

Astral Apostle

Chapter 21: Hidden Battle Talent (2)

The white spider beast wailed incessantly. Finally, the arrow was at the end of its flight. Now that it had suffered a critical hit, it was also on the verge of death. Its two enormous arms, which once possessed infinite strength, could no longer be raised.

Seeing this, Barong's eyes lit up. He immediately seized the opportunity and threw the ax in his hand towards the white spider monster's defenseless head.

Pu!

The ax was deeply embedded into its head, almost splitting it into two.

The White Spider sagged down without any movement after. It was dead.

"It's finally dead..."

Zhou Jing was just about to grit his teeth and get up when he saw this scene. He heaved a sigh of relief and continued lying on the ground.

His entire body felt like it was about to fall apart. Several of his bones were broken, and his internal organs were also throbbing in pain.

Unfortunately, the interface did not have any health points or data showing his status. He could only sense his condition on his own.

Although his Resistance attribute was not extremely high, his Physical Fitness was strong, and it also helped increase his resistance to attacks. The beast could kill an ordinary hunter in one hit but only severely injured him.

Zhou Jing silently lay on the ground and looked up at the sky. Suddenly, he felt a sense of relief.

This was the first time he had experienced a life-and-death struggle.

He, a law-abiding citizen who had never seen blood, rushed into the battlefield and fought with such a monster...

Most importantly, he did not have any lingering fear. Instead, he felt that this feeling of risking his life... was very addictive.

He was focused as if he could cast aside everything. The only thing he needed to care about was the moment when life and death were decided.

It was as though he was immersed inside the situation with all his heart, dancing on the edge of a knife.

He somehow felt an indescribable pleasure in this activity.

Only today did Zhou Jing realize that he actually had such a side to him.

Furthermore, this was his first time participating in a battle, but he was extremely calm and did not panic.

When he remembered how he clearly captured the movements of the white spider beast just now, Zhou Jing felt a bit enlightened.

“It seems like I’m quite talented in combat..”

If he did not travel through the astral realms and did not encounter such a life and death battle, he might have never discovered his potential in this aspect.

He would also not know where his true talent lay.

At this moment, Barong had retrieved his ax and walked over. He plopped down beside Zhou Jing, gesturing with his chin as he asked in concern.

“Are you okay?”

“...I should be the one asking you that.”

Zhou Jing tweaked his head to look at him.

Barong looked much more miserable than him. He had faced the white spider beast head-on the entire time, and the webbing between his thumb and index finger was badly mangled. His mouth and nose were still bleeding.

“Haha, I’m just a little weak after my burst just now. This small injury is nothing. I’ve suffered worse injuries than this before. It’s normal for me to bleed a little when hunting medium-risk mutant beasts.”

Barong laughed heartily.

Zhou Jing’s face twitched when he heard this.

Are you really alright? Your ears are spewing blood!

At this moment, Barong stopped laughing and became serious.

“Will, you didn’t have to risk participating in the hunt. In the end, you still helped. You helped us get rid of this beast faster and avoid more casualties. I have to thank you.”

When Zhou Jing heard that, he propped himself up and said with deliberation, “There’s no need to say all this. We’re all in the same situation. If you failed, I wouldn’t be able to walk out of the forest. You were willing to help me back then. It might be as easy as lifting a finger for you, but it’s very important to me. I can’t just hide and watch as you suffer heavy casualties.”

After hearing that, Barong felt that Zhou Jing was more pleasing, so he extended an invitation with a loud laugh.

“We’ve fought side by side today, and we’ll be brothers in the future! I don’t know where your hometown is, but you’ll always be welcome in Frostwood Village. You’re talented in combat, and you’re a good seedling to become a Mutant Beast Hunter.”

At this moment, Griff walked over with his injuries. He had survived the battle as well.

He smiled as he spoke, “Will, I didn’t misjudge you. You really are someone I can trust. That guy Dean kept saying you were suspicious. He—”

Griff paused suddenly. He remembered that Dean had died in battle and fell silent.

Although there were conflicts usually, the other party was still a comrade who could be trusted at crucial moments. He could not help but feel a little sad.

Zhou Jing shook his head lightly.

They had only known each other for a few days, so they naturally didn’t have much of a friendship. However, he still felt a little sad when he thought about how Dean had yearned to return to the battlefield before he died.

At least for these hunters, he was a reliable companion.

Barong used his ax as a crutch to stand up, swaying for a moment before standing firm. He shook his head and said,

“Bury our dead brothers. Don’t let the wild beasts eat their bones. Also, remember to collect the spoils. Take away the White Spider’s shell and arm bones. Those are good materials. They can be sent to the workshop in the town and made into protective gear...”

Everyone nodded and dragged their tired and injured bodies to clean up the battlefield.

Zhou Jing checked his injuries and confirmed that he wouldn't die in the short run. He slowly crawled up with difficulty to help dig a hole to bury the hunters' corpses.

It was then he had the time to open the interface and take a look at the information he had just received.

[You have triggered an achievement: First Victory in Combat!]

[You have received 200 Astral Points!]

[You have triggered an achievement: Participate in a Hunt!]

[You have received 100 Astral Points!]

[You have triggered the achievement: First Kill!]

[You have received 200 Astral Points!]

[You have triggered the achievement: First Kill of Mutant Beast – Medium Risk!]

[You have received 500 Astral Points, 1x [Aptitude Boost – Physical Fitness (Small)] and 1x [Attribute Boost – Physical Fitness (Slight)].]

He hadn't had time to pay attention during the battle, but he discovered that four successive accomplishments were related to the battle.

His Astral Point count increased by 1,000 points in one go, giving him a grand total of 1,305 points in his interface. He had gained quite a bit from this whole experience.

The special rewards for [Attribute Enhancement] and [Aptitude Enhancement] did not immediately take effect on this. They were stored in the Achievements warehouse and could be activated or used by different apostles instead.

Zhou Jing knew that he didn't have much time left in this realm. Hence he decided to first store them in the warehouse.

Up till now, he was still unaware of what the situation would be like when he returned. He didn't think it would be too late to arrange these rewards after he figured out all the functions of the interface. If he used it hastily without understanding all the mechanisms, he would just be wasting these precious resources.

Now that he had killed his prey and his situation was safe, Zhou Jing relaxed and began to plan for the future.

These hunters have completed their goal. Next, they should bring me out of the forest to Frostwood Village. Speaking of which, is this considered exploring a new area?

I'll think about what to do next when we reach Frostwood Village. Since I have a friendly relationship with these hunters, I should be able to integrate into the village and ask about the situation...

After spending four days with the hunters, he only had a general understanding of the world. There were still many details that he was not clear about.

So long as he arrived at a village inhabited by people, he could slowly ask around. At that time, he could then think about his next step.

Zhou Jing dug the hole absentmindedly as his thoughts drifted away.

However, at that instant, a sense of danger arose in his mind, causing his exhausted mind to jolt in shock.

Shuashuashua —

They were footsteps... dense and high-frequency footsteps!

“Be careful! Something is approaching... F*ck!”

Zhou Jing immediately became alert, but before he could finish shouting, he heard a series of whooshing sounds.

In the next moment, dozens of arrows shot out from the forest and flew rapidly towards them!

Chapter 22: Return (1)

A sneak attack!

Zhou Jing's mind instantly sharpened. The dozens of arrows seemed to have slowed down, and the trajectory of each arrow became clearly visible.

Sharp bone heads, pitch-black arrow shafts, quivering tail feathers...

Damn it.?

His body was too injured to keep up with his thoughts!

It was already too late to escape all the arrows. Zhou Jing could only drag his injured body and try his best to hide in the area with the fewest arrows. At the same time, he pulled out his hunting blade and dagger to deflect the arrows.

Clang! Clang! Psh psh psh—

The arrows aimed at his neck and legs were sent flying, but there were still three arrows that broke through the encirclement.

The sharp bone arrows penetrated his body, and one could hear the sound of flesh being pierced,

First, there was a chill, followed by intense pain. After that, Zhou Jing almost lost all his strength.

Although his body's physical fitness was good, he wasn't strong enough to deflect five arrows simultaneously, and he had already been injured previously.

His mastery of the hunting blade and dagger was only at the Apprentice level. Although he was currently well versed in operating weapons, his weapon mastery was not enough for him to perform more difficult moves.

With a weapon in each hand, he accurately deflected two bone arrows. He was immensely concentrated.

At the same time, the sound of arrows hitting could be heard from all directions, mixed with the cries of two to three hunters.

"Ambush! It's the Subterraneans!"

"When did they arrive?!"

In the shadows of the forest, groups of Subterraneans appeared in the dark. At a rough glance, one could see that there were no less than 50 of them. They held short black bows and kept shooting arrows down on the group.

This group of Subterraneans seemed to be the group that was scared off by the hunters after having foiled their night attack a few days ago.

When everyone recognized the origin of these Subterraneans, they were both shocked and furious.

To think they would attack at this moment!

The commotion from the hunt must have been too loud. The light from the inferno they created shone far away, and the roar resounded through the forest, attracting the nearby Subterraneans.

It was also possible that the group of Subterraneans had been secretly tailing them and looking for an opportunity, keeping a distance so that they would not be discovered. When they realized that the group was fighting the mutant beasts from afar, they waited for both sides to suffer heavy losses before launching an attack and taking advantage!

The White Spider was long considered a threat to the Subterraneans who lived in the forest... So they were probably waiting for the hunters to get rid of the White Spider so that there would no longer be any threats to them!

“What a bunch of despicable little b*st*rds!”

Everyone was furious, having come to a similar conclusion.

A few days ago, the hunters would not have been afraid, but three of their comrades had just been killed while hunting the white spider beast. The rest of the hunters were exhausted, and they had varying degrees of injury. They were in very bad condition. Barong, who had suffered the most injuries, said that he was fine, but he was actually exhausted.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The arrows were too sudden, and everyone was caught off guard when handling the spoils of war.

Including Barong, four hunters were shot, and one was even hit with seven arrows!

Only the other three survived because they stood a little further away.

“Run into the forest!” Barong roared.

To create the pit trap and make it easier for them to rain arrows on the mutant beast, they specially chose a relatively empty space to set their ambush. The sparse trees now proved to be a disadvantage for them.

They had to escape into the forest to use the trees as cover to block the rain of arrows from the Subterraneans.

Everyone could not even care about the spoils of war and the corpses of their companions as they fled.

The two hunters who were hit with the most arrows were too heavily injured to run. They were shot in the back by the next wave of arrows and fell to the ground with a thud, eventually drowned by the swarm of Subterraneans.

Zhou Jing had three arrows stuck in his body. Every step he took brought about bone-piercing pain.

He suddenly sensed the whistling of arrows behind him. Gritting his teeth, he pounced to the side.

Du du du!

Seven to eight arrows appeared on the ground where he previously stood.

He felt another sharp pain in his back and shoulder blades as he tried to dodge. He was once again shot by two arrows, making him gasp involuntarily.

By the time Zhou Jing got up from the ground again, the Subterraneans had already closed in. The bone blade in its hand ruthlessly stabbed out, aiming for his heart.

Zhou Jing endured the pain and loss of strength as he fought with both his blades.

Clang!

The hunting blade and dagger intersected, blocking the bone blade that was stabbing over.

Then, he raised his left hand and swiped it. The dagger instantly slit open the neck of this Subterranean without any hesitation.

Fresh blood spurted out!

Even though he was injured, his physical fitness was still much stronger than these skinny little skeletons.

Although the Subterraneans were a part of the human race, Zhou Jing did not hesitate.

When he was hunting the mutant beasts just now, he felt as if a switch had been turned off in his heart. It was as if he had broken through the shackles of a stable life and vented out his anger.

Zhou Jing's hunting blade went straight into another Subterranean eye socket and pierced through the head.

Puchi!

When he pulled out his blade, a stream of blood that was mixed with white brain matter spewed out. He expressionlessly watched the Subterranean before him spew blood and fall.

However, even though he had killed the enemy, his footsteps had still paused for a moment to execute the move.

And following the fall of the Subterranean, he saw three or four more Subterraneans behind the first, as well as more Subterraneans drawing close.

I can't turn around. If I do, I'll be stabbed to death...

Zhou Jing immediately understood the situation. As he retreated, he gripped his two weapons tightly, preparing to face the Subterraneans head-on.

At this moment, a gust of wind whistled past.

Hoomph!

Barong's giant ax spun out, smashing into the Subterraneans with irresistible force.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The few Subterraneans at the front could not dodge in time and were directly bisected.

In an instant, broken limbs flew everywhere!

It was not obvious when they were fighting against the mutant beast, but when fighting against other races, the overwhelming power of the Mutant Blood Warriors was fully displayed!

Chapter 23: Return (2)

"Let's go!"

Not far off, Barong shouted at Zhou Jing.

Mutant Blood Warriors far exceeded the fitness of ordinary people. Barong was the most heavily injured, yet he was still the fastest. He ran to the front, but when he turned around and saw that his companions were in danger, he stopped and threw out his weapon without hesitation. Unfortunately, he only had enough time to resolve Zhou Jing's threat.

However, Baron threw out his weapon with all his strength, causing his injuries to worsen. He almost lost his balance and fell to the ground.

Luckily, Griff and another hunter happened to run to his side. They grabbed his arms and dragged him away.

The first few Subterraneans were smashed into pieces, and the ones behind them stopped in their tracks in fear.

Zhou Jing didn't dare to hesitate. After taking advantage of Barong's opportunity, he turned around and ran.

A few seconds before the next wave of arrows came, he finally followed the surviving hunters into the forest.

Thud! Thud! Thud! The concentrated arrows nailed themselves to the tree that he had just run past.

With the cover of the trees, the threat of the Subterraneans' arrows was greatly reduced.

Zhou Jing followed Barong and the others as they madly dashed through the forest. After running for an unknown amount of time, the shouts behind them gradually faded into the distance. It was as if the Subterraneans had finally given up on pursuing them and returned to plunder the spoils of war.

However, they did not dare to stop to rest. After treating their wounds, they forced their exhausted bodies to continue moving.

After running for a while and ensuring that the Subterraneans were truly not chasing after them, everyone finally stopped. They were all covered in dirt and were in a sorry state.

"Is... is it safe?"

Griff gasped violently.

Zhou Jing was also panting heavily. The wounds on his body were painful and itchy, and the injuries caused his stamina to fall drastically.

Barong fell to the ground, coughing violently and spitting out blood.

He had already thrown out his weapon, and given the circumstances, it was obvious that he could not retrieve it. At this moment, his hands were empty.

“This group of Subterraneans are despicable and shameless! Sooner or later, we’ll exterminate them and burn their lair to ashes!”

Griff pounded his fist against the trunk of the tree, his face full of grief and indignation.

They lost two more companions, and only half of the hunter team was left. They had suffered heavy losses this time around.

“Cough, cough... We’ll talk about this when we get back.” Barong could not stop coughing. He was exhausted. He pointed at Zhou Jing and said intermittently, “It’s all thanks to you, you saved us.”

“Weren’t you the one who saved me?” Zhou Jing panted, a little puzzled.

If Barong hadn’t thrown the ax and forced the Subterraneans to retreat, there was a high chance that he wouldn’t have been able to escape.

Griff took a deep breath before he explained, “We wanted to stall for time and wear the white spider beast down, but looking back at it now, we would probably end up being attacked from both front and back before we could have finished off the mutant beast. We would be dead... Fortunately, you killed the white spider beast in advance. Otherwise, none of us would have survived.”

From the hunters’ point of view, they could see the crucial role Zhou Jing played in this fight.

If they hadn’t brought Will-Wood along with them, they would have been completely wiped out in the protracted battle against the mutant beasts.

Just the thought of being attacked by two groups of enemies made everyone’s heart palpitate.

Zhou Jing had indirectly saved their lives. Although they might not have realized how much he had actually helped, the hunters could not pretend that nothing had happened.

“You saved us. We will firmly remember this kindness.”

Griff had on a solemn expression.

So that’s what he meant... Zhou Jing exhaled.

Thinking about it carefully, it did seem to be the case. If they had not met him halfway, this hunter team would have met a grisly end in the forest.

Zhou Jing caught his breath for a while more before he shook his head.

“There’s no need for that. We’re just saving each other...”

He had only said half a sentence when his vision started to spin, and he fell to the ground.

Everyone was shocked.

Griff hurriedly squatted down to examine Zhou Jing’s body. Soon, his shock turned into anger.

“The group of Subterraneans smeared poison on the arrows. The poison has activated!”

The other two who hadn’t been shot were shocked and quickly went to check on Barong and the rest of the hunters.

They only saw the other hunter that had been shot leaning against a tree without even a sound. He had already long fainted. His body was hot, yet his forehead was covered in cold sweat.

Barong waved his hand, his face pale. He forced himself to focus. “Take care of them first. Don’t worry about me. My body is different from yours. I can take it.”

Zhou Jing’s vision began to blur, and he felt the pain in his body intensify. A hot, wet sensation filled his chest—as if his lungs were bleeding, he had a hard time breathing.

Originally, the poison wouldn’t have acted up so quickly, but since he ran along the way, the poison spread faster through his blood. Not only did the poison deepen, but it also worsened his injuries.

“Brother, hold on, don’t fall asleep!”

Griff shouted anxiously, patting Zhou Jing’s cheek repeatedly.

Zhou Jing tried his best to keep his eyes open, trying to maintain his consciousness. However, after holding on for a while, his consciousness gradually became muddled, and he fell unconscious.

...

In his hazy consciousness, Zhou Jing vaguely felt as if he was being carried by someone, walking and stopping, the terrain rising and falling.

It seemed that someone was anxiously shouting the name “Will Wood” over and over again. Sometimes they said things like, “We’re almost there,” and sometimes, they said, “Hang on.”

He could not hear anything clearly, as though he was separated by an insulating layer. It was like being underwater and listening to the sounds coming from above.

Zhou Jing woke up intermittently, but every time, he would quickly fall unconscious again. He did not know what was happening in the outside world and how much time had passed.

This continued for an indefinite period of time before his consciousness suddenly shook, and he became clear-headed again.

Whoosh!

His view suddenly left his body as if his consciousness was floating in the air.

He looked down to see that Will·Wood's body was being carried by Griff, and Barong, who claimed to be able to hold his own, as well as the other hunter that was shot being carried by two other uninjured Hunters.

The three of them each carried one person on their backs as they trudged through the forest.

In the next second, the figures of these people quickly became smaller in his field of vision. Zhou Jing's view gradually rose. He passed the treetops and looked down at the forest from high up in the sky. The scene he saw suddenly became an endless dark green sea of trees.

They were at the edge of the forest, and beyond the forest, a village with smoke curling up from its chimneys appeared before his eyes. It was too far away for him to see clearly, but it was precisely the direction that Griff and the others were heading...

Before Zhou Jing could analyze this matter further, he felt a familiar attraction from above.

He looked up and saw a brilliant crack silently opening in the sky.

It was the rift that had sucked him in when he had arrived. It had appeared at his feet when he had descended, and when he had returned, it had appeared above his head.

Zhou Jing's body became light as he was sucked into the rift.

It was the familiar tunnel of light again. The familiar colorful lights... The difference was the lights were ascending when he went down to the astral realm but descending during his return journey.

At the end of the tunnel, the starry sky gradually became clear.

At the same time, a stream of information surged into his mind.

[The projection has ended!]

[Actual time of stay: 6 days]

[Amount of resource collection and extraction: 163 Astral Points (For statistics, please expand/contract the menu)]

[Experience log has been recorded, and relevant exploration results have been entered into the illustrated handbook.]

[Cooldown till next Astral Projections: 12 hours in main body]

[Please select a placement for the .]

Chapter 24: Placement And Determination (1)

His consciousness jolted as he returned to the starry space.

“I’m back?”

Zhou Jing looked down and confirmed that he was not in the avatar of Will Wood but in his original appearance.

Phew, I’m finally back. Being poisoned and unconscious is really unpleasant...? Zhou Jing grinned.

When using the , the consciousness could not detach itself from the carrier’s senses. It was 100% realistic, and the pain he felt was real.

A huge glowing interface panel floated in front of him. The information he had received earlier was displayed on it.

“The actual duration of stay was six days... so after I was poisoned, I was almost unconscious for two days. Griff took me, a wounded man, for so long in the forest..”

Zhou Jing fell silent.

The forest was fraught with danger, and the threat of the Subterraneans had yet to disappear. He was not the true companion of the hunters, and they could easily

abandon him as a burden... but it seemed that their so-called kindness was not just empty talk.

He had gone on an adventure for a short period of time and tried a different kind of life. His memories and experiences were extremely profound.

Zhou Jing suppressed his emotions and read the next message.

The interface showed that he had collected a total of 163 Astral Points in this duration, accumulating a total of 1468 Astral Points.

Many of the actions of the s, such as fighting, cultivation, survival, and even eating, could gather the energy of the astral world and transform it into Astral Points.

However, these were different from the immediate benefits of triggering an achievement. The astral points collected from daily activities would only be calculated every time the apostle was released and the consciousness returned. The results would be brought back in one go.

Zhou Jing opened the statistical details of this project. It listed which behavior had collected the Astral Points in this experience. It looked very trivial.

From killing mutant beasts to eating something every day, the Astral Points were included in everything. Even sleeping alone had benefits, albeit extremely low.

“So as long as the s are alive and breathing, they can continue to collect Astral Points...”

Zhou Jing scratched his head.

Most of the profits this time were from killing the white spider beast, and the rest were summed up from all kinds of miscellaneous items.

At the bottom of the list, however, two pieces of information caught his attention.

[Synchronization Rate Bonus: 0%]

[Legendary Point Bonus: 0%]

The synchronization rate and Legendary Points could increase the number of Astral Points obtained through daily activities. It was equivalent to increasing the efficiency of the apostles collecting Astral Points.

The synchronization rate of Will Wood had been raised to 32% before he returned, but there was no bonus added. He estimated that the synchronization rate needed to reach a certain standard before there could be a bonus factor included.

The Legendary Point section seemed to be related to the influence of the . One had to leave behind some achievements that would attract the attention of many people. Based on Zhou Jing's analysis... This Legendary Point might be equivalent to a person's reputation in that realm.

After closing the statistical details, Zhou Jing looked at the next page. It said, "Experience log has been recorded. The results of the exploration have been recorded in the illustrated handbook."

"What does this mean..."

With a thought, the interface flashed, and an extension of the interface appeared on both sides.

On the left interface was shown:

[List]

[Number 001: Will Wood (Alive) — Check detailed attributes and experiences log.]

[Number 002: None]

And on the right interface:

[Records Illustration]

1

1

1

1

1

Zhou Jing's interest was piqued. He studied them carefully and roughly understood what they were.

The List recorded all s that were born, regardless of whether they were still living or dead.

If one selected a name within the name list, they would be able to check the profile of this apostle in its Astral Realm. One could also check the experiences of this apostle.

The experience log took the form of a recording. It contained all the knowledge of this inside as a video series.

Zhou Jing tried to watch a few paragraphs. They were all images from the carrier's first-person perspective. They were all things he had experienced not long ago. If he forgot the details, he could directly check the related images without confusing his understanding.

[Records Illustration] categorized all the abilities he had used in the Mode. It could be directly checked. Currently, only Will Wood's abilities were displayed.

The illustration also served as a character material storehouse. When creating a new , inheriting the abilities of other s was possible through a template of the new carriers. However, different abilities consumed a different number of Astral Points.

So, the more s we use, the richer the names and illustrations... But, it seems like I can only create a new after the previous has cleared the round or died.

Zhou Jing made a mental note to himself before closing the expanded list to continue reading.

The cooldown time for the next drop was 12 hours... This was understandable. His main body had to spend at least 12 hours before sending its consciousness back into the .

It didn't seem like this was a forced mission. When the time came, Zhou Jing could shuttle back and forth if he wanted to. If he didn't want to, he could choose to wait it out. They were free to choose.

Zhou Jing looked at the last row of words.

[Please select a fixed operation of placement for the .]

The reason the interface stopped at this settlement interface was that there was no follow-up operation.

The moment he chose to continue, the settlement interface disappeared and was replaced by a new page.

[Target: Will·Wood]

[Highest synchronization rate: 32% (Stage 2)]

Chapter 25: Placement And Determination (2)

[Fixed Placement Benefits Limit: Astral Point 0 / 2,000, information state particle 0 / 20]

[Please select your main action objective, secondary focus, event processing mode, battle mode, and interaction mode...]

[Remarks: During placement, the synchronization rate will not increase. The higher the synchronization rate, the better the can deal with complex events and act flexibly according to the objectives of the Placement.]

[Remarks: Even when the carries out the placement objective, their behavior will still follow that of the original model template personality]

Zhou Jing took a look and came to a realization.

“Placement model... So this is how it is after returning. When I don't control the apostles from the astral world personally, they act according to the plan I set. They're just like robots with standard artificial intelligence in the main world? Fixing their placement model is equivalent to building a robot's behavior program and logic chain...”

He had been wondering if the Apostles would disappear together with him after he returned or if there would be a time halt in the other dimension.

From the looks of it, time in the other world still flowed. The apostles would stay in the world and continue to collect astral energy according to his plans.

However, unlike when he was controlling it personally, the s had a limit when it came to gathering points. It depended on the synchronization rate.

Every 25% increase in synchronization rate was a dividing line that separated the Apostle into four stages. For every stage, the upper limit of the yield would increase.

The upper limit of each stage depended on the rarity of the model template. For every increase in a stage, the upper limit of the benefit would multiply by at least a fold. Hence the upper limit at the fourth and final stage would be at least eight times more than the upper limit of the first stage.

The moment an Apostle reached the upper limit of his cumulative benefits, he would not be able to obtain any more earnings. He would have to personally descend to increase his synchronization rate in order to expand the upper limit of his obtainable benefits.

Only the s who had completed their main missions and had their synchronization rate reached the fourth stage could have no limit to their benefits.

Zhou Jing nodded secretly. “So, increasing synchronization rates is a high priority target. Compared to controlling them personally, the s will spend more time in the placement mode.”

He carefully read through the details of the placement.

The placement mode had many settings and covered several areas.

He summarized it and simply divided it into two categories. One was the target of the action, and the other was the mode of action.

The former was to determine the purpose of the apostles in the Astral Realm. To explore a new area or to stay in the same place—to focus on training or to cause trouble everywhere.

If he were more detailed, he could even specify a particular detail. For example, he could choose to focus on training and set which skill or attribute he wanted to prioritize.

The latter was the way to deal with various events, such as radicalism, conservatism, balance, and so on. However, it would be affected by the current traits of the Apostle — personality, style, alignment, and so on.

“Let’s give it a try and see what the results are like...”

Zhou Jing thought for a while and quickly decided on a safe and balanced plan.

He would do a run that emphasized stability first.

[Placement plan has been saved. Effective immediately.]

[Do you wish to open the map overview mode and additionally specify the activity area during the placement or to plan out an activity route?]

[Remark: This is an optional decision. s can also decide the area and scope of activity according to the Placement.]

The map’s interface popped up. This time, it was no longer completely black but a small area. It was the area that Zhou Jing had walked through in the Black-Clothed Forest the last time. It could be zoomed in and selected.

Additionally, this unknown area was now available as an exploration target in the placement mode.

“No designated areas.”

Zhou Jing rejected the suggestion.

Currently, there was nothing much to explore. He had to wait for Griff to bring the Will·Wood to Frostwood Village to unlock the area.

After doing this, the interface flashed, and the interface where the placement plan was situated disappeared. A new message appeared:

[Set-up complete]

[Shutting down the projection shuttle space]

[Countdown to next projection: 12 hours]

Suddenly, Zhou Jing’s vision went dark.

In the next second, his vision was restored. He was no longer looking at the interface panel and the starry space. He had returned to his room.

The neon lights were still flashing outside the window, illuminating the steel forest-like skyscrapers and flying vehicles.

Zhou Jing blinked a little in surprise.

Back already? Just like that?

I thought it would transport me back like the Astral Realm projection.

By the way, what time is it?

Thinking of this, Zhou Jing sat up in bed and turned on the digital clock on his phone.

5 am in the morning.

He estimated that more than six hours had passed since he fell asleep.

In the preparatory stage before the projection, it showed that the time of the projection could be set manually. Because the duration of time in the two realms was different, the main body would be fixed to experience six hours, while that duration would be converted to reflect the time in that realm itself.

Zhou Jing was still quite energetic at this time and did not feel any fatigue.

I can travel through the astral plane by projecting my consciousness. During this period of time, is my main body sleeping? If someone wakes me up during this process, will I continue to travel through the astral plane, or will I return immediately? Would I just wake up from the astral plane?

Zhou Jing was curious about this.

After spending six days in the astral world, he had a deep impression of his adventures. However, during this period of time, he would remember the main world from time to time, so there was no confusion.

Zhou Jing didn't know if it was an illusion, but he realized that his memory had improved a lot. With a thought, he recalled the experience of his main body the day before he traveled.

Oh, I just got home from an interview. My family told me that I needed to undergo forced immigration. My life plan was messed up...

Zhou Jing let out a sigh. He was not as disappointed and angry as he was when he first heard the news.

After staying calm for a few days in the astral plane and wandering between life and death, he suddenly became more open to many things.

Although he did not gain any benefits, such as changing his body structures, he realized that his mind had changed.

There had never been a moment when it was like this from when he was born up till now. It was as if an invisible burden had been removed from his shoulders, so much that the weightlessness felt as though it had reached his bones. It was as if he was infinitely at ease.

Zhou Jing's eyes flickered. Finally, he made up his mind and let out a long breath.

" I guess I have to make a decision."

...

...

Outside the Black-Clothed Forest was a winding river that was clear like sapphire. On the other side of the river was a verdant plain.

On the plains, there was a human village called Frostwood Village. It stood along the river and had built a small stone bridge that connected to the forest.

The sky was slightly bright, and the day was slightly warm. In the peaceful village, the farmers yawned and walked out of the house. They brought their farming tools and prepared to work in the fields.

At this moment, three miserable figures carrying people on their backs ran out from the forest on the opposite shore. They stepped onto the stone bridge and stumbled into the village. As they ran, they shouted anxiously, quickly attracting the attention of many villagers.

“They can’t hold on anymore, save them!”

“Call the witch doctor!”

Instantly, the entire village boiled with attention.