

Endless Debt

#Chapter 7 - 2: The Unlucky Guy and the Assessment [Thanks to the Alliance Leader Chongchi]_2 - Read Endless Debt Chapter 7 - 2: The Unlucky Guy and the Assessment [Thanks to the Alliance Leader Chongchi]_2

Chapter 7 - 2: The Unlucky Guy and the Assessment [Thanks to the Alliance Leader Chongchi]_2

Bologue nodded, took out six Weng Coins from his pocket, and handed them to the old man through the iron bars.

After a while, the old man handed over a piece of bread and a can of beer through the iron bars, and Bologue put them in his pocket as he was preparing to leave. He noticed something.

"Is the security not good lately?" Bologue asked.

"It's alright, it's just preparing a little more. When you operate this late, you're bound to run into some trouble."

The old man chuckled, stuffing the gun handle that peeked out by the small window back inside.

Bologue raised an eyebrow, waved his hand, "Remember to tell me if anything happens, goodnight."

"Goodnight, Bologue."

The old man replied with a smile, then pulled the small window shut.

Returning to his apartment, he pushed open the first-floor door, glanced at the drowsy superintendent, and walked up the dirty stairs, with endless noise filling his ears.

Those were the neighbors of Bologue. An elderly man who was a bit deaf, always liked to turn the TV volume up to max; while another was a couple with emotional discord, who argued from time to time, and once they began, it would last the whole night. Unfortunately, Bologue lived between the two.

To be honest, it felt rather peculiar. The neighbors ran around every day for the sake of daily provisions, while he wandered about hunting demons, yet ultimately they all returned to one building, sleeping peacefully.

Like people from two worlds, yet wondrously coexisting in one.

Ignoring the incessant noise, Bologue stopped in front of a worn-out door, turned the handle, and returned to his familiar little room.

...

After a day's work, Geoffrey dragged his weary body home. Having lent his coat to Bologue, the cold wind on the way back made his cheeks flush slightly; he suspected he might be coming down with a cold.

Slumping onto the sofa, just as he was about to enjoy this brief tranquility, a shrill phone ring sounded. Geoffrey looked towards the source of the ring, with a slight gloom covering his eyes.

Picking up the phone, a familiar voice resounded.

"What do you think of this Bologue Lazarus?" The person didn't bother with pleasantries, directly asking the question.

In the dim room, Geoffrey hung his head low, holding the phone receiver, hesitated for a few seconds, then answered, "Not bad, at least I think he's a good person."

"A good person?"

The voice on the other end was momentarily stunned.

"Yes, a good person," Geoffrey loosened his tie at the chest with one hand, it was making him feel a bit breathless, "A somewhat unconventional, beyond common sense, not quite a good... good person."

A vague image of Bologue Lazarus formed in his mind.

"You think he's a good person? Look at the things he's done."

Geoffrey wasn't surprised by the other party's reaction; Bologue truly was a peculiar guy.

Like some rare species, when you meet him, you start questioning the reality of the world.

With a bitter smile, he picked up a cut-up newspaper on the table, each clip reporting all sorts of shocking news.

"In January this year, a serial killer codenamed 'Werewolf' appeared near the Great Rift; this Bologue Lazarus gentleman found him, and hung him on the cable car of the Great

Rift. In the morning, as the cable car moved up, the dangling corpse was witnessed by hundreds..."

The phone receiver resounded.

"The opponent was a demon, you know too, demons are no longer human, there's no need to be so merciful... I think Bologue sees it that way too." Geoffrey attempted to argue on Bologue's behalf.

"In May, he wielded a knife, slaughtering several train cars on a tram heading to the suburbs. When the tram arrived at the station, the cars opened, and there was a river of blood, a heap of corpses... Now some citizens who witnessed this scene are still receiving psychological treatment in the hospital."

"That tram was packed with gathered demons. I admit his methods might be a bit extreme, but he did stop a meeting of demons, whatever they were conspiring, anyway, they all turned into a heap of corpses."

Geoffrey covered his head, having to admit Bologue's record was quite impressive.

"And what about this? This... he did well on this one, the demon codenamed 'Poison Fang', we've been tracking it for a long time, but he accidentally resolved it."

The voice on the phone became complicated. According to Bologue afterward, he was wandering that day, happened to notice the demon's trail, and took care of 'Poison Fang' on his way as overtime work.

"And what about this next one? A vendetta? He single-handedly dismantled several small gangs and dealt with some bribed sheriffs using private punishment, slaughtering all the way, then there's today's priest."

"This just goes to show, he has justice in his heart! The wrath of the righteous!"

Geoffrey began to speak nonsense.

The other end of the receiver fell silent, after a while, the other party asked.

"Why are you defending him like this?"

Geoffrey didn't answer immediately, squinting, recalling working with Bologue over the past year.

"How to put it? Yas, I just feel... Bologue's quite okay, though this guy has various troubles, he's indeed an expert in handling these matters."

On the other end, Yas didn't interrupt Geoffrey, listening quietly.

"Sometimes, I think Bologue might be somewhat self-destructive."

"Self-destructive?"

"Yes, he's quite unlucky. I've talked to him many times; he can't even recall why exactly, but he made a pact with the devil, inexplicably becoming a debtor, then before he could do any bad deeds, he got locked up."

Chapter 8 - 2: The Jinx and the Assessment [Thanks to the Leader Chong Chi]_3

Geoffrey asked Bologue many times, but regarding everything related to the devil, Bologue himself couldn't remember anything; it was a blank memory. In his own words, he knew he had made a deal with the devil, but as for the specifics, he couldn't recall, as if the memory had been intentionally erased.

"After getting out of prison, he was taken in by kind people... Bologue even talked to me about preparing some gifts for Mrs. Doriluna, but then she just passed away."

Geoffrey mumbled to himself.

"This guy is somewhat too unlucky, yes, too unlucky. He wants to embrace the world with love, but nothing good happens to him, and even if it does, it quickly disappears, bringing him even greater pain.

However, none of this has defeated him, at least not yet. Although life is cruel, he still holds on to his principles. For a monster, adhering to principles is indeed an admirable virtue."

"So you want to help him?" Yas asked.

"Yes, I think he's just missing one chance, a chance to prove himself."

Geoffrey pondered for a while, then continued, "Furthermore, isn't this our original intention in selecting debtors? To give these unfortunate souls a chance to repay their debts."

"The 'blessings' carried by debtors give them powerful and treacherous abilities, which are completely independent of the 'alchemy matrix'. Moreover, unlike the demon, the debtor hasn't completely lost his soul and can withstand the hollow hunger within."

Geoffrey continued arguing for Bologue's chance.

"But debtors have long been in contact with the devil, and they will only sink deeper into their debts."

"That's why we need to control them, to keep them rational, isn't it?" Geoffrey said lovingly like an old father.

After a brief silence, Yas's voice was somewhat helpless, "You always do this, whether it's you or Lebius, always like this."

To this, Geoffrey let out a hearty laugh, "Yas, sometimes you also need to learn to compromise."

"Compromise with evil?" Yas retorted, but he didn't bother to argue, "Alright, I know, so about the upcoming assessment..."

"Is it about to start?" Geoffrey asked.

"Yes, the 'cultivation room' is being covered, and once it's fully covered, we can begin the assessment to determine whether Bologue has the ability to become one of us."

Yas thought of something and asked, "Have you mentioned the assessment to him?"

"No, he doesn't know about the assessment," Geoffrey said, "He only knows that the result will come out over the weekend, but he doesn't know the exact time or the manner."

"I think he'll be shocked," Yas grinned mischievously.

"It's nothing, because handling emergencies is also one of our professional skills, and naturally, it's part of the assessment."

Saying this, Geoffrey clenched his fist, and a faint light glowed on his arm, under the light was an array dense as circuitry.

"Are you planning to go easy on him? Geoffrey." Yas asked.

"No, but I believe he will definitely pass."

The glow on Geoffrey's arm extinguished, but from the other end of the phone came a gleeful laugh.

"What's wrong?" Geoffrey asked.

"I just received a notification that the examiner for the assessment has changed. It will no longer be you or me."

"Who is it then?" Geoffrey was puzzled, Bologue had been under his charge, so logically, the final assessment should be conducted by him.

"Lebius."

Yas said.

"Lebius is going to personally assess Bologue."

Chapter 9 - 3: The Demon, the Folding Knife, and... Rock Music [Thanks to the Wise Leader of the New Era]

Opening his eyes, Bologue lazily crawled out of bed, yawning widely as he looked outside the window, still the same familiar view.

Thick smoke spewed from the factory, pouring into the sky, a gray haze through which not a single ray could penetrate.

This was the norm of Opus, the advancement of industrialization brought factories all over the city, with the ominous clatter of steel and poisonous smog coexisting with the city.

Outside the window was the noise of machines, next door was the blaring of the TV, on another side, a couple's quarrel, in the hallway, door slamming and arguing, endlessly, day after day.

This was the result of cheap rent, but Bologue didn't mind; compared to the cries of the Black Prison, these sounds were actually pleasant and full of life's vitality. Sometimes he would even lean against the wall, listening to what these people were arguing about.

Get up, wash up, get dressed.

Bologue's room was very tidy, with not much clutter, the only unusual things being the sand table in the living room, and the record player in the corner.

The sand table was filled with chess pieces, simulating army attacks and defenses, and nearby were several stickers with texts on them, seemingly the operator's insights.

The bedroom was simple too, just a bed and a table, and a radio on the windowsill.

This was Bologue's home now, after leaving Adelle's couch, he had lived here ever since, sometimes inviting Geoffrey over for a drink or taking him to Adelle's to enjoy her cookies.

She always worried about him, fearing that after getting out of prison, he wouldn't find work because of his record. To ease her mind, he had Geoffrey pretend to be his boss, which dispelled Adelle's doubts, though in some ways, Geoffrey really was his boss.

Geoffrey had taught Bologue a lot, the knowledge about demons came from him, which made Bologue feel that Geoffrey wasn't so simple, but no matter how he asked, Geoffrey wouldn't say, leaving him helpless.

"Who will be next?"

He muttered, opening the wardrobe where identical white shirts were neatly hanging.

Bologue's "Blessing" granted him immense recovery power, thus during demon hunts, he was entirely unconcerned about his safety; after all, he couldn't truly die.

His mortal body wouldn't perish, but his clothes would get damaged. Aside from rent, his greatest expense was buying spare clothes, all identical in style, acquired cheaply in bulk.

After tidying himself up, he sat on the bed, facing the wall draped in black cloth.

He opened the beer can bought last night, took a bite of bread, stood up, and tore off the black cloth, revealing the wall beneath.

The wall was covered with countless sticky notes, many black and white photos, and newspaper clippings, all pinned and interconnected by red threads, tangled like a spider's web.

Looking at a corner of the web, the person in the photo was very familiar, Bologue softly whispered his name, picked up a pen, and drew a red cross on the photo.

Doron Nord.

He was the last on the list, and before Geoffrey sent new intel, Bologue had nothing to do.

Sitting back on the bed, gazing at these "glorious achievements," Bologue felt calm, pondering what was next.

And then... the internship's end.

Bologue wasn't sure of his direction ahead — being thrown back into the Black Prison or becoming one of Geoffrey's affiliates — but what was certain was that he couldn't return to the Black Prison.

He bent over, hands resting on his face, a contemplative posture.

The life in the Black Prison, isolated from the world, left Bologue completely disconnected; even after a year of transition, he still felt somewhat lost. In this city, he

had no real friends or familiar faces; he'd occasionally visit Adelle, but with her passing, his last connection vanished, leaving him all alone.

No demons needed hunting, nor any relatives to visit, as for family...

Bologue didn't continue to think about that.

After a brief confusion, Bologue returned to the living room, casually picked up a record, placed it on the player, and soon music began to play.

Perhaps due to the Black Prison experience, Bologue was easily satisfied, not materialistic, his only hobbies being music and recreating historical battles on the sand table.

The rising music carried noise and distortion, but that couldn't be helped, the player had been scavenged from the flea market, a secondhand relic, still functioning was already a miracle.

Humming along, Bologue pondered that this weekend marked the end of the internship, the moment deciding whether he'd stay or leave. He had to admit, he was a bit anxious, unsure of how to spend this rare free time today.

"Indeed, can't be locked back there."

After a brief thought, Bologue let out a long sigh.

Adelle's hatred, suppressing bulimia nervosa, the possibility of completing his soul... and those most significant things.

What exactly did Bologue trade with the Devil?

He couldn't remember, that piece of memory seemed deliberately erased, he couldn't even recall the Devil's face, name, only the existence of a transaction, as for its content, he was clueless.

From what he recalled, when Bologue awoke, everything was already over...

Chapter 10 - 3: The Demon, the Folding Knife, and... Rock Music [Thanks to the Wise Leader of the New Era]_2

In that transaction, Bologue lost part of his soul and became the debtor he is today.

To this day, he still doesn't understand what kind of price he paid. Was it really only that part of his soul? Or are there more costs that he has forgotten?

Bologue shivered, the feeling was really terrible. He didn't even know what kind of "debt" he bore, only that his soul was missing.

As for why he came into this world, that was an even more unreachable mystery.

"So what is the result?"

Bologue picked up the folding knife and began to play with it casually.

This weapon is interesting. When not unfolded, it's a long metal handle. With the rotation of the mechanical structure, the metal cover on one side pops up, followed by the second section of the "blade" springing out like a switchblade, the first section's cover resets to become the "handle," and then the third section of the sharp "blade" slides out from the second section of the "blade".

The cold metal extended section by section, placed in front, carrying a heavy intent to kill.

Bologue sighed; waiting is always nerve-racking.

...

As night fell, Geoffrey stood on the rooftop, from where he could see the building next door, which was where Bologue lived.

The ruined building, with moss and vines growing on the outer walls, mostly crumbled and broken, revealing the red bricks beneath.

"Whether Bologue Lazarus will be employed depends on the result of tonight's assessment."

A voice came from behind Geoffrey, as a tall, thin man walked up slowly and stood with Geoffrey, looking at the solitary building under the night.

"I don't think he'll pass the assessment, Geoffrey," the man said.

"Why? Just because he's a debtor? Yas," Geoffrey looked at Yas and asked puzzledly, "I remember I mentioned to you over the phone how exceptional he is."

"I know, but being exceptional is one thing, and his status is another... I've never agreed with the idea of hiring a debtor," Yas said unhappily.

Geoffrey said nothing. As old colleagues, he could understand Yas's aversion to debtors, or rather, to anything related to the devil.

"But we indeed need such people, people who defy common sense," Geoffrey said earnestly.

Yas did not argue further, or rather, having come this far, arguing was pointless, it was only necessary to wait for the outcome.

"The 'Cultivation Room' has completely covered it, and now the building is part of the 'Cultivation Room.' Next, we'll see what Lebius wants to test... Honestly, I dislike Lebius more than I dislike debtors," Yas said.

"Damn Lebius."

Geoffrey cursed as well, but that's all he could do, for if all this was done by that "Lebius," he had no power to interfere.

"Alright, let's quietly watch the performance together."

Yas said while putting an arm around Geoffrey's shoulder, speaking casually.

"I bet three hundred Weng Coins that he'll die in this assessment, that strange self-healing ability won't save him."

Hearing this, a strange light flashed in Geoffrey's eyes. He raised his head slowly, the pressure on his face vanished into thin air.

"I'll bet with you, but I bet he'll kill all the obstructing guys and pass the assessment."

"Hmm? Why are you so confident in that guy?"

Why so confident?

A smile appeared on Geoffrey's face, and he asked back.

"Do you know what Bologue's 'Blessing' is?"

"Self-healing..."

Halfway through Yas's words, he stopped, realizing the problem.

He never knew what Bologue's 'Blessing' was, he only assumed it was "self-healing" from the report.

Seeing his reaction, Geoffrey was very satisfied, "Also, for us, 'intelligence' is the most important thing. Even you don't have the authority to view Bologue's files, do you?"

"What is his 'Blessing'?" Yas seemed somewhat anxious.

Geoffrey remained silent, revealing a playful look in his eyes.

"However, even without the so-called 'Blessing,' I still think he can pass the assessment," Geoffrey said, recalling a scene from not long ago in his mind.

It was something that happened shortly after Adelle's death.

Geoffrey suddenly received notification that the debtor under his supervision had gone out of control.

At that time, Geoffrey was already prepared to incapacitate Bologue and take him back to the Black Prison, but when he arrived at the scene of the outburst, it was all over.

The large warehouse was filled with shattered corpses, and a few unfortunate ones were hanged from the beams, their deaths tragic, apparently having suffered greatly before dying.

Geoffrey found Bologue in the corner of the warehouse. He was already a man of blood. Nobody knew what kind of battle he had experienced, but you could tell he was very tired, even his self-healing speed had slowed, as if he truly was going to die.

"Here."

Seeing Geoffrey, Bologue looked very happy. His white teeth paired with his blood-stained face gave an indescribable comical impression.

He raised his hand and handed Geoffrey a piece of paper.

The text on the list was crooked, filled with pain and despair, the bloodstains soaked into the black words, light yet heavy.

The list, the demons' list.

Bologue used knife and blood to pry out the list from the mouths of these villains, each name was a potential Demon, they were involved in the smuggling of Philosopher's Stone.