

Keyboard Immortal

Chapter 5: Messed-up Rewards

Translator: Pika

What the actual fu-... He knew deep down that the system was trolling him—he could almost hear its mechanical laughter ringing in his ears! His train of thought was interrupted by a new line of words that appeared on the screen next to the ball of steel wool. Holding on to hope, he leaned over to read it.

Heiress Ball of Delights: Legends say that this artifact is capable of granting rich women unspeakable delight. Alas, behind this great joy lies the tremendous suffering endured by countless boy toys. Thus, a particularly clever boy toy devised this item to protect himself.

Artifact Effect: After using this artifact, any pain inflicted upon you by a woman wealthier than you is transformed into sheer bliss. Warning – this artifact does not lower the actual amount of damage you take. If a rich woman inflicts lethal damage to you, you will not die but be left with your last sliver of health.

Do you wish to store this item into your item bar? You can use it when you wish by hitting the 'Q' key.

Oh god, stop messing with me! Zu An stared at the now-materialized ball of steel wool in his hand. He was tempted to hurl it to the ground. What the hell is this thing good for? It's almost completely useless, and it comes with a bunch of conditions for use. I'm not gonna become some rich lady's boy toy. How the hell am I supposed to use this?

Stone-faced, Zu An stored the ball of steel wool into his item bar. He ran over to the basin of water and washed his face again. Still not convinced that he had washed the bad luck away, he proceeded to wash his hands vigorously as well. Only then did he draw his third reward.

The light marker flickered across the keyboard once more as Zu An watched anxiously. "Please don't be the spacebar. Please don't be the Q key..."

Finally, the ball of light came to a halt atop the 'B' key. The cold, mechanical voice thundered, "Congratulations on winning 'Poisonous Prick'!"

Zu An was so incredulous, he nearly spat out a mouthful of blood. This keyboard is absolutely lewd. What kind of messed-up reward is this? It wasn't until he saw the image of a pitch-black dagger appear on the screen that he realised it was his own thoughts that were lewd. [1]

Poisonous Prick: There was once a man who licked this dagger gingerly just as victory was within his grasp. That one action cost him his life. Before he died, the last thing he said was 'poisonous prick'!

Artifact Effect: This is a cursed dagger. Anyone injured by this dagger will perish immediately.

Zu An let out a sigh of relief. Despite its odd name, it was essentially an incredibly powerful weapon. Of course, the biggest challenge was that he actually had to injure his foe with it first.

After having seen how powerful Snow and Chu Chuyan were, he knew that even touching them in a real fight was next to impossible, let alone actually causing them injury. Mm. I better keep it low-key for now. Sneak attacks are the name of the game! In 'Duke of Mount Deer', Wei Xiaobao was able to use one sharp dagger to win the love of seven beautiful ladies. I'm sure I'll be able to use mine to win at least seventy.

Wait a sec. Zu An blinked. If I accidentally scratch myself with it, will I die? He stared at the shiny dagger in his hand. He had an inexplicable urge to test this, but he quickly quelled the thought of using himself as a guinea pig. That'd be a dumb way to die.

Excited by his success, Zu An tried to draw more lottery tickets, but each time, he was met with the same response: Not Enough Rage Points.

"Trolling for rage? That's easy!" Zu An stroked his chin as his mind turned towards Snow. He let out an evil cackle. Eeep. I'm laughing like I'm the villain in this story. But he couldn't help himself.

Thinking about Snow automatically brought up the embarrassing events that had transpired earlier. His face began to twitch, and his joy at acquiring a priceless treasure instantly vanished. His first and foremost priority was to repair his 'little Zu An'.

Wait a second. Wasn't the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra sucked into the keyboard? Zu An's face turned ashen. Was he really destined to be a eunuch? His gaze flicked instantly to the keyboard, and he saw that only the F2 key remained lit. He pressed it, and words appeared on the screen: Do you wish to train in the [Phoenix Nirvana Sutra]? Y/N.

He hurriedly selected 'yes', and specks of golden light floated out from the F2 key. They blanketed him, filling his body with comforting warmth.

Instant max level! C'mon, instant max level! Zu An chanted repeatedly. Eventually, the golden light dissipated, and he opened his eyes. The air seemed sweeter and fresher, and the world around him looked more vibrant. Time to test this out. He hurled a full-blooded punch against the nearest stone wall.

“Ow ow ow ow ow ow!” Zu An nursed his hand, tears welling up in his eyes. Nothing changed at all! No, wait. Nine incredibly complicated rune formations had appeared on various parts of his body, connected by a web of lines. However, these formations were empty in the middle.

They glowed for a moment before seeping beneath his skin. Zu An panicked for a moment, until he noticed the runes flicker once more inside his body.

“What the hell are these things?” Taking a closer look, Zu An noticed golden specks floating in the center of the lowermost rune formation. He remembered what the mysterious old man had said about this unique technique. He lowered his head, staring at his bloody fist. It all made sense now.

This bullshit technique really does require sustaining injuries to level up. Having played countless video games in his past life, Zu An quickly recognized the simple levelling mechanic set up by this Keyboard Warrior system. All he had to do was fill up each formation with those golden specks to level-up his skill.

As for the golden stuff? Clearly, he could only acquire it by getting beaten up.

Well, anything is worth it for the sake of ‘little Zu An’ - I mean, for my pride and joy! Even though this is a bullshit technique, I’ll still train in it. Zu An gritted his teeth and threw another punch at the wall. Although it hurt almost as badly as before, the number of golden specks within the formation did not grow. Zu An stared at his fists.

He thought for a moment, piecing together what just happened. Unlike the first time, he had forewarning of what would happen, and thus he had subconsciously held back to protect himself. Naturally, the benefits were also reduced.

So I can’t even train using self-flagellation? Looks like the only choice is for someone else to beat me up. But who? Damn this all to hell! The more he thought about it, the more ridiculous it seemed, and the angrier he became.

He spied a rat scrounging for food by his feet, and his anger ratcheted up another notch. My life really sucks. Living in this crappy place is one thing, but living in a warren of rats?! He lashed out viciously with his foot, sending the rat sailing through a nearby window. As he was admiring his awesome soccer skills, the door to the house flew open.

“Did you throw this rat?!” A crisp voice came through the doorway, followed by a young lady. She was short and slender, with red lips and perfectly white teeth. Her hair was short but neatly cut, and her bangs just barely reached her eyes. Her perfectly adorable image was somewhat marred by the rat in her hand.

Squeak! Squeak! The rat squealed and struggled vainly in vain.

“Careful, the rat might bite you,” Zu An warned.

“It’s not like I’m afraid of these things.” The young woman clenched her fist, and the rat let out one final, miserable shriek before going completely limp.

Gulp. Zu An swallowed, hard. Is this really a girl? He watched as she tossed the rat’s corpse aside and wiped her hand disdainfully on her dress.

The girl then stared icily at him. “I have no idea what my big sister was thinking. She brought you back but didn’t punish you?”

Zu An had been distracted by the sound of someone chewing outside. He was just about to ask about it when her words struck him like a hammer. “Uh, big sister?”

He took a second look and immediately saw the resemblance between her and Chu Chuyan, although she was clearly much younger. Most likely, this was the Second Miss of the Chu clan, Chu Huanzhao. He was slowly assimilating the memories of his ‘predecessor’, so he was more informed about his surroundings now. The one thing he couldn’t understand was why the Chu clan had given the Second Miss such an awful name.[2]

She was dressed in skin-tight leathers that accentuated her slender waist and her perky bottom. A leather whip was fastened to her waist. She looks like one hot little pepper. She’s completely different from her ice-cold older sister. They came from the same mother, so why are they such polar opposites?

“What the hell are you staring at you, you dog?” Chu Huanzhao was already vexed, and him eyeing her up and down with his beady little eyes only served to infuriate her further.

You have successfully trolled Chu Huanzhao for 10 Rage points!

Zu An noticed that the Rage Counter above his keyboard had changed from ‘0’ to ‘10’. Joy washed over him. This girl seems to have a terrible temper. I’d be shortchanging myself if I didn’t seize this chance to earn some more Rage points.

He felt the gears turning in his mind. “Honestly, I have to get this off my chest. Your big sister has a very pretty name, ‘Chuyan’. Why did your parents give you such an awful name, ‘Counterattack’?”

You have successfully trolled Chu Huanzhao for 666 Rage points!

Zu An shrank inside. That’s... a pretty extreme amount of rage.

Chu Huanzhao’s visage reddened with fury. “Pah! ‘Chuyan’ was the name she gave herself! Her real name was ‘Zhaodi!’”[3]

Zhaodi?! Zu An struggled to reconcile the image of his elegant, white-robed wife - a fairy Immortal who drifted around gracefully - with her vulgar name, but failed. His face contorted with the effort.

Zhaodi? Huanzhao? Wait a sec, I seem to recall that the eldest son is named 'Youzhao'?

"Are you mocking me?" Chu Huanzhao interrupted his musings.

"No, no!" He denied hastily, seeing the fury in her eyes. "Oh, right. So why don't you just change your name too?"

You have successfully trolled Chu Huanzhao for 199 Rage points!

"I want to, but my parents won't let me, nor will my sister! Hmph. She was able to change her name, but she doesn't give a damn about anyone else." Her face clouded over with anguish as she recalled the lifelong abuse she had received from her classmates.

"W-wait a sec!" Chu Huanzhao suddenly remembered who she was talking to. "Stop trying to make friends with me. I've got a score to settle with you regarding last night!"

Zu An was happily counting all the Rage points he had just accumulated. He had 875 Rage points, enough to draw eight prizes! This time, I'm bound to get something better than the useless crap I drew last time, right? Distracted by this, he replied offhandedly, "Oh, I'm sure what happened last night was just a misunderstanding."

"You climbed into my bed. How is that a misunderstanding?" Chu Huanzhao smiled coldly.

You have successfully trolled Chu Huanzhao for 10 Rage points!

Huh. So few Rage points for that? Clearly, she has a lot of issues about her name in particular.

"Then why didn't you stop me? You could've called for guards or something!" replied Zu An.

"I..." Chu Huanzhao's pale face flushed beet-red. "I don't know what happened either. I think I was asleep."

"Well, and I was drunk. I don't know how I ended up in your room. Honestly, I'm sure something strange is afoot." Zu An cast aside the notion of accumulating more Rage points. The most important task at hand was to pacify this little brat from hell. I wonder if she knows martial arts. Young people often underestimated their own strength and did

not know when to hold back. If she killed him by accident, he wouldn't even have the chance to mourn his own passing.

"Are you suggesting that I perhaps dragged you into my room?" Chu Huanzhao gave him a frosty smile. "As the saying goes, wine is the purveyor of lust. You could've gone anywhere after you got drunk, but you just so happened to choose my bed. This is proof of your lust for me!"

Zu An stared at her completely flat chest, then let out a long sigh. "You're a kid. How could I have lewd thoughts about you? If I really did have lewd thoughts, I would've headed to your sister's room."

Chu Huanzhao instantly exploded. "I'm a grown-up! I even help to manage parts of the family business at times! I'm not like you, a good-for-nothing who does nothing more than to eat and sleep! How dare you talk down to me?!"

You have successfully trolled Chu Huanzhao for 99 Rage points!

Zu An snorted under his breath. Clearly, no matter what world you were in, the one thing young adults hated the most was others treating them like little kids.

"You know, if you keep glaring and huffing and puffing like that, nobody would ever dare to marry you. Honestly, try to act more like a woman. Why don't you pick up needlework, or some other feminine activity?" Zu An tried to sound as sincere as he could, his eyes filled with warmth and concern. "Be a good girl, now. This is all for your own good."

Despite his fears about being beaten to death, he just couldn't pass up all the potential Rage points that were at stake!

"AHHHHHHH!" Chu Huanzhao felt herself going berserk. What the hell is wrong with this bastard? Why is he lecturing me as though he was one of my elders?

You have successfully trolled Chu Huanzhao for 33 Rage points!

...33 Rage points! ...33 Rage points! ...33 Rage points! ...

Zu An nearly chortled aloud as he watched his Rage points skyrocket. This little girl is so easily provoked. It's a walk in the park compared to farming points off of that icy wife of mine.

"Do you want to beat me up? Don't forget that I'm your brother-in-law! If you abuse your elders, the heavens will strike you down with lightning!" Zu An grew nervous. The girl was so mad that he half-expected to see steam rising from the top of her head. If she got any angrier, she'd probably lose all her hair and go bald.

But then again... it might not be such a big deal if she really did attack him. Her limbs were so short. Having a pretty young lady like her pounding her fists against his chest couldn't possibly be life-threatening. In fact, it might even help him break through to the next level of his technique!

You have successfully trolled Chu Huanzhao for 55 Rage points!

Before Zu An could celebrate, something immensely powerful struck him in the chest. He threw up a mouthful of blood and fell backwards onto the bed.

Chu Huanzhao retracted her fist, her face twisted in disdainful sneer. "Y'know, for a moment there I thought you might actually have some real skills, given how hard you were trying to piss me off. Bah! You are as weak as a chicken!"

1. In the original Chinese text, the name of the item is 'dagger with poison inside', but the character for dagger is replaced with a homophone for female genitalia.

2. Huanzhao literally means 'Counterattack'.

3. Zhaodi literally means 'summoning your sister-in-law'