

Endless 146

Chapter 146: Ace Combination

"There's not a trace of an Ether reaction; this guy is thoroughly dead."

A gentle breeze passed by, and Palmer rode the wind to land on the ruins. Turning back, among the scarred earth, Bologue's figure slowly emerged.

When David went berserk, Palmer rode the wind to escape the battlefield. Judging from his fast reaction and decisive decision-making, it's clear Palmer has run away like this many times before. Now, aside from sweating a little, he seemed completely unaffected.

Bologue was different—covered in dirt, clothes tattered, like a homeless man who've just woken up under a bridge.

Unlike Palmer's agile mobility, under the Shadow Beast's fierce strike, Bologue could only summon the earth beneath him, constantly raising walls of soil, building layer upon layer of fortifications to protect himself.

Possibly due to severe injury and the Ether's rampage, it seems David couldn't precisely control the Shadow Beast. Consequently, the attacks on Bologue were more like venting frustration, grand in scale but lacking the previous cunning and lethality.

Though somewhat miserable, Bologue merely got injured amidst the fierce assault and did not die.

Tonight's death was sufficient to probe the opponent's Secret Energy and expose their flaw.

"You look like a miner now," Palmer remarked.

"Hmm, this gives me an idea. Maybe later, I could sneak in by digging tunnels; it's just that the Ether's fluctuations are hard to conceal. I need to go back and see how to train 'Ethereal Concealment.'"

Bologue, unaffected by Palmer's teasing, responded seriously.

Palmer was momentarily speechless, not knowing what to say next.

"Is this considered a major victory? We've eliminated all adversaries and destroyed the goods."

Bologue turned back, glancing at the factory-turned-ruins, as if the city government had ordered its demolition tonight, followed by the demolition team working overnight, making it unrecognizable.

"Probably," Palmer shrugged, defending, "We're only responsible for the killing; the rest is up to the Logistics Department."

Bologue rarely agreed with Palmer's words, nodded along, and also understood why the folks from the Logistics Department always put on a sour face when they saw the guys from Field Operations.

The majority of their work pressure comes from the Field Operations; it's no wonder they couldn't face them kindly.

Bologue bent down, touching the cold ruins; the bricks and steel rods moved to the sides. After a few minutes, David's blood-soaked corpse came into view.

"Target death confirmed."

Bologue stated, after a brief delay, Geoffrey's voice echoed in his mind.

"Mission concluded, return to the 'Cultivation Room' for task reporting. Subsequent handling will be by the Logistics Department."

"Okay."

Finally, it's over.

Bologue, exhausted and in pain, along with Palmer, slowly descended the ruins; the factory's gate ahead was only a frame left, through the cracked gap, could see the outside street packed with vehicles.

Come to think of it, even on the edge of Opus, this is still part of the city area; it's impossible for such a battle to go unnoticed.

"Nicely done, better than I expected," Bologue suddenly said to Palmer.

Truth be told, Bologue thought Palmer would only drag him down. But it seems this guy has some real skills.

"What do you mean by better than expected, I was once the best new employee of the year, you know," Palmer and Bologue walked arm-in-arm, fantasizing about that beautiful future, "You should also work hard, Bologue, try to strive for the best new employee of the year or something."

"Why?" Bologue wasn't concerned with fame.

"Think about it, two best new employees partnered together; one a fierce, cold-blooded, undying killer, the other the lucky star of the Clarks."

Palmer beamed with excitement.

"We'd be the ace duo of the Field Operations Department."

Palmer rambled on incessantly, talking about kicking Lebius out within a few years, taking control of the Special Operations Group, and within ten years, dominating the Field Operations Department, becoming a tyrant of the Order Bureau.

He said with the support of the Clarks, all this is possible. If regarded as a company, the Clarks are one of the six largest shareholders in the Order Bureau.

Bologue couldn't be bothered with him; not to mention whether Palmer's eerie luck could take them that far, he seemed to forget an important point—the head of the Field Operations Department is directly appointed by the Deputy Director of the Order Bureau. Palmer isn't just aiming for domination; he's gunning for a coup.

"Ace duo, you'd better disappear from our sight quickly."

While Palmer was dreaming solo about the future, and Bologue silently endured his nonsense, another voice sounded from ahead.

A man in loose work clothes, wearing a safety helmet, appeared. Behind him, car lights flickered, many people dressed similarly were moving hurriedly between the raised caution tape, waving warning lights, directing the nearby crowd.

"Who are you?"

Bologue instantly became alert.

He didn't know what this man might have heard; damn it, Palmer distracted him. A real expert ought to relax only after evacuating to a safe area.

Should I knock him out? But there are so many people here, it's hard to deal with.

In his thoughts, Bologue's hand already reached into his arms, gripping a blood-stained, mottled Sheep Horn Hammer tightly.

As a memento from his first mission, Bologue searched through the ruins for a good while before digging it out.

"Marion Rod, Ferryman Company of Oubos in Oath City; our company has contracted all city construction and accident handling work from the town hall. Of course, our main work is dealing with accidents."

The man took out his wallet and showcased a page of credentials to Bologue.

The emblem on the credential caught Bologue's attention. Gears biting into each other, surrounded by chains on the outer edge, resembling a precise machine ready to roar any moment.

Bologue had seen this emblem. Its frequency of appearance within the Order Bureau was second only to the chains and sword representing the bureau itself.

This is the emblem of the Logistics Department. Is this guy in front of us from the Logistics Department?

Past memories collided with the present, and Bologue suddenly remembered why this "Ferryman Company" sounded so familiar.

"The Logistics Department formed a company on its own?" Bologue asked Palmer quietly.

"We need a legitimate identity to deal with the normal world, a company that handles urban construction and accidents, appearing on the ruins of a collapse... It's quite reasonable," Palmer said.

Bologue was left speechless.

"Hurry up and go! Go back and make your reports, damn Field Operations Department."

Marion cursed as he passed the two of them, joining others walking into the ruins. Half an hour ago, he was about to go to the Agreement District to see a show he had looked forward to for a long time, but at the critical moment, an order was issued, and he rushed over with his people to clean up after the Field Operations Department.

"Every time, it's like this. Every time."

He grumbled.

Bologue and Palmer were surrounded by reporters who arrived after hearing the news. In Marion's script, the two of them were the survivors of the incident. To play their parts well, Palmer had wrapped a few loops of bandage around his head, and as for Bologue... he already looked miserable enough.

The two evaded the flashlights, hastily making an appearance under the cover of the ferrymen, and sneaked away through a detour.

"How are they supposed to explain this accident then?" Bologue looked back at the collapsed ruins.

"Gas explosion? Aging infrastructure? Whatever, it's the Logistics Department who'll have to deal with it."

Palmer tore off the bandage on his head, speaking with indifference.

"They're professionals at this kind of thing."

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Order Bureau, Special Operations Group Office.

Bologue and Palmer sat in chairs, with Lebius behind the desk and Geoffrey standing to the side, like a competent bodyguard.

Each time after establishing the "Heart Core Net," Yuriel, as the living hub, would bear tremendous mental pressure. After the task, she would go to rest first, leaving the matters to Lebius and Geoffrey to handle.

"That's the course of action."

Bologue finished recounting everything they had just experienced.

Making a report was much more tiring than Bologue had thought. No one expected them to record all the conversations between Bologue and Palmer, with time stamps even prepared.

He had to follow these dialogues to recount the situation at that time. Many details were repeatedly questioned; the worst part was that large portions of the dialogue were Palmer's ramblings.

Even when Bologue was questioned, his facial expressions were somewhat uncontrollable, while Palmer had an utterly unconcerned look, which was also a kind of self-indulgence.

Lebius nodded silently, exchanged glances with Geoffrey, and communicated with their eyes.

"Alright, you can rest now."

"Is it over just like that?" Bologue asked Lebius.

"What else? It was merely a regular field mission. There wasn't any need to even mobilize the 'Cultivation Room' for sealing. Such tasks will become as routine as daily work in your future careers, not worth noting."

From Lebius's perspective, this mission indeed couldn't have been more ordinary. If it weren't Bologue and Palmer's first action together, he felt there wasn't even a need to establish the "Heart Core Net."

Bologue roughly understood Lebius's point. Like himself, during his first demon hunt, he was terrified, but now he took it for granted and even enjoyed it.

"Clock out! Clock out!" Palmer shouted with joy.

"What about afterward? We only destroyed one base; we haven't eradicated the 'Man-eater' entirely, have we?"

Bologue did not share the same happiness as Palmer, continuing to question.

The warehouse destroyed had a stockpile that shocked Bologue, making it hard to imagine how many more had fallen prey to the 'Man-eater' in the unseen shadows.

"This needs to wait for intelligence from the Crow's Nest. They will continue to dig down this line," Lebius said.

"Wait?" Bologue was somewhat displeased.

"Patience is also a crucial quality for a hunter," Lebius said calmly.

"Moreover, what you need to do now is to reflect and learn," Lebius instructed. "You've realized it too, right? The cunning in battles between Condensers."

Bill's unyielding form, and David's rampaging Shadow Beast... They were merely the lowest Condensers. In future battles, Bologue would face even more cunning and powerful enemies.

The mysterious Secret Energy, Alchemy Armaments with unknown effects, supportive Ethereal Techniques, and even Contract Objects which trade cost for power...

Bologue nodded, let out a long sigh, and calmly said.

"You're right. I was a bit too impatient."

A sense of fatigue engulfed him; "Resurrection" had consumed a large amount of Ether, leaving him feeling empty inside, unable to replenish fully all at once.

The "Soul Shards" stored from siphoning served more like a backup energy source, releasing when Bologue needed it. To assist in becoming a Condenser, the Soul Shards had been entirely depleted, and those gained from killing demons in the factory were also used up in a single death.

Bologue could now even feel a slight hunger, unsure if he was genuinely hungry or if Bulimia Nervosa was rearing its head.

At this thought, Bologue glanced at Palmer.

"Wanna go grab a late-night snack?"