

Endless 139

Chapter 139: Flaw

In the rising dust and rolling darkness, with the infusion of ether, the Face of Horror fully came alive. The twisted iron wires embedded like tentacles into Bologue's flesh, the blood soaking through the leather, transforming it into a terrifying visage.

It was as if the ordinary reality was collapsing, and the nightmare broke through to descend upon this world.

Faced with this suddenly emerging Evil Spirit, intense fear surged through David's blue eyes, attacking his mind. He surprisingly failed to react at first, feeling rather shocked instead, his body involuntarily leaning backward.

"Ah-ha!"

Fear is mutual. Bologue was also tormented by this immense terror, but unlike the shocked David, the thought that the other could feel the same fear made Bologue laugh excitedly.

The Summoning Hand wielded the long sword, and during a brief sprint, the forging continued. The crooked sword body became increasingly straight, as if countless Heavy Hammers hammered upon it, making it sturdier and more solid until it possessed the Steel-Breaking Power.

"Bill!"

David shouted.

The immense fear induced an instinctive counterattack, the blazing light trail spreading across David's body, turning him into a burning torch in the night.

The surrounding darkness boiled, with hoarse, beast-like roars echoing incessantly.

In a trance, it seemed like a massive herd gathered in the darkness, breaking free from shackles, and rushing toward Bologue to tear him apart.

Secret Energy·Shadow Devouring Beast.

Before Bologue could break into the room, the writhing darkness solidified into a bizarre entity, given a twisted and grotesque life. They bared sharp teeth and raised sharp claws, whipping toward Bologue like living thorns.

The darkness enveloped Bologue. He only sensed an invisible darkness, followed by numerous cuts on his body, blood splattering.

Fortunately, at the last moment, he raised his long sword, with dazzling sparks bursting from the steel. Amidst the metallic clang, Bologue protected his chest, avoiding a fatal blow.

However, his advancing steps were interrupted, his rush losing balance, the grappling hook retrieving him, dropping straight into the ruins below.

David strode forward, standing on the window ledge. He fended off Bologue's fierce attack, but he still lost.

To repel Bologue, at the critical moment, David revealed his secret energy. Although it was only for an instant, it was enough for Bologue to guess a lot of information.

In ordinary combat, David wouldn't be so cautious, but this time he was well aware of whom he was facing—the Order Bureau, the rulers of this city. Even the powerful King's Secret Sword fell here during the disputes seven years ago.

According to David's understanding of the Order Bureau, the action groups that execute tasks usually move in groups, meaning Bologue wasn't alone. There must be hidden Condensers in the darkness, observing the battle here, analyzing his secret energy through Bologue's probes, and thrusting a fatal sword.

"Did you see clearly, Palmer?"

Bologue lay in the ruins, blood flowing down his arm. Driven by the Blessing, these wounds were healing. It's unclear if this was observed by them.

Under the Initial Activation Phenomenon, the Condensers emitted bright light from their bodies. Before mastering the Extreme Techniques of Ethereal Concealment, this phenomenon was hard to hide. So, even though it was dark and dusty, the figures of the three were extremely conspicuous.

Like stars in the night, nowhere to hide.

"I saw it clearly, you're right, the darkness is his jungle."

Palmer stood on the factory roof. As Bologue destroyed the beam, the ceiling, after a brief delay, collapsed under its own weight. Amidst the shattered dust, Palmer found a suitable position and continued to observe the battlefield.

Bologue, in the darkness, might not have seen all this, but from Palmer's perspective, at the moment the light burst on David's body, the surrounding darkness twisted into a grotesque form, condensing from nothingness into a solid entity, fiercely attacking Bologue.

Thinking of this, Palmer felt Bologue was indeed adept at adapting. After being stumped by Bill, he directly attacked David, forcing him to use his secret energy.

"We need to utilize this opportunity. If the assault fails, he will undoubtedly become more vigilant." Bologue said.

"So what do you plan to do? You don't have a strategy for that guy called Bill, do you?"

Palmer asked, having roughly understood from David's shout that the other man was called Bill.

"I don't know."

Bologue gave a surprising answer.

"No matter how perfect a plan is, there will be unexpected events. We are currently in such an event, which is why we need to adapt and respond."

Bologue spoke, raising the long sword. With heavy footsteps, through the hazy dust, Bill, like a giant forged from light, strode toward Bologue.

Order Bureau, command room.

Lebius and Geoffrey squinted slightly, as if asleep. In fact, they were listening to the dialogue within the Heart Core Net. Although unable to see the action site, they could roughly gauge the situation from the conversation between the two.

"What do you think?"

Geoffrey wrote down this phrase on a sheet of paper.

"Passable."

Truly, Lebius writes with extreme indifference, which made Geoffrey chuckle silently.

Bologue stared at the formidable opponent in front of him. Conventional attacks had no effect on Bill. If it were Eugene's Secret Energy, it would be much simpler—a brief eye contact and the Shock Burst Vision could shatter Bill's consciousness.

Taking a deep breath, Bologue focused all his attention on Bill.

David was watching like a hawk from above, but Bologue wasn't worried. Even higher up, Palmer overlooked the battlefield, ready to alert Bologue if David made any sudden movements.

So, Bill, what exactly is your Secret Energy?

After acquiring the Secret Energy, Bologue borrowed many related books from the Order Bureau's library. Among these, the ones that benefited him the most were books describing the characteristics of Secret Energy schools, as well as mission records written by the field staff of the Order Bureau.

In the records, they detailed the psychological warfare during battles. Bologue simply categorized them and realized that, in battles between Condensers, the most important point was distinguishing between "broad and blunt" and "narrow and sharp."

"Broad and blunt" is easy to identify—slow to release and hugely powerful. The most troublesome is the "narrow and sharp," which is limited by various conditions, thereby unleashing deceitful power.

From those records, Bologue discovered that once the conditions limiting the "narrow and sharp" were discerned, it often determined the direction of the battle.

Just like Bologue's Summoning Hand, once his hands were cut off and unable to touch solid matter, or if placed in a liquid environment, his Secret Energy was completely useless.

Bologue speculated that Bill's tendency was "narrow and sharp." From the recent battle, his body's hardening was extremely rapid; even when Bologue applied the hammering of Ethereal Amplification, it was easily blocked. Now Bologue's task was to find the conditions that limit the "narrow and sharp."

Without any warning, Bologue raised his longsword high and slashed down at Bill.

The clash of metal resounded again; Bill blocked Bologue's slash with one punch while the other fist came crashing down from the side. Bologue twisted with all his strength, transforming the longsword into a Round Shield, stubbornly blocking the blow. Then he was sent flying like a cannonball, tumbling several times in the rubble before stabilizing.

"A Condenser of the Commanding School?"

Bill came towards Bologue once more. During the exchange, he gradually figured out Bologue's power—this ability to distort and reshape existing materials was exclusive to the Commanding School.

Bologue did not respond. Right now, they held the advantage. Bologue, alone, had forced them into such a state, and he also had Palmer lurking on his side.

Transforming the Round Shield into a Long Spear, Bologue took a few steps forward and hurled it at Bill with great force.

The spear whistled through the air, aiming for Bill's head. This time he didn't even block; he merely tilted his head to dodge it. But the next second, Bologue, who was far away, suddenly rushed to his front.

The moment he threw the spear, Bologue had flung a grappling hook. With its pull and the aid of Ethereal Amplification, he sped up rapidly, all the while channeling surging ether into his mask.

Physical attacks were ineffective against Bill, but on a mental level, it was different. The ether reached its peak, and in an instant, Bologue seemed to transform into a fierce ghost, enveloping Bill completely with an aura of dread.

Strange whispers and chaotic, tragic visions flashed back. Even though Bill was a mercenary who'd killed countless times, his resilient mind trembled for a moment, just like David's.

In that brief moment of lapse, Bologue hurled a long spike, then raised his fist to fiercely hammer the spike's tail, driving it into Bill's chest like hammering a nail.

It penetrated about a centimeter deep before it couldn't go any further, and by then, Bill had regained his senses.

He was injured, intricate patterns spread along the section where the spike penetrated, blocking it firmly.

"Your Secret Energy requires constant maintenance."

The cold words echoed; constant maintenance meant a continuous need to consume ether.

Bologue stepped on Bill, leaped high, and at the same time whipped out the chain from his waist.

The chain whipped at his chest, lighting up with radiant patterns wherever it touched. Then the chain wound towards Bill's back, and he roared, grabbing the chain. Bologue, who was in the air, had nowhere to brace himself, and was pulled over.

Unexpectedly, Bologue didn't let go of the chain. As he was being pulled towards Bill, he drew another folding knife from beneath his clothes and slashed towards Bill's swinging fist.

A deafening explosion burst forth.

Amidst the swirling dust, two figures, surrounded by radiance, stood within the ruins.

Bill had a strained smile on his face; for a brief moment just now, Bologue did indeed put considerable pressure on him. Yet now he had won, just as he always did, crushing enemies to dust.

Indeed, that was the case. The folding knife in Bologue's hand was shattered, and his entire arm was limp and useless, its bones utterly broken. But his other hand still held the chain tightly, with a faint glow floating on it.

Bill felt something, and in his frightened eyes, a ghostly blue gaze was reflected.

"Your hardening is not overall but localized hardening; or perhaps overall hardening consumes too much ether, so you usually focus your Secret Energy on specific parts, right?"

Bologue spoke as he tugged the chain, which had somehow transformed into Iron Thorns filled with sharp spikes as it wrapped around Bill's back.

During the battle, Bologue had drawn all of Bill's attention, making him focus all his hardening on the front while leaving his back completely unprotected, without any Secret Energy shielding.

The Iron Thorns tugged, the sound of tearing flesh echoed, and large swaths of blood spurted out.

"Kill him! David!"

In agony, Bill roared, and in the next moment, the darkness roiled entirely. Twisted, hoarse Shadow Beasts howled towards Bologue.