppets should be Li Shentan, but who's the person who can trigger a massive earthquake?"

Ren Xiaosu did not answer this question, because he still did not want outsiders to know how terrifying Yan Liuyuan's power was at its peak.

Seeing that he did not want to answer, Jiang Xu asked again, "What do you think is the reason that people can become superhuman?"

Ren Xiaosu thought for a while and answered, "Yang Xiaojin told me this. When a disaster comes, mental strength becomes the highest caliber of weapon humanity has. Someone else once shared a similar point of view as mine. That person is Li Shentan, and he said that humans have not fully mastered their own bodies, which are controlled by the subconscious. When humans are able to control their subconscious, they'll be on par with gods even in their mortal bodies."

Ren Xiaosu added, "I spent a lot of time in libraries reading many books, as I wanted to learn more about this world. I came across a very interesting book called Psychology in a Deviant Society. It recorded an experiment that a scientist carried out. He gathered 11 people and blindfolded them, then told everyone he would sear them with a hot iron."

"But actually, he used an ice cube and 'seared' their skin with it instead of using a hot iron. Then something strange happened. After the ice cube came into contact with their skin, two of the subjects

did not react while three started screaming. The other six people experienced scalding and developed blisters on their skin. However, when they learned that it was just an ice cube that had “burned” them, their injuries disappeared within a few minutes.”

Jiang Xu wondered, “If this is true, does that mean that superhumans who master their subconscious will gain control of the world?”

“I don’t know. I doubt even Li Shentan understands this fully yet. Otherwise, he would’ve become a god already.” Ren Xiaosu said, “But no matter what, this is no longer a world where authority figures can do whatever they like. Besides, among the supernatural beings, many of them have already started treating normal people as ants. They won’t even hesitate to sacrifice an entire stronghold to achieve what they want. Mr. Chief Editor, do you pay attention to whether you’ve trampled any ants while walking?”

Jiang Xu said, “Yes, I do.”

“... Amazing,” remarked Ren Xiaosu.

Jiang Xu started belly laughing. By stumping Ren Xiaosu, he felt like he had gained a minor victory of sorts. He finally got revenge for the chess game!

“Will you still be attending classes at the university after everything settles down?” Jiang Xu suddenly asked, “Why did you come to Luoyang City? It seems like you know exactly what will happen in Luoyang City. In that case, why did you still come here and risk your life?”

“Initially, I came here to look for Yang Xiaojin. Although I don’t know her whereabouts now, I’ve found some clues. So I plan to stay and see if anything will arise.” Ren Xiaosu was currently waiting for the Saboteurs to appear. “Besides, since Qin Sheng and Old Li are my friends, it’s only natural that I help them out.”

“I know Qin Sheng, but who is Old Li?” Jiang Xu wondered.

“Li Yingyun,” Ren Xiaosu explained.

“Oh, I usually call him Little Li,” Jiang Xu said with a smile.

Ren Xiaosu said unhappily, “Is there any point in lording over such a small thing when you’re already the important chief editor?”

“I am certainly much older than you, so how does that count as lording over you?” Jiang Xu said, “You still haven’t answered my question. Will you still be attending classes after everything settles down?”

“Yes,” Ren Xiaosu said frankly, “it’s still very rewarding to attend your class.”

“Alright.” Jiang Xu took his cane and stood up. “Then I’ll see you in class next time. I’m also looking forward to the questions you ask. If there isn’t enough time in class, you’re welcome to visit me at Hope Media.” With that, Jiang Xu limped out of the office.

Ren Xiaosu asked, “Did someone really break your leg? Have you gotten revenge yet?”

Jiang Xu did not answer his question. “This was the price to pay for reporting the truth.”

...

In the afternoon, Ren Xiaosu continued to attend classes according to the schedule. However, the other classes were not as interesting as the one in the morning. Ren Xiaosu was getting drowsy as the lecturer recited directly from the textbook at the teaching podium.

He asked a male classmate nonchalantly, “I heard that there was a very popular girl in this class. Is her name Yang Xiaojin? When did she leave Qinghe University?”

“Oh, I don’t really remember why, but that should have been more than ten days ago.” The male classmate said, “She just suddenly stopped coming to class. We only found out that she took a leave of absence from school when the Class Committee went to ask a counselor. Why? You want to find out about her as well?”

“As well? Who else is asking?” Ren Xiaosu wondered.

“Well, a lot of people.” The male student chuckled and said, “Our class often joins up with other classes for the larger lectures. That is to say, two or three classes will attend the same lecture together. Many of the male students fell in love at first sight. Wait, why are you so concerned about this when you’re just here to show up for attendance for someone else? What do you do outside of campus? Are you really short of money?”

“Oh, I sell roasted sweet potatoes with my family,” Ren Xiaosu lied with a smile.

The male student did not say anything more to Ren Xiaosu as he continued paying attention to the lecture and writing some notes.

A female classmate sitting in the back muttered, “I wonder where Zheng Hang found this person? He’s good-looking and has a nice body too.”

A lot of guys do not know that girls can actually be cruder than guys when discussing such matters in private.

### **Chapter 632: Prelude to chaos**

A girl beside her said with a smile, “Are you interested in him?”

“Interested?” The female student who started the conversation muttered, “And live a life of poverty after getting together? A guy like him is just good for looking at.”

1

“Have you guys heard? It seems like Xu Zhi has always been single. He’s the president of the student council and his family members are the core figures of the Qinghe Group...”

The people who would stand in for students for their lessons were typically bums from outside of school, so the students of Qinghe University would look down on them.

Therefore, everyone would stop paying attention to Ren Xiaosu once the novelty of his presence wore off.

When Ren Xiaosu would eventually leave the university and Jiang Xu would suspend Zheng Hang from his classes year after year, Zheng Hang would likely be unable to graduate and end up becoming a bum of society himself.

After school, Ren Xiaosu did not go straight home like the other students who lived in the stronghold. Instead, he did some reading in the library before leaving at 8 PM.

Sure enough, it was just as Qin Sheng had said. The soldiers on duty at 8 PM were the same ones on duty at 8 AM. As they already remembered Ren Xiaosu’s face, they only routinely swiped his student pass, checking the mag strip, before letting him through.

On the way back, Ren Xiaosu tried to find out the whereabouts of the Saboteurs. However, it was a futile attempt as he barely knew any of their members.

But before he could return to his residence at Junmin Alley, he heard a hysterical scream in the distance. Then he saw a figure dart across a roof.

“They’re making their moves already?” Ren Xiaosu muttered to himself. In his opinion, the various forces in Luoyang City should be lying low while waiting for the other forces to make their move first. So some of them were getting impatient?

But the bird that takes the lead gets shot first. The first ones to strike would most likely get crushed by the Riders with the most brutal methods.

At this moment, a peddler selling roasted sweet potatoes on the sidewalk started packing up. He looked like he was afraid of getting dragged in.

As Ren Xiaosu had not eaten dinner yet, he decided to lowball the street vendor and buy two sweet potatoes on the cheap. The peddler was not in the mood to haggle with Ren Xiaosu, so he just sold them to him cheaply.

1

Ren Xiaosu called Qin Sheng. “What’s happening in Luoyang City? Do you need my help?”

Qin Sheng replied over the phone, “It’s fine. An unknown person attacked a tobacco and liquor store in the city. We now suspect that the store was operated by one of the forces, and that a clash broke out

between them and a rival. But these are all minor incidents. Unless a large number of superhumans appear, we're capable of dealing with these matters on our own."

Ren Xiaosu got the picture. So it turned out they were just sending a few minions to create a bit of trouble. Meanwhile, the supernatural beings, as the trump cards, had not even appeared yet.

"Alright then." Ren Xiaosu said, "Also, I have good news to tell you. To be precise, the good news is related to your cousin. I got him appointed as the Humanities and Political Science class representative."

Then Ren Xiaosu ate the sweet potatoes as he slowly made his way back to his little courtyard house.

Since Qin Sheng said he did not need his help, there was no need for him to intervene, right?

After hanging up, Qin Sheng was baffled for a moment. He did not know whether he should tell his cousin about the bad news Ren Xiaosu had conveyed to him. For a student who preferred playing video games at home every day, he actually got chosen as the class representative.

2

Ren Xiaosu was walking down the street. Although Qinghe University was more than ten kilometers away from the little courtyard house at Junmin Alley, Ren Xiaosu did not take the streetcar.

But at this moment, the chaos and clamoring were getting louder. It sounded as though it was heading towards him.

Shortly after, Ren Xiaosu watched two people turn a corner while holding the sweet potatoes in his hands. They were making a mad dash towards him.

They were not targeting him but were being chased. These two people were fleeing towards him in panic.

Ren Xiaosu pulled his hood over his head.

When the two people passed by Ren Xiaosu, he stuck out a leg and tripped one of them. Due to the great inertia, the person who got tripped was sent rolling more than ten meters before coming to a stop.

Just as Ren Xiaosu was about to deal with the other person, he suddenly felt a sense of danger behind him. It was a scorching attack. Ren Xiaosu could even feel the heat on his back while the ends of his hair also started curling.

Faster than the blink of an eye, the nanomachines covered his entire body and turned into extremely strong armor.

Immediately after, an explosive fireball engulfed the armor in flames. This was an attack by a supernatural being who was trying to provide cover for the two people to escape!

However, the supernatural being who used the fire technique was surprised to find that the armored being was unscathed by his attack. Within the brilliant flames, that dark figure of the steel beast turned around and looked at him. He was being stared down by something terrifying.

With no time to hesitate, the supernatural being who used the fire technique turned around and tried to escape. With just a few simple jumps, he propelled himself up towards the rooftops by kicking off on the walls between two buildings that were four meters apart.

But before he could safely land on the rooftop, the supernatural being suddenly felt that his ankle was caught by something metallic. When he looked down, he saw the steel beast had jumped more than eight meters at once from its original position. It grabbed hold of his ankle ruthlessly and threw him to the ground!

Even he had to resort to pushing off walls to get to the top of the building that was eight meters high. However, his opponent was able to achieve the same by just leaping up? What sort of formidable physical fitness was that? Or could this be the effect of the steel armor?

If he were to fall from a height of more than eight meters, the supernatural being thought he would either end up dead or crippled.

Thinking of this, he twisted his body. As he was falling, he used a flame whip to tie the legs of the steel beast together in an attempt to break his fall. His movements were extraordinarily agile.

When the supernatural being flicked the flame whip in his hand, his body immediately stopped falling. Furthermore, he managed to pull Ren Xiaosu back towards the ground and used this momentum change to leap into the air again.

Ren Xiaosu's expression remained calm within the steel armor. In just a few seconds, he roughly realized his opponent was a supernatural being who was extremely nimble and had swift reactions as well. He looked just like a flame dancer gyrating in the air.

"Too fancy."

With that, Ren Xiaosu grabbed hold of his opponent's neck with his left hand in midair and pierced the chest of the supernatural being with the black saber in his right hand.

The supernatural being tried to struggle free the moment he was caught, but the strength of that grip was absolutely not something he could resist.

This supernatural being felt sullen before he died. He was only here to provide cover for the others to leave, so how did he end up getting killed first?

Ren Xiaosu quickly left the battlefield and disappeared into the shadows of a building after killing this supernatural being. When Qin Sheng and the others who arrived later saw the corpse of the supernatural being lying on the ground, Old Li quietly gave a sigh. A supernatural being had finally died in this chaotic battle in Luoyang City. Perhaps even more supernatural beings would soon die in this conflict.

On this night, blood was finally spilled in this chaotic battle.

### **Chapter 633: Legend of the armored being**

Initially, Qin Sheng and the other Riders thought it was just a minor incident that happened today. This was nothing more than a few unidentified forces getting rid of their rivals and taking out their intelligence network.

Everyone was currently at the stage of mutual observation as each party took note of how many people the other forces had brought to Luoyang City and vice versa. In any case, no one wanted to make the first move and continued hiding in the shadows.

Therefore, Qin Sheng and the others were also at the stage of trying to figure out the situation. Everyone felt that it was still not the right time to make a move.

Superhumans appearing at this moment was something very unexpected. Moreover, one of them even died as soon as he appeared.

Sometimes, it was very difficult for supernatural beings to kill another supernatural being even if they encountered one another.

For example, back at the Wang Consortium's stronghold, the Pyro Company's members had wanted to kill that elderly sugar painter. However, with his amber-colored dragon keeping a close guard at his side, the Pyro Company could not find any opportunity to finish him off.

Meanwhile, when the Anjing House's Vanilla tried to kill the members of the Pyro Company, they were able to escape due to their strong physical fitness.

Everyone had their shortcomings. So when some superhumans bumped into each other, they would usually just exchange a few blows before retreating.

But it was different today. A supernatural being had absolutely crushed another supernatural being in just a short encounter. This incident had undoubtedly announced to all of the supernatural beings in Luoyang City that someone really strong was here.

Earlier, Ren Xiaosu was also caught off guard by the sneak attack on him. Under such circumstances, he had no choice but to activate his armor.

Of course, a lot of people knew of the existence of the armor, but they might not know that Ren Xiaosu was the one controlling it.

Other than Fortress 178, Wang Fugui's group, and Yang Xiaojin, it seemed that the only other living people who had seen him in the armor were the residents of Stronghold 146. However, Stronghold 146's residents did not know his identity. Furthermore, the Fortress 178 troops had been ordered to keep it a secret. Therefore, the outside world only knew that someone in armor had destroyed a stronghold, but they did not know who exactly that person was.

This time, many of the residents in Luoyang City witnessed it as well. When the Riders and the Luoyang City troops arrived at the scene, someone came up to them and said animatedly, “Are you guys pursuing two people? I saw them escaping in a hurry earlier on. But when they happened to pass by a hooded young man, that young man tripped one of them while snacking on some sweet potatoes.”

Qin Sheng and Old Li looked at each other. Snacking on sweet potatoes? What the fuck?! Meanwhile, Zhang Qingxi, who was nearby, said nothing.

The pedestrian continued, “Just as the young man was about to stop the other person from escaping, someone suddenly attacked him from behind from the alley. I don’t know how he managed to conjure up a fireball and envelope the young man inside the flames, but that young man was suddenly clad in steel armor that appeared out of thin air, and he was unscathed by the fire.”

Next up was the story of how the steel beast killed the acrobatic superhuman. Even if the pedestrian did not really understand supernatural beings, he could tell that the young man in the steel armor was much stronger than the other supernatural being.

He had brutally crushed his opponent. The pedestrian felt adrenaline pumping just from watching it happen, and he even wished he could become the protagonist of this battle.

“Steel armor?” Zhang Qingxi mumbled, “Could it be that person from the Northwest?”

Actually, even Ren Xiaosu himself did not know he had become as famous as Li Shentan after the battle at Stronghold 146. In the eyes of many, he was a superhuman on par with Li Shentan.

After all, not many supernatural beings could take on a stronghold on their own.

No matter whether they knew the specifics, a symbolic object like “steel armor” was flagged by most of the major forces. Everyone knew Fortress 178 had such a fearsome supernatural being in their ranks.

But after Zhang Qingxi said that, Li Yingyun threw him a significant look. The three Riders then walked away. Puzzled, Zhang Qingxi asked, “What’s the matter?”

“Brother Qingxi, there really is someone from Fortress 178 in Luoyang City at the moment,” Qin Sheng explained. “And he’s the only one from there who’s here.”

“You mean Ren Xiaosu?” Zhang Qingxi was stunned. “Didn’t you two say that he doesn’t look like he can fight that well?”

“Ahem, that was just a misunderstanding.” Old Li said, “Didn’t we bring it up again in the post-op meeting? That kid went into Stronghold 61 by himself, so he might also be the one who took care of the creeper vine.”

“Based on what you said, if he is really the person in the steel armor, he might be the one who finished off that creeper vine.” Zhang Qingxi muttered, “Why didn’t you two say so earlier?”

Zhang Qingxi had made his stand clear at the meeting that if the descendant of the Riders' founder was a weakling, he would be willing to provide the other party a life of luxury, but he would definitely not swear loyalty to him.

But now it seemed that if the person they were looking for was really Ren Xiaosu, Zhang Qingxi might not even be a match for him.

After all, Zhang Qingxi knew he was not capable of taking on a stronghold by himself.

"Are you sure he's here to help?" Zhang Qingxi asked.

"I think so." Qin Sheng explained, "During the conflict between the two forces earlier, he even called me to ask if we needed his help. I told him it was fine. He should have been in the vicinity at that time and acted after encountering the two who tried to escape."

"That's a good thing." Zhang Qingxi said with a sigh, "Since Wu Dingyuan and Wen Meng are still not back, something must have happened along the way. It looks like the Qinghe University students will have to cancel their future travel plans. It's really no longer safe to go to other people's territories."

Every year, the Riders would send their members to travel out of the stronghold with the more outstanding Qinghe University students to see the world. Back then, the Rider Ren Xiaosu met at the black market was Wu Dingyuan.

The scope of their travels was very broad and was mainly to allow the students to gain more real world knowledge by not always remaining in the stronghold.

However, the enemies took advantage of this moment to come to Luoyang City. At this moment, there were only seven Riders in the stronghold, so their overall strength had slightly weakened.

This was also the reason why Qin Sheng and the others had to kill their enemies so decisively. At this moment, they needed to intimidate the troublemakers and stall for time.

The arrival of Ren Xiaosu and the power he displayed had undoubtedly reassured them a little.

"He still helped us in the end. We definitely have to thank him for that, but we can't keep relying on outsiders." Old Li said with a smile, "Besides, we Riders are pretty strong ourselves too!"

When Zhang Qingxi looked at the huge stronghold city, the nightlife was still brilliant and bustling. He wondered if the prosperity would remain after this chaotic battle ended.

News of the armored being's appearance in Luoyang City had already begun to spread through the grapevine.

However, the people from the other forces did not know the truth of the armored being like the Riders did. They were only speculating whether Fortress 178 was also interested in the satellites the Qinghe Group had in their possession.

That was also a possibility. After all, Fortress 178 did not have the ability to launch their own satellites either.

However, how many people from Fortress 178 had come to Luoyang City?

Suddenly, it seemed like the situation had become even more chaotic. Everyone was surprised because they had not previously thought Fortress 178 would get embroiled in this matter.

Even the commanders of Fortress 178 had the same thoughts.

### **Chapter 634: Jiang Xu's regrets**

The next day, Ren Xiaosu went to school as usual. Last night, he had been waiting for Qin Sheng and Old Li to come and ask him if he was the one who killed that supernatural being. However, Qin Sheng did not come over.

But actually, it was unnecessary to ask too much. The moment that armor appeared, many questions were answered.

It was as though everyone tacitly understood what had happened. I know that it was you, and I know that you already know...

This was probably what the situation was like.

When Ren Xiaosu walked into Qinghe University, he could hear some students discussing last night's incident.

Ren Xiaosu approached and listened in on their conversation.

"A big battle had broken out between superhumans in the city last night. Could that be the reason why our school is under lockdown? It looks like something big is really going to unfold in Luoyang City."

"But Professor Jiang said these matters would not affect the school."

"On the contrary, I'm paying more attention to that superhuman. I heard he defeated the other superhuman in a one-sided battle and killed his opponent. I wonder where that superhuman came from and which organization he belongs to?"

"Hehe." A knowledgeable student said, "I'm better informed than you. I know he's from Fortress 178 as my friend's cousin told him so. During the war in which the Zong Consortium was destroyed, he single-handedly brought down an entire stronghold. It's someone who's on par with the Demon Whisperer and has been placed on the watchlists of all the major organizations."

When the student said that, a flurry of wows and other exclamations rang out all around him. Ren Xiaosu was overjoyed.

“Is he really that powerful? But why did someone from the Northwest come to Luoyang City?” someone wondered. “I heard he’s still a young man, but I don’t know his actual age.”

The powerful superhuman they were talking about was actually close to their age? He was strong, mysterious, and young. Just these characteristics alone were already enough to attract the yearning of the female students at the school.

“But I don’t think he’s the most powerful person yet,” a male student said.

Ren Xiaosu raised his eyebrows and was about to interrupt. However, the male student continued, “I still think the person who saved Xu Zhi is better, not for any other reason but because he has a maid.”

This male student’s words showed that he was full of disdain at being single. Ren Xiaosu felt better when he heard that. In the end, he was still the one being praised.

When he found the classroom where the first class was held for the day, Ren Xiaosu realized Yang Xiaojin’s classmates were also discussing last night’s incident.

There was simply too little entertainment around these days. This was why the presence of someone like Li Ran was so popular with the people.

Any of the more interesting topics in life could be discussed for extended periods. If one was not up to date with the major incidents that happened in the stronghold while living here, they might as well just stay home.

Basically, the landline phone’s role in a stronghold was simply a channel for people to pass on news from the grapevine most of the time.

Ren Xiaosu thought that if he reunited with Yang Xiaojin, she could come back to school and say to her classmates, “Do you know so and so? He’s the guy I like.” He wondered if the students would be jealous of him or not.

As he was thinking about that, someone next to him said, “Hey, you, what are you snickering about at the door?”

The students in class were still unaware of Ren Xiaosu’s name, and Ren Xiaosu did not intend to tell them either. Therefore, they would just address Ren Xiaosu as “hey, you” when calling out to him.

Ren Xiaosu came back to his senses and found a seat and sat down. A male student beside him asked, “Have you told Zheng Hang about what happened yesterday? We couldn’t get through to him at all. By the way, why did Professor Jiang summon you to his office?”

Ren Xiaosu glanced at him. “Is that any of your business?”

The male student was speechless.

The students next to them looked over. Weren’t they getting along quite fine just yesterday? What was going on? Did he wake up on the wrong side of the bed today?

However, Ren Xiaosu did not explain to them and just waited quietly for class to start.

Yesterday, Jiang Xu told him that Yang Xiaojin's relationship with her classmates was not good. If that were the case, Ren Xiaosu would definitely not treat them nicely either.

Jiang Xu only held two classes per week. After attending the other teachers' lectures, Ren Xiaosu found there were two slightly more interesting classes. One of them was Modern History, which recorded some of the events that occurred after The Cataclysm.

For example, it talked about how everyone worked together to establish the Alliance of Strongholds and how they ended up splitting and fighting against each other.

At the end of the lesson, Ren Xiaosu was about to head to the cafeteria for lunch as usual. In fact, the food at this university was really cheap. Apparently, this was because of the Qinghe Group's subsidies.

If Qinghe University were not under lockdown right now, Ren Xiaosu would have liked to have taken Zhou Yingxue, Wang Yuchi, and the others here to eat as well.

But just as the students were about to rush out of the classroom, Jiang Xu suddenly appeared outside the door. He smiled and waved at Ren Xiaosu. The entire class was shocked as everyone knew Jiang Xu's habits. If Jiang Xu did not have any classes for the day, he would definitely not come to school. After all, he was only a visiting professor and there was a lot of work to handle at Hope Media.

Everyone looked at Ren Xiaosu. What could have made Jiang Xu so concerned about a student?

Ren Xiaosu walked out of the classroom. "What are you doing here? I don't think you have any classes today, right?"

"Yeah, whatever!" Jiang Xu cut him off. "I'll treat you to a meal at the staff cafeteria. Wanna come?"

"Sure!" Then Ren Xiaosu followed Jiang Xu out.

Many of the students were utterly confused. A female student said, "Did Professor Jiang just say he was taking him out for lunch? It's obvious that their relationship isn't typical."

...

While they were walking to the staff cafeteria, Jiang Xu asked, "You were the one who killed that superhuman last night, right?"

"Mhm." Ren Xiaosu felt there was no reason for him to deny it.

Jiang Xu said with a smile, "A weak and frail-looking scholar like Zhang Jinglin actually chose to entrust Fortress 178 to a superhuman. It looks like he also thinks the world is starting to get dangerous. I heard you destroyed a Zong Consortium stronghold by yourself?"

"I'm really not that great at fighting. Luck still played a major role in the outcome. Mr. Zhang chose me..." Ren Xiaosu said modestly, "... probably because I'm wiser and smarter than most people."

Jiang Xu was speechless for some time. He changed the subject and asked, "What exactly is that steel armor you were wearing yesterday? I think none of the consortiums have developed something like that yet, right?"

"They're nanomachines from the Li Consortium and the Yang Consortium," Ren Xiaosu explained as they walked along the secluded path. Seeing that no one was around, Ren Xiaosu stretched out his hand. Jiang Xu saw with his own eyes how the nanomachines turned into a steel-like armor around Ren Xiaosu's hand like an illusion..

He asked in surprise, "Are these nanomachines inside your body?"

"Yes." Ren Xiaosu nodded. "They depend on a bioenergy source to charge up. They can also temporarily take the place of bone and muscle in case of injury. They're connected to the human body's neurons and controlling them is like controlling your own fingers. Say, if you connect them to your neurons, getting your broken bones repaired will definitely not be a problem."

Ren Xiaosu said this because he felt it was a great pity for someone like Jiang Xu to walk with a limp.

### **Chapter 635: It's you!**

When Jiang Xu heard what Ren Xiaosu said, his interest was piqued. "Where are these nanomachines found? You know, the Li Consortium and the Yang Consortium have already been destroyed."

"The Qing Consortium." Ren Xiaosu answered matter-of-factly, "Luo Lan said that Qing Consortium has already developed nanomachines and put them into use."

"I know that," Jiang Xu said. The Qing Consortium did not treat this matter as a secret either. Hope Media had even reported it in their newspaper before.

Luo Lan said everyone knew the Li Consortium and the Yang Consortium had nanomachines in their possession. With the Qing Consortium replacing those two consortiums now, of course it would be no secret the nanomachines were also in their hands now.

In any case, it was just used for strengthening the physical fitness of normal soldiers. Moreover, Qing Zhen was not allowing the nanomachines to be implemented on a wide scale yet. On one hand, it was due to a lack of production quantities. On the other hand, he was worried the soldiers would start relying on them.

A lot of their training would become much easier to complete.

Qing Zhen believed the most important thing for the troops was not their strength but having a strong will that could not be crushed. So what was regarded as a treasure to the Li Consortium and the Yang Consortium was only seen as an ordinary tool in Qing Zhen's hands.

Perhaps Ren Xiaosu would only get to see nanosoldiers in large numbers again when another war descended upon the Qing Consortium. But the next time, he would not have to hunt down those nanosoldiers.

Jiang Xu continued asking, "So, is the Qing Consortium the only one who has nanorobotics technology at the moment?"

Ren Xiaosu wondered, "It's good as long as it can be used. Do you need me to get some nanomachines from the Qing Consortium?"

"There's no need." Jiang Xu smiled and shook his head.

"Why not?" Ren Xiaosu was even more confused by this. "Don't you want to be able to walk normally?"

"It's not that." Jiang Xu explained with a smile, "Who would want to walk with a limp? A lot of people admire me because of what happened to my leg. However, I'd rather walk like a normal person than have everyone's admiration."

"Then do you have something against the Qing Consortium?" Ren Xiaosu asked again.

"No." Jiang Xu shook his head. "Rather, of all the organizations, I admire the Qing Consortium the most. Of course, organizations throughout the world are all the same, and there's essentially no difference between them."

"Then why're you unwilling to approach the Qing Consortium and get some nanomachines from them?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"Because I want to record the truth, so I can't accept gifts of any kind from any organizations. Besides, the Yang Consortium and the Li Consortium have also proven that the nanomachines are capable of controlling human thought. For example, when Stronghold 88 was destroyed, those nanosoldiers had already fallen under their control." Jiang Xu said, "Even if the Qing Consortium doesn't control me with the nanomachines or run any malicious programs in the background, how am I going to convince everyone that I'm really recording the truth?"

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. To ensure he could record the truth, Jiang Xu was willing to persevere even when his leg was broken.

To ensure that the truth was reliable, he would rather give up the chance to fix his broken leg.

This was probably the reason why everyone admired him.

Some people were really willing to give their lives to uphold their principles, and such people were way too few and far between. They were so rare they seemed to exude a certain brilliance.

Therefore, if the Qing Consortium were the only organization in the world that could produce the nanomachines, Jiang Xu would be unwilling to accept it even if Ren Xiaosu offered to give his own nanomachines to him.

This was because Jiang Xu wanted to avoid suspicion. How would others possibly know where his nanomachines came from?

Jiang Xu patted Ren Xiaosu on the shoulder. "You are also part of the truth I want to report. At the very least, I can start putting on record what the seventh commander of Fortress 178 is like once you take over in the future. Perhaps you still haven't realized you'll also become part of this history, so you'll never be forgotten with time."

"Is the truth really that important?" Ren Xiaosu asked in a low voice, "What if no one cares what the truth is?"

Jiang Xu laughed and continued walking towards the cafeteria. "That's their problem then."

Although Ren Xiaosu was starting to admire Jiang Xu a little, he did not hold back at lunch. He ate so much that Jiang Xu was left dumbfounded by his appetite. Patting his stomach in satisfaction, he asked if they were going to have lunch together again tomorrow.

Jiang Xu expressed he would not be coming to school again until the next lecture.

The head chef in the staff cafeteria was dumbfounded. He thought Professor Jiang must be a really kind person to bring a poor student here to eat.

...

In the evening, Ren Xiaosu left the library quietly and exited the school through the security post. Then he walked all the way across a dozen streets and made his way towards a secret residence.

This was the place where he and Qin Sheng had agreed to meet for a dinner party with the Riders.

Back when they entered the stronghold, Qin Sheng told Ren Xiaosu he had arranged for a meal together with Xu Ke, the head of the Qinghe Group. The meetup could be considered an opportunity to make friends.

Ren Xiaosu had intended to stand Qin Sheng up today, but he did not expect Qin Sheng to call him seven times today to remind him about it.

There was no choice. He could not possibly disgrace Qin Sheng and turn down his invitation. After all, it was not like he was some big shot.

The residence did not look grand, and there were not a lot of people inside either.

After Ren Xiaosu knocked on the door a few times, Qin Sheng opened the door and let him in. There were only four people inside. They were Qin Sheng, Old Li, an unknown person who was preparing a meal in the kitchen, and a final person who was stunned when he saw Ren Xiaosu. "It's you?"

Ren Xiaosu was amused. "Oh, it's you."

Zhang Qingxi was the Rider Ren Xiaosu had seen near East Lake at Stronghold 73. At that time, Ren Xiaosu was jogging around East Lake when the Rider advised him to leave.

Ren Xiaosu could still clearly remember how Zhang Qingxi tried to persuade the plaza dancing aunties in the plaza to leave but ended up getting threatened with extortion claims instead.

Only at this moment did Zhang Qingxi realize Ren Xiaosu was also at Stronghold 73 at that time.

However, Zhang Qingxi was a little puzzled. "Since you were also at Stronghold 73 at that time, were you that person in the white mask?"

With only a few clues, Zhang Qingxi immediately linked it to Ren Xiaosu. During the Battle of East Lake, "Old Xu," who was wearing the white mask, had slaughtered a lot of people. On the other hand, Ren Xiaosu seemed to have disappeared with no one paying much attention to him.

All of these were suspicious points.

Old Li and Qin Sheng looked at each other. When they were defending Stronghold 74, the person in the white mask had also appeared there, as a matter of fact, and Ren Xiaosu happened to be there as well.

Some things just could not stand up to scrutiny...

Ren Xiaosu said, "It wasn't me. It really wasn't me."

"Don't worry, we Riders have our principles and will not reveal your identity. Besides, you came over to help us out this time. We don't betray our friends," Zhang Qingxi said.

Ren Xiaosu said innocently, "It really wasn't me."

"Then where did you go that day?" Zhang Qingxi stared at Ren Xiaosu.

"Oh." Ren Xiaosu lied without blinking, "You persuaded me to leave. After thinking about it carefully when I got back, I felt that you were right, so I left."

Zhang Qingxi was speechless. Who are you trying to bluff?!

At this moment, Xu Ke walked out of the kitchen wearing an apron. He said with a smile, "Stop arguing about this. Wash your hands and get ready to eat. Hi, I'm Xu Ke."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. The leader of the Qinghe Group had personally prepared the meal?

### **Chapter 636: The Xu clan's past**

Ren Xiaosu had heard of Xu Ke's name on many occasions. As the leader of the Qinghe Group, it was quite normal that his name was so well-known.

But in his opinion, the leader of an organization should be someone very prominent and aloof. As Ren Xiaosu did not like interacting with such people, he initially wanted to bail on Qin Sheng.

The Yang Consortium had also invited Ren Xiaosu to a gala before. However, that event made him lose interest in all galas since then.

The games people in the upper class played did not interest Ren Xiaosu at all.

But right now, Xu Ke was dressed in a casual gray sweater paired with a checkered apron. He held a plate of shredded pork with garlic sauce in one hand and a spatula in the other. He looked like he was only in his thirties and could be considered young.

This image did not suit the looks of an organization's leader at all. Instead, he felt more like a really nice househusband.

Qin Sheng introduced Ren Xiaosu to Xu Ke, "This is Ren Xiaosu, whom I mentioned to you previously."

"Pleased to meet you. Quickly take a seat. I'll bring the food over." Xu Ke said, "Due to the secrecy of this matter, the place that we chose is a little secluded. It's just some home-cooked food, so I hope you won't mind."

"It looks pretty good." Ren Xiaosu looked at the shredded pork with garlic sauce in front of him. It looked delicious and appetizing.

Qin Sheng said from next to him, "Dig in. This is a secret gathering place for the Riders. It's usually Big Brother Xu Ke who prepares the meals."

1

Meanwhile, Old Li was rummaging through the cabinets for something. Xu Ke wondered, "What are you looking for?"

"Where's the wine you hid in the house?" Old Li asked.

"Have you forgotten?" Xu Ke did not know whether to laugh or cry. "You and Qingxi finished it the previous time. Also, we shouldn't be having any alcohol now since it might delay our work."

"Ahem." Zhang Qingxi said, "He drank a lot more than me. I only had a little...."

When the five of them took their seats, Xu Ke raised his teacup and said to Ren Xiaosu, "I'm grateful to Brother Xiaosu for coming to Luoyang City's assistance during this crisis. I would have liked to have given you a toast with wine, but I have to keep a clear head right now. So in place of that, let me use tea to toast you instead." With that, Xu Ke downed the tea in one gulp.

Curious, Ren Xiaosu asked, "Just what is the cause of this crisis? Surely those organizations can't come looking for trouble just because they want to seize your satellites, right?"

"The cause of this actually arose from the Xu clan's control of the Qinghe Group." Xu Ke calmly explained, "You should've heard the rumor that we're searching for the heir of the major shareholder. In fact, our Xu clan only owns 3% of the Qinghe Group's shares. The rest of the company belongs to the major shareholder."

1

"I know that." Ren Xiaosu asked, "But what does that have to do with the crisis?"

"Our Xu clan's ancestor was named Xu Nuo. He built the organization with the founder of the Qinghe Group, and the leadership role has since been passed down from father to son through my family's lineage. We all abide by the teachings of our forebears and do not covet what does not belong to us." Xu Ke sighed. "This is really a scandal for our clan. Although my direct family does not have ambitions of seizing control of the Qinghe Group for ourselves, some of our relatives are unwilling to comply."

With Xu Ke's explanation, Ren Xiaosu realized Xu Ke and his father had always only taken a 3% share of the profits, while the rest of the money was reinvested back into the operations of the Qinghe Group.

As the Xu clan was firmly in power, some of the Xu clan's relatives gradually started holding important positions within the Qinghe Group.

At first, everyone worked hard and performed quite well. But over time, these people started to completely regard the Qinghe Group as the Xu clan's asset. Moreover, a lot of them tried to persuade Xu Ke to not search for the major shareholder's heir anymore.

It was their Xu clan who had been managing the Qinghe Group for all these years, toiling hard and earning merit for the organization. Therefore, they felt the Qinghe Group should rightfully belong to the Xu clan.

1

Some of the business arms were even monopolized by certain relatives as they passed down their positions within their own families. In the past, it was the capable people who assumed these positions. But now the children would take over after their parents' death, regardless of whether they were capable or not.

When Xu Ke realized his relatives were starting to get such ideas, he immediately started purging potential threats within the organization. This was to prevent the Qinghe Group from being led to its demise by the hands of his relatives' children while under his watch.

1

In this clan struggle, Xu Ke came out as the winner in the end. After all, the Riders were on his side.

But this power struggle also made the relatives of the Xu clan realize their strength alone was not enough to exert any pressure on Xu Ke. Moreover, they were not firmly in power at the moment, so they began to secretly conspire with each other and search for external forces to help them seize authority from within the group.

The most critical step was dealing with the Riders.

After his relatives had found the external powers to help them, they did not immediately make a move. Instead, they spent several years planning and letting a large number of spies and unidentified superhumans into Luoyang City.

Ren Xiaosu wondered, "Aren't they afraid that the external powers will usurp power over Luoyang City?"

Xu Ke laughed. "That's why they thought they were being smart by finding different groups of people to aid their conspiracy. Their goal is to let the various forces fight among themselves and hold each other back so that no one can usurp the stronghold. In the end, they're even willing to give up control of all the satellites in exchange for the wealth that's been accumulated by the Qinghe Group over many years. Some of them even want to sell the Qinghe Group and go lead a life of riches at the other organizations."

1

"So who's the main enemy this time?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"The Wang Consortium." Zhang Qingxi said in a low voice, "But we don't have any hard evidence yet. We only suspect the Wang Consortium wants to use our seven satellites to complete the final step of their AI strategy."

After the meal, Ren Xiaosu had a rough understanding of the situation. Perhaps out of gratitude to Ren Xiaosu for his help, Xu Ke told him everything he knew.

Then Xu Ke said with a smile, "Let's not talk about such serious topics anymore. Do you all want some dessert? Brother Xiaosu, what would you like to eat?"

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. As if he ever had dessert before!

Ren Xiaosu pondered it for a moment before saying, "Give me a plate of pickled garlic then."

1

Xu Ke, Li Yingyun, and Qin Sheng were all surprised.

...

In the end, Ren Xiaosu did not get to eat pickled garlic. But it was not because there wasn't any in the house as it just so happened that Xu Ke really kept a jar.

Before the pickled garlic could be served, Zhang Qingxi received a phone call. "A chaotic battle has broken out at Triumphant Road again, but we still can't figure out which of the forces are involved. The garrison troops are already on their way. We'd better hurry over now."

Xu Ke nodded. "Thank you for the assistance. I'll also return to the Group's headquarters immediately."

With that, everyone got dressed and left in different directions. Ren Xiaosu was surprised to see that Xu Ke's mode of transportation was actually a bicycle.

Perhaps by using such a mode of transportation, it would make it harder for others to track him down.

Ren Xiaosu asked Qin Sheng, who was beside him, "Are any of the supernatural beings going to make a move tonight?"

"Yes." Qin Sheng nodded. "But based on their characteristics, one of them seems to have operated as a lone wolf in the past. I wonder which organization recruited him here to make this hard-earned money."

"A lone wolf?" Ren Xiaosu asked, "What's his power?"

"Oh, I heard he can produce saliva bubbles to blow people up..."

### **Chapter 637: Come out and surrender**

When Ren Xiaosu heard Qin Sheng say the other party's power was blowing saliva bubbles, Ren Xiaosu was stunned for some time. Qin Sheng added, "I heard that person's saliva bubble power is extremely powerful. The other superhuman was blown more than ten meters away by his attack. I wonder why there's such a strange superpower like that...."

Then Qin Sheng noticed Ren Xiaosu had a strange look on his face. Curious, he asked, "What's wrong?"

"I think I might know that supernatural being," Ren Xiaosu said with a sigh.

Even elemental superpowers would have very obvious differences. For example, there was the covert supernatural being from Fortress 178 who could turn water into lifelike underwater beasts such as a killer whale among other creatures. Only through this could he unleash his greatest destructive power.

And now, the person who could blow saliva bubbles might just turn out to be that Zhang Baogen that Ren Xiaosu knew.

Back then, he and Zhang Baogen used to live in the same town. But because some refugees harbored evil intentions against him, they reported him to the authorities.

His parents thought he was doomed after he was taken into the stronghold, so they killed the entire refugee family who reported their son before taking their own lives.

Wang Fugui and Zhang Jinglin were even the ones who helped bury the corpses of Zhang Baogen's parents, while Wang Fugui paid for their burial.

At the time, Ren Xiaosu also thought Zhang Baogen would definitely not survive. However, the earthquake saved him. During the escape, Ren Xiaosu even saw from afar how he repelled the Experimentals with his superpower.

But he did not expect Zhang Baogen would appear in Luoyang City as a supernatural being that acted alone.

After Ren Xiaosu related Zhang Baogen's story to Qin Sheng, Qin Sheng was also stunned. "Wow, there's even something like that? Then let's quickly go over and have a look."

The place where the battle broke out was Triumphant Road. When they arrived there, Ren Xiaosu saw strange fracture marks on all of the surrounding residential buildings. It was as though a bomb had been thrown at the walls, but there were no scorch marks left behind at all.

It looked like the battle was already over. Qin Sheng was told the two superhumans had fought each other for over 20 minutes as they battled across several hundred meters. In the end, it was the superhuman who could blow saliva bubbles that killed his opponent. Right now, he was hiding inside a building and holding someone hostage.

The garrison troops of Luoyang City surrounded a bicycle shop while a negotiator standing at the door was negotiating with the superhuman inside. "We've surrounded this place. Even if you kill the hostage, you can't get away. Why don't you tell me your terms and we might consider letting you off?"

The person inside sneered, "Y'all will let me off? What a joke! There's no need to convince me to release the hostage."

Ren Xiaosu quietly walked away from Qin Sheng and climbed to the top of a building across from the bicycle shop by himself.

This location was more than 700 meters away from the site of the incident, and it was a perfect spot for sniping.

He took a look inside the bicycle shop with his spotting scope first, and he was surprised by what he saw.

In the bicycle shop, Zhang Baogen was hiding behind his human hostage shield. And the hostage turned out to be the person he tripped the previous night! Was this a coincidence? Or were they putting on an act?

Ren Xiaosu called Qin Sheng. "I'm getting ready to make my move."

Qin Sheng had a confused look on his face. He looked around and realized Ren Xiaosu had disappeared off to somewhere. "Where are you now? What do you plan to do?"

"I'm gonna snipe him from far away."

"But he's well-hidden. It'll be very difficult to kill him without injuring the hostage," Qin Sheng said doubtfully.

Just as he finished speaking, everyone at the site heard the crack of a sniper rifle. Qin Sheng immediately turned to look at the bicycle shop and saw the hostage inside had been killed on the spot.

Qin Sheng was confused.

Bro, when you said you were making your move, did you mean you were going to just kill the hostage?

The sniper bullet was fired precisely through the carotid artery of the hostage's neck. However, it did not hurt Zhang Baogen, who was standing behind the hostage.

Ren Xiaosu said on the phone, "Alright, get him to come out and surrender, but don't kill him yet."

Qin Sheng felt helpless. Meanwhile, the Qinghe Group's negotiator phrased it in a different way. "The hostage has been killed. Will the criminal inside please come out and surrender immediately..."

Everyone was dumbfounded. Zhang Baogen was even more confused. What kinda nonsense was this? Why did they shoot and kill the hostage?!

Zhang Baogen stared at the black barrels outside the shop. He wanted to charge out, but he gave up on the idea in the end.

After dragging the situation out for such a long time, all of the Riders in Luoyang City would probably have arrived by now. Since their ally had killed the hostage so decisively, they were prepared to go in and kill him as well.

He raised his hands and slowly walked out of the bicycle shop as Qin Sheng and Zhang Qingxi converged on him from both flanks. However, they only pressed Zhang Baogen down to the ground. As he did not resist, they did not continue hurting him.

After the farce was over, Ren Xiaosu followed the vehicle convoy of Qin Sheng and the others. He wanted to ask Zhang Baogen about something.

As for the hostage who had died, he would soon be forgotten.

While the convoy was traveling, the vehicle Zhang Baogen was being escorted in by Qin Sheng and Zhang Qingxi suddenly split from the convoy on a remote road and headed in another direction.

Zhang Baogen, who was sitting in the vehicle, asked, "Where are y'all taking me?"

Qin Sheng smiled and said, "An old friend would like to meet you. However, his identity is special, so in order to not expose him, we had to shake off some spies first."

Zhang Baogen did not say anything else. He was already resigned to fate. However, he was a little puzzled. How could he still have any old friends?

The vehicle turned left, then right, and finally stopped at a section of a park. When Qin Sheng and Zhang Qingxi led Zhang Baogen out of the car, Ren Xiaosu emerged from the woods in the park.

When Zhang Baogen saw Ren Xiaosu, he was shocked. "You're... Ren Xiaosu, the one who's sick in the head?!"

Ren Xiaosu's face darkened. Why the hell are you bringing up something from so long ago!

As the four of them stood in the dark in a spot in the park, Zhang Qingxi and Qin Sheng looked at each other and wondered what was about Ren Xiaosu being sick in the head.

However, Ren Xiaosu said, "Your parents..."

Zhang Baogen said anxiously, "What about my parents? Where are they?"

After Zhang Baogen got captured, the stronghold was already destroyed by the time he regained his freedom. He was still unaware of his parents' situation and tried looking for them, but he couldn't get past the Experimentals at all. His only choice was to escape.

Ren Xiaosu whispered, "After you were taken away, your parents killed the entire family of the one who reported you before taking their own lives. The schoolteacher, Mr. Zhang, and Wang Fugui helped with your parents' funeral. They're buried outside the town. You should be able to see their tombstones if you go there in the future. That place might still be intact."

Actually, Zhang Baogen already knew his parents were probably not alive anymore. But when he got confirmation of the news, he still felt upset and forlorn.

Ren Xiaosu and Qin Sheng looked quietly at Zhang Baogen and waited for him to calm down.

Half an hour later, Zhang Baogen looked up at Ren Xiaosu and said, "Thank you for telling me about this. You can ask me anything you want to know. I'll answer all of your questions."

### **Chapter 638: Orphanage**

"I heard that you work as an independent supernatural being. Why did you get involved in this chaotic battle?" Ren Xiaosu asked, "Who gave you orders and who were you trying to kill?"

Zhang Baogen thought for a while before replying, "I don't know my employer's identity. All I only know is that Scarface from Luoyang City hired me to kill someone at Triumphant Road. The target was going to appear at a restaurant wearing a black shirt and gray shoes."

Scarface was a well-known underworld agent at Luoyang City who specialized in brokering illegal transactions. It sounded like Zhang Baogen and Scarface had collaborated with each other on more than one occasion as well.

This was easy to verify since it would not be difficult for Qin Sheng and the others to find Scarface.

However, Zhang Qingxi felt that Scarface might not even know who the employer was.

"Are you saying that you came to kill the target because you accepted an assassination mission?" Zhang Qingxi wondered, "I've been to the site of the battle. You aren't cautious enough when carrying out your attacks and don't look like a professional hitman either. Also, it seems you didn't expect the target to be a superhuman too?"

“True, I really didn’t expect that.” Zhang Baogen said, “I’m really not a professional hitman either. I only come out to do such jobs when the days get unbearable. If I didn’t have to get coats for winter this time, I wouldn’t have taken the risk to carry out a hit in Luoyang City.”

Nobody knew how to react when they heard Zhang Baogen say he only resorted to killing someone because he wanted to buy a coat. He actually went to kill a superhuman so that he could buy a coat?

Zhang Qingxi scrutinized Zhang Baogen. He realized Zhang Baogen was dressed in ill-fitting clothes sold at street stalls.

“How did you manage to get into Luoyang City?” Zhang Qingxi asked. “The security is so tight now. Someone must’ve helped you get in. Who’s that person?”

This time, it was Zhang Baogen’s turn to be surprised. “I’ve been living in Luoyang City all this while. A few months ago, I came here like the other refugees and entered the city through a work recruitment exercise. Later on, the director of the welfare home took me in. He even helped me apply for a long-term work permit, which allowed me to stay in the stronghold for half a year.”

“Wait a sec, you’re working at a welfare home? What do you do there?” Ren Xiaosu wondered.

This time, everyone was confused by Zhang Baogen.

At first, everyone thought Zhang Baogen was just a hitman that operated alone. But the more they talked, the more they realized he was just a rookie. He did not even know who he was killing and was basically just doing the dirty work for someone else.

Furthermore, he was even working at an orphanage in Luoyang City.

Ren Xiaosu said with a sigh, “Did you accept such a dangerous mission just so you could buy one coat?”

“It’s not just one coat.” Zhang Baogen explained earnestly, “It’s 47 coats. The welfare home is running out of funds, and we still haven’t bought any coats for the children yet. Even though the director has applied for funding from the higher-ups, we did not receive any reply for a long time. Left with no other choice, I took the risk while trying to hide it from the director.”

Ren Xiaosu did not know whether to laugh or cry. This conversation with Zhang Baogen tonight was simply full of twists and turns. What did this have anything to do with the children at the orphanage?

Zhang Qingxi and Qin Sheng looked at each other. “Let’s go, we’ll head to the orphanage right away to verify the situation. Don’t worry, we won’t disturb the children there. If you’re telling the truth, we won’t make things difficult for you.”

After all, Zhang Baogen did not kill anyone from the Qinghe Group. It could be said that the more those forces fought among themselves, the happier the Riders were.

And if Zhang Baogen were telling the truth, then this person was at least good-natured.

Zhang Qingxi uncuffed Zhang Baogen. “Lead the way. We’ll talk when we get there.”

When Zhang Baogen got into the vehicle, he said in a low voice, "I know that there's many good people in the Qinghe Group. I didn't want to kill anyone in Luoyang City either..."

"Alright, that's enough." Zhang Qingxi said with a smile, "There's no need to flatter us. As long as you're telling the truth, you'll be fine."

When they arrived at the entrance of the orphanage, Ren Xiaosu looked at the run-down place. "This is your Qinghe Group's property, right?"

"Yes." Qin Sheng nodded. Since there was a sign that read "Qinghe Welfare Home" at the entrance, it had to be their property.

"Then why's there a lack of funding? It's not like y'all lack this bit of money," Ren Xiaosu asked.

"I'm afraid this must be the doing of the Xu clan's relatives. Those people do not have any principles at all, and this isn't the first time they've embezzled their employees' salaries. Previously, someone even dared to embezzle the garrison troops' military salary," Zhang Qingxi explained calmly. "This is probably one of the reasons why Xu Ke wants to purge the potential threats from the organization."

As the four of them walked into the orphanage, Qin Sheng suddenly thought of something. "By the way, Brother Xiaosu, why did you straight-up shoot that hostage?"

Qin Sheng had been wondering about this for some time, but he couldn't figure out why.

Zhang Baogen looked at Ren Xiaosu in surprise. So it turned out Ren Xiaosu was the one who took out his hostage.

However, Zhang Baogen could understand that. After all, Ren Xiaosu was well-known in town for being ruthless.

Ren Xiaosu explained, "You should know that I tripped a fugitive last night, right?"

"Yes, I heard so from a pedestrian yesterday." Qin Sheng nodded. "After that, you were attacked by that superhuman."

"The hostage turned out to be the person I tripped." Ren Xiaosu lamented how fate was so unpredictable. If Zhang Baogen had really not colluded with anyone beforehand, then that hostage must have just been... purely unlucky.

The truth of the matter was that the guy was really unfortunate. As an intelligence agent, he only wanted to see what was going on out there. In the end, he got manhandled by Zhang Baogen.

He could only resign himself to the fact that he had been taken hostage. As a normal person who was no match for a supernatural being, he was carried away effortlessly by his opponent. But the Qinghe Group would most likely find a way to rescue him, right? After all, they did not know he was a spy.

But before the Qinghe Group could rescue him, he was shot dead.

Who could he possibly go and reason with!

It was 11 PM when the four of them walked into the orphanage. Some of the children who were still awake were horsing around in the yard.

When the children saw Zhang Baogen, they happily greeted him as Uncle Baogen. They even scrambled forward to get close to him.

Zhang Qingxi quietly observed that these children were truly wearing tattered and threadbare clothes and many of them were even patched up. Some of the children hiding inside the house were also wearing very thin fall clothing.

Judging by the situation here, Zhang Baogen was not lying.

A child looked at Zhang Baogen eagerly. "Uncle Baogen, didn't you say you were going out to buy coats for us? Did you manage to get any?"

Zhang Baogen said in embarrassment, "I'm sorry, I didn't manage to get them today. I'll go out again tomorrow to have a look."

Seeing that the child was a little disappointed, Zhang Baogen said with a smile, "Let me blow a bubble for you."

With that, Zhang Baogen blew a saliva bubble for the child. The bubble turned into a white little winged horse in the air as the children ran playfully after it.

Zhang Qingxi asked, "You're a superhuman. Are you really satisfied with just being a care worker at the orphanage?"

"Actually, my reason for coming to Luoyang City is not that simple." Zhang Baogen whispered, "I only wanted to sneak into the stronghold to kill someone and complete my mission. But after I snuck in as a care worker, I kept wanting to cheer up those children whenever I saw them. It wasn't until an autistic child saw the bubbles that I blew and started laughing that I suddenly got the idea of staying. There is nothing special about supernatural beings. Perhaps the purpose of my power was never meant for killing people at all."

### **Chapter 639: Unexpected**

Just because Zhang Baogen had accidentally amused an autistic child with his saliva bubbles, it made him, a supernatural being, decide to remain at the orphanage. This would probably be unimaginable to many supernatural beings.

But whoever stipulated that supernatural beings had to go around killing people and striving for supremacy?

Perhaps superpowers were meant for achieving other things in the first place.

Not everyone in this world was cast from the same mold. Ren Xiaosu sought to use his own superpower to protect his family and friends, while Zhang Baogen felt his superpower was at its peak when using it to cheer up an autistic child. Was there anything wrong with that?

Zhang Qingxi went into the orphanage's kitchen to look around and realized there weren't even any decent food ingredients.

Zhang Baogen explained, "The Qinghe Group disburses 6,000 yuan to our welfare home each month. But as y'all can see, we have so many children here, so that amount is definitely not enough to go around. We also don't wish to see these children suffer, and most of them have some sort of issue. They're either born with internal birth defects or developmental disorders like autism. Their parents abandoned them at our doorstep and gave up on them."

Qin Sheng looked at the group of children and said coldly, "To think that there would be such an impoverished welfare home in Luoyang City. Why don't they just call it a hardship home instead? Where's the director? Get him out here. I want to check with him on who's responsible for these situations!"

There were only two care workers at the orphanage. One of them was Zhang Baogen, and the other was a girl who was telling stories to the children inside the home. Meanwhile, the director had not made an appearance at all til now.

Zhang Baogen went in and shouted for the director. But when Ren Xiaosu saw the director, he was dumbfounded. It was Hu Shuo!

Ren Xiaosu immediately cursed in his head!

To be honest, he had not expected to encounter Hu Shuo here.

He was wondering why Li Shentan had only made mention of Si Liren but not Hu Shuo. However, he did not expect Hu Shuo to actually end up as the director of the orphanage at Luoyang City.

After all, this was the former director of the Li Consortium's Special Investigations Division, so how could he possibly be willing to be the director of an orphanage?

He wondered how Hu Shuo ended up as the director of the orphanage, and it seemed like he had been in the role for quite a while too. However, Ren Xiaosu did not expose Hu Shuo's identity. He just stood at the side and watched Hu Shuo lament to Qin Sheng and Zhang Qingxi. His acting was so flawless the two Riders did not suspect a thing.

Ren Xiaosu even suspected Hu Shuo was the one who instructed Zhang Baogen to deliberately kill someone so it would attract the attention of the Qinghe Group's people. By playing the sympathetic card, they could improve the orphanage's benefits.

Back when Zhang Baogen was holding the hostage, there was something that made Ren Xiaosu suspicious, and it was how Zhang Baogen had so easily stopped resisting.

But only by doing so could he survive until the “interrogation” stage without getting seriously injured. Only then could he convey to the Riders his reason for killing someone.

One would have to carefully consider the Riders’ behavior patterns before they dared to pull off something like that. And it was precisely someone like Hu Shuo who possessed such a quality.

If it were really so, Hu Shuo was probably not expecting Ren Xiaosu to appear here.

Qin Sheng and Zhang Qingxi assured Hu Shuo they would investigate this matter thoroughly the next day. On top of that, the disbursement of funds to the orphanage would be handled by the Riders’ staff in the future. It would no longer be controlled by the Civil Affairs Department of Luoyang City.

Hu Shuo was so grateful he directly addressed the Riders as kind angels. Zhang Qingxi and Qin Sheng turned red in embarrassment and wanted to get out of there.

Ren Xiaosu did not leave, as he told Qin Sheng he wanted to catch up with Zhang Baogen.

After the orphanage’s gate closed, he saw Hu Shuo smiling ambiguously at him. “Why didn’t you expose me just now?”

“What do I stand to gain if I expose you? After all, the children really do need new coats, and it’s also a good thing to improve their welfare.” Ren Xiaosu said, “But you’re not someone who lacks money, so why’s there a need to put on such an act?”

“Why? Did you see through my plan?” Hu Shuo chuckled and said, “I’m just trying to test the Riders to see if they’re as honorable as the rumors say.”

Ren Xiaosu gave Zhang Baogen a stern look. “You’re way too bold. Are you tired of living? You dared to go along with something like that?”

Hu Shuo smiled and said, “He’s not putting on an act. He really doesn’t know about it.”

Zhang Baogen looked at Hu Shuo and Ren Xiaosu with wide eyes. “The two of you know each other? Director, you...”

Ren Xiaosu finally understood Hu Shuo was mainly trying to test Zhang Baogen. Who could rest easy when a supernatural being like him claimed he just wanted to remain at the orphanage to take care of the children?

Hu Shuo patted Zhang Baogen on the shoulder and said with a smile, “Go and watch the children. I’m gonna have a chat with Ren Xiaosu.”

After Zhang Baogen went off, Ren Xiaosu asked, “Are you planning to make use of Zhang Baogen?”

Hu Shuo sighed, “That kid is like an uncut gem. I can’t bear to make use of him.”

“Then are you thinking of making use of the children in the orphanage?” Ren Xiaosu suddenly made a guess that Hu Shuo could probably raise a new batch of elite intelligence agents by staying here for a few years to groom these children who had no one to rely on.

Ren Xiaosu had attended Hu Shuo's classes before, so he knew exactly what Hu Shuo was capable of. He was an expert in rearing talents.

Hu Shuo replied, "When I first arrived here, it was indeed just as you had thought. On the one hand, I wanted to keep my identity a secret and stay hidden in the city. On the other hand, I hoped to inject new blood into my intelligence network. But after living with them for a while, I've already dismissed that idea. All of us have led a tough life, so why should they have to go through those hardships again?"

"Alright." Ren Xiaosu felt that Hu Shuo sounded quite sincere. Curious, he asked, "Where's Li Shentan?"

"You still have the cheek to bring this up? I get so angry at the mention of it. Yang Xiaojin was chasing after him for half a month, and he ended up being forced to escape south. He says he's gone there to wait for the typhoon season to arrive!" Hu Shuo snapped at Ren Xiaosu, "Why does your girlfriend have such a bad temper?"

Ren Xiaosu wanted to hold it in, but he finally snapped back, "Serves him right!"

"Look at you! Is that what you should be saying?" Hu Shuo said.

"Since he knew that Yang Xiaojin was at Qinghe University, why didn't he just tell me?" Ren Xiaosu was also getting unhappy. "Do you have any news about Yang Xiaojin?"

"No." Hu Shuo shook his head. "That girl is very elusive, so it won't be easy to find her. But since you've already revealed your armor in the city, she'll definitely be attracted back here when the news gets out."

Ren Xiaosu nodded. Actually, the reason he no longer hid his whereabouts and revealed his armor was because he was hoping the various forces could spread this news to let Yang Xiaojin know he was here.

Perhaps the venue and timing of this reunion were not too appropriate, because this place would soon become the center of a storm.

But Ren Xiaosu did not care about the impending danger. Before meeting Yang Xiaojin again, no one was allowed to do anything to this stronghold!

#### **Chapter 640: A touch of humanity amid the chaos**

After chatting with Hu Shuo, Ren Xiaosu went to take a look at the kitchen. There was not much rice left in the rice bucket. Furthermore, Ren Xiaosu even purposely took a look at the garbage can in the kitchen, but he did not find any meat remains in it. This demonstrated the living conditions of these children at the orphanage were deplorable.

Hu Shuo followed behind and said, "Do you know why I can't bear to make use of Zhang Baogen? Was it just because he revealed his kind nature? No, or rather, it wasn't that alone."

Ren Xiaosu turned around and quietly listened.

Hu Shuo continued, "Actually, Zhang Baogen is also still a child. He had been sent to a psychiatric hospital by the Qing Consortium before he could get to see what the world is really like. Fortunately, the

Qing Consortium is considered slightly more benevolent among all the consortiums. They only observed the condition of the supernatural beings without harming them.

“When Zhang Baogen first arrived here, he was totally broke. A while ago, one of the children said he wanted to eat dumplings. When he was three years old, his parents abandoned him at the entrance of the orphanage. Now that he’s twelve, he only remembers the taste of a type of pork and celery dumpling. That was the only memory left of his original family. He doesn’t even remember what his mother looks like, but he still remembers the taste of the dumplings.

“As Zhang Baogen did not have any money, he went to the market to collect celery leaves that had been discarded by other people. He even begged the butcher to give him some fatty meat that people didn’t want. I don’t know how he did it, but they really gave him some in the end.” Hu Shuo laughed and said, “That day at the orphanage, it felt as though we were celebrating the New Year. Later, Zhang Baogen went out to work some odd jobs like clean people’s cars to earn a bit of money. Every time he gets paid, he’ll buy some meat back for the children to eat. However, he didn’t have any for himself.

“This time, if it weren’t because of the coats costing too much, and the children already suffering from frostbite, he would probably not have taken the risk to go out and kill someone. Do you know what I value most about him? After he came here, he really wanted to turn over a new leaf and start taking care of the children. He also would like to eat the meat he brought back, but he’s fine with just watching the children have it.”

Ren Xiaosu said, “Aren’t you rich? Why didn’t you buy something for the children?”

Hu Shuo looked at Ren Xiaosu and said, “Don’t bring that up with me. Shentan, that rascal, did not even give me a share of the gold after taking so much of it. He said he was keeping it all for you. When I was still an official in the Li Consortium, I was always honest and never took any bribes, so how would I have any money! At the beginning, I did have a little bit of savings. But you don’t know how much these children can eat. As the saying goes, a growing child burns a hole in the pocket. I literally went broke because of them!”

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. “Are you really that poor?”

“So what if I’m poor?” Hu Shuo’s face darkened. “Money can’t buy happiness, anyway!”

Ren Xiaosu pondered it for a moment before saying, “It’s because you have too little money that you can’t buy happiness!”

He turned around and went out. The next afternoon, he came back with half a dozen kilograms of high quality pork and dozens of kilograms of celery. Behind him, Zhou Yingxue was also carrying a large bag of flour. All of the children at the orphanage started cheering.

This time, even Hu Shuo made the dumplings together with everyone. Ren Xiaosu used his two black sabers to put on a fancy performance of chopping the dumpling filling for the children. It won their applause and made Ren Xiaosu very proud.

When it was time for the pork and celery dumplings to come out of the pot, Zhou Yingxue stood next to it. However, the children did not make a rush for the food. They all followed Zhang Baogen's instructions and lined up in an orderly manner, with each of them carrying a small bowl. Girls in the front, boys at the back, the young ones went first while the elders waited behind them.

It wasn't until the children started eating that Zhang Baogen came over with a bowl in embarrassment.

Zhou Yingxue smiled and filled the bowl to the brim. Zhang Baogen even thanked her for it.

After they finished eating, the children sat in their chairs with bloated bellies. They had not had meat in a long time, so they could not stop eating once they got started.

A child smiled at Zhang Baogen and said, "Uncle Baogen, please blow a bubble for us!"

Zhang Baogen thought for a moment and casually blew out a bubble in the shape of a magpie.

However, the children recoiled and said, "Uncle Baogen, why does the bubble today smell like pork and celery..."

...

After leaving the orphanage, Zhou Yingxue walked beside Ren Xiaosu and said, "Master, you were quite compassionate today."

"Compassionate?" Ren Xiaosu forced a smile and said, "That was nothing more than a moment of kindness. I doubt I can protect those children like how Zhang Baogen does."

"It's still better than doing nothing." Zhou Yingxue grimaced and said, "The world would be very different if there were a touch of humanity. But, Master, why didn't you leave some money for them?"

"Even without us, they'll live very happily." Ren Xiaosu said, "At first, I had wanted to leave them a million yuan. But later on, I thought that Hu Shuo was probably right. Their happiness there has nothing to do with money. Besides, Qin Sheng and Zhang Qingxi will help them solve their financial problems, so we don't need to intervene unnecessarily."

For the first time since last night, Ren Xiaosu suddenly felt a brief moment of peace.

Since arriving at Luoyang City, he was constantly tensed up in case he had to be on guard against enemies who might attack without warning. However, this should not be how the world worked. All of a sudden, he started looking forward to world peace.

Just as another wave of chaos subsided in Luoyang City, a group of more than 20 people were rushing towards Luoyang City from afar.

The person leading the group had a red cloth covering his face. It was the Rider Wu Dingyuan.

He had been taking the students out to travel according to the plan. But midway through their journey, he was informed about the crisis going on at Luoyang City. As such, he was forced to bring the students back to the stronghold.

But when they passed through the Kong Consortium's stronghold and rested there for a night, their vehicles were all damaged by some people with ulterior motives. In the end, they could only travel on foot.

Wu Dingyuan knew someone was deliberately delaying his return, but he did not go and argue with the Kong Consortium about this. Since what was done was done, the Riders had to assume every consortium was their enemy.

When they were still about 300 kilometers away from Luoyang City, Wu Dingyuan suddenly stopped in his tracks. He looked at Vanilla and the elderly sugar painter in front of him.

Vanilla smiled and said, "I'm Vanilla from the Anjing House."

The old man introduced himself while stirring some sugar syrup, "I'm Tang Hualong from the Anjing House."

Wu Dingyuan frowned. "Is the Anjing House declaring themselves an enemy of the Riders? Have you considered the consequences?"

Vanilla explained with a smile, "That's why we're here. We have no intention of becoming enemies of the Riders, nor do we want to kill innocent people in Luoyang City. As such, we won't enter the stronghold. We just hope that you, Wu Dingyuan, will accompany us and have a chat here."

"And if I say no?" Wu Dingyuan said with a grim expression, "Are you going to use these students behind me to threaten me?"

"No, no, no." Vanilla shook his head. "I'm not a cold-blooded killer. It's just that you won't be able to leave with the two of us taking you on."

Wu Dingyuan stood right where he was. He suddenly realized the people in Luoyang City might be making a move soon.