

Endless 101

Chapter 101: Bizarre Movie

The chaotic images linger within view, overlapping into an absurd and bizarre movie.

First comes a song filled with vigor and strength, followed immediately by large swaths of cheap blood plasma, smeared across every corner within view.

A broken doll, with cotton rolling out from its stitches, tangled with countless venomous snakes, as a red car crashes through the walls amidst a woman's labor pains.

Brilliant sunlight pours through the cracked wall, briefly distorting the powerful song, transforming it into thousands of screams, mixed with the sound of a frantic electric guitar, as the falling sunlight illuminates the stage.

A group of bears dressed in suits grasp the microphones, singing loudly, the song is cultish and eerie, while countless rabbit dolls cheer and leap below the stage, throwing one bloody head after another onto the stage.

The bears also cheer towards the audience, then bow.

The stage returns to darkness, then lights up again.

"Ah... what on earth is this..."

Bologue opened his eyes, his vision briefly blurry before gradually clearing up, with intense pain rising from beneath his skull, like someone had just drilled through his skull with an electric drill.

After a moment of distraction, the first thing he sees is the gray ceiling, then the raised iron frame, from which several intravenous drips hang, some empty, others filled with medication.

The air is filled with the scent of disinfectant, and faintly visible are white figures moving around, conversing and whispering, seemingly discussing him, or perhaps, someone else.

He appears to be in a hospital, it's been a long time since he last came to a hospital. Ever since gaining "Resurrection," Bologue thought he had severed ties with hospitals.

He tried to sit up, but the needle-like pain across his body, like sharp metal stuck in his joints, made even the slightest movement bring piercing pain.

Amidst the pain, the absurd dream quickly resurfaces in his mind, faintly Bologue feels that the bear band is right beside his hospital bed, blowing trumpets and playing electric guitars, swaying their bulky bodies, starting that hellish performance...

Bologue suspects that his "past life's" memories are the reason he always dreams of these chaotic things. He thinks if he were to become a director of bizarre films, he would definitely be successful.

After a brief rest, Bologue mustered strength, low growls resonating from his throat, he struggled to sit up.

His left hand felt somewhat heavy, enduring the soreness and pain, he raised his hand to find his forearm covered with infusion needles, probably the reason he's not dead. These doctors certainly weren't the slightest bit gentle.

Turning his head to look around, he heard an excited shout.

"Bologue, my friend!"

Bologue thought, is it too late to play dead now.

With Belli's shout, in an instant, Bologue's bedside was surrounded by people... though not too many.

Starting with Belli who considers him a guinea pig, she peeled back his eyelids, endlessly shining a flashlight, her face showing a mix of love and hate. Then came Balder, this guy was still in protective clothing, always by Belli's side, to prevent her from doing anything outrageous.

Next was Geoffrey, this guy with a smile on his face. From his expression, the implantation ceremony seems to have succeeded. Before they could say anything, a slightly cold voice sounded, a soft collision approached Bologue.

"Congratulations, Bologue Lazarus."

Geoffrey stepped aside, and Lebius, leaning on a cane, stood before his bed.

"You are now one of the Condensers."

"Con...Condenser."

This term should be familiar to Bologue, but upon truly touching it, an indescribable emotion rises within him.

As if a current swept through his body, this sense of amazement made Bologue slightly more alert, soon realizing that the world in his eyes was different now.

The world has gained something, something invisible, ubiquitous, perceptible...

Bologue is certain that they had existed all along, yet he couldn't feel them so clearly.

Like observing light with eyes, listening to sound waves with ears, sensing contact with skin.

Bologue now seems to have gained a new sense, perceiving these things that shouldn't have been noticeable.

Ether.

Mysterious and elusive ether, now they're no longer those elements dwelling high above, now they're within reach.

Green patterns arose on Bologue's body surface, the glow slightly dim, undulating with his breathing, cast into his eyes, causing Bologue's breath to slightly quicken.

This is his Alchemy Matrix, he is now one of the Condensers.

"Do you remember anything, Bologue, my friend?"

At this moment, Belli asked, the unexpected incident at the end of the ceremony left her with many doubts.

"Remember... what?"

"The process of the ceremony. You should know, you triggered a disaster, plundering all the 'Cold Iron Souls' around you, destroyed the entire lab and triggered an ether vacuum phenomenon, leading to multiple experimental failures of the sublimation furnace core, causing accidents."

Belli meant to inquire, but the more she spoke, the faster her speech became, eventually complaining loudly, then backed away, leaning against the wall and slowly sitting down, huddled.

"Clearly, there have been no accidents occurring this year... clearly..."

Balder appropriately stood where Belli had just been, though his face was covered by the protective gear, Bologue could feel the gaze beneath it. Bologue continued to speak.

"I don't remember."

Vaguely in his mind, he remembered that world of deathly silence, but alongside it, Bologue couldn't recall anything else. As for that world of deathly silence, he had long grown accustomed to it, reaching there briefly every time he died.

But... But it seemed like there was something else besides the deathly silence...

Bologue racked his brains but couldn't figure it out.

"However, I seem to... vaguely feel something..."

Bologue looked at his glowing palm, speaking uncertainly.

"At the time, I just felt great pain. I couldn't accommodate the Alchemy Matrix... Demand, I needed to demand. I wasn't clear on what to demand, but it felt instinctive."

"Instinctive?" Balder pondered, "It's also a possibility. After all, it's the Power of Dominator—triggering miracles isn't impossible."

To this day, they still couldn't figure it out, so they could only attribute it to some miraculous explanation.

"By the way, how long was I unconscious?"

Bologue asked, amidst the ritual where he repeatedly died and was resurrected. The short-term numerous deaths would leave him feeling exhausted and faint.

"Not long, just half a day."

Balder's answer surprised Bologue.

"I see... What about Teda? What's his view?" Bologue asked, feeling that compared to these guys, the former department head was more reliable.

"After the ritual, the teacher left. He doesn't like staying here for long," Balder explained.

Bologue was silent for a few seconds before speaking again.

"It's because my soul capacity was insufficient, so I plundered the 'Cold Iron Soul' to reach the required soul capacity for mine. And then? It's not my soul, won't there be any issues?"

"No, the 'Cold Iron Soul' is the most humble soul. It won't fade away autonomously and can be easily restrained," Balder explained. "The Alchemy Armament's Alchemy Matrix is based on the 'Cold Iron Soul'."

"Many novice Condensers also use the 'Cold Iron Soul' to solidify their souls when necessary, although they don't use nearly as much as you."

"So, can I use the 'Cold Iron Soul' to keep piling up to become a Prayer Believer?" Bologue asked.

"No, the 'Cold Iron Soul' is the most humble, the least valuable soul, merely useful for those advancing to Condensers, and its effect is merely soul stabilization.

One could say, apart from being made into Alchemy Armament, the 'Cold Iron Soul' is useless.

That's why we're curious—you, with a fragmented soul, shouldn't have gone so smoothly even with the 'Cold Iron Soul.'

This point left Balder very troubled. The advancement of Condensers requires many factors: firstly, stabilizing the soul; then, after stabilization, solidifying and strengthening the soul to increase its capacity, allowing the Alchemy Matrix to continue growing.

This requires a long time and a large amount of alchemical materials. They even prepared to nurture Bologue for months to ensure the stable implantation of the Alchemy Matrix between life and death.

That is to say, they expected Bologue would have to experience death for several months... But everything just fell into place.

The fragmented soul was forcibly expanded in capacity, allowing the Alchemy Matrix to extend over the plundered soul, fully implanting into Bologue's soul.

"So... Is this my soul?"

With his head lowered, Bologue could vaguely feel an existence between reality and illusion beneath the Alchemy Matrix that filled his shell.

That was Bologue's soul, distinct from the ordinary golden souls. His soul was, without a doubt, much dimmer.

He knew why—he was a Debtor. He had sold a part of his soul.

Yet instinctively, he felt his soul shouldn't be this dim... At least, it should be somewhat brighter...

Then Bologue remembered something, suddenly grasping the reason for the success of his ritual.

He seemed to possess some sort of "absorption" ability. The soul shards he had absorbed were also released during the ritual, merging with the "Cold Iron Soul" into his Alchemy Matrix.

Those were soul shards from the 'Golden Soul,' whose inherent value was undoubtedly far higher than the 'Cold Iron Soul,' constructing a new trajectory for the Alchemy Matrix to extend upon.

Just as Bologue was contemplating, a difficult-to-restrain alien sensation emerged from the depths of his body and soul.

Uh-oh.

A flash of fear crossed Bologue's gaze—the familiar feeling returned once more.

With the soul fragments consumed fully, the hole once filled was exposed again. Now, his soul was frail beyond measure, and Bulimia Nervosa was about to erupt.

"Do you have any restraining clothes here?"

Suddenly, Bologue asked.

"Huh?"

Balder was taken aback by Bologue's words, then immediately saw Bologue's expression twist like a beast, panting, tightly gripping the bedrails at his sides, clenching until the steel crushed and twisted.

"Pardon me for this slight... indiscretion."

A hoarse voice came from Bologue's mouth. Balder hesitated for two seconds, then shouted loudly.

"Doctor!"