

## Endless 167

### Chapter 167: Deception and Betrayal

Amidst the monotonous sound of the rain, bursts of shattering noise echoed, resembling the tumultuous surface of boiling water. Countless light points struggled on the Ethereal Sword, eventually dissipating.

Kedening turned sideways, adopting a stance ready for battle. The short sword in his hand gleamed with a metallic finish, as if the surging destructive force just now was merely an illusion.

It was not an illusion.

The halberd fractured, the ground shattered—all actual sights in Bologue's eyes. The Ethereal Sword's power was astonishing, cutting everything with ease, as if nothing could block it. This forced Bologue to take it seriously.

Is this Kedening's Secret Energy?

Watching the raised short sword, Bologue questioned.

He was well aware that in this world, there were many things capable of achieving the effects of Secret Energy, like Alchemy Armament or Contract Objects.

Battles between Condensers were crafty and treacherous.

Perhaps what he saw was merely the effect of Alchemy Armament, with Kedening's Secret Energy secretly poised to strike, or this Ethereal Sword was Kedening's Secret Energy, while he perhaps had a lethal Alchemy Armament in hand, waiting for the critical moment to unleash.

Bologue hadn't learned much swordsmanship, but judging from Kedening's stance, the guy had some skills, his muscles tense from head to toe. No matter which direction the attack came from, Kedening could swiftly swing out his blade to cut everything down.

So then...

Bologue stepped forward, closing the distance between him and Kedening, swinging out the chain in his hand like a long whip at the man.

After some time of training, Bologue realized the chain was an excellent weapon for him. It could strike from many angles, and with the aid of Summoning Hands, the chain could be molded into various shapes, leaving the enemy defenseless.

Just like now.

Intricate patterns extended from Bologue's palm to the chain, its end shimmering and twisting into a scythe that smashed down on Kedening.

Kedening turned and dodged, but the falling scythe instantly exploded into dozens of iron spikes, stabbing toward Kedening.

Metal clashed against metal, the short sword severing the approaching iron spikes one by one, yet Bologue's offensive was too dense. Kedening had no chance to breathe, let alone the fact that as the spikes erupted, Bologue did not stop; one hand reached for the chain, while the other pulled out a short-barreled shotgun, aiming directly at Kedening.

Blinding light erupted, Ether enveloped the short sword again, transforming it into a deadly Ethereal Sword. With a flash, all iron spikes shattered.

The radiant light rolled across the short sword as Kedening retreated, trying to maintain a safe distance, yet by this time, Bologue had almost reached him.

Ethereal Amplification.

The Alchemy Matrix ignited, causing Bologue's speed to soar, pouncing like a leopard.

Bologue hadn't been a Condenser for long, his grasp of Secret Energy and Ethereal Skills far less profound than Kedening or Bill, his speed was slower than Kedening, his strength inferior to Bill; but these were just tools for combat, and tools only needed to be sufficient.

The pitch-black muzzle completely enveloped Kedening. In Bologue's view, the Ethereal Sword was impressively sharp, but how many bullets could it cut? Kedening was fast; could he be faster than a bullet?

He pulled the trigger, the gunshot roared, and that ever-evading Kedening, in the instant of the gunfire, uncharacteristically rushed toward Bologue, simultaneously swinging his Ethereal Sword.

Ready to fight to the death, knowing he couldn't dodge?

Bologue thought this, but suddenly a strong sense of strangeness surged from his heart.

Kedening knew he was an Undead, what right did he have to fight to the death with him? Or was it that he knew he was doomed to die, and even in death, wanted to inflict serious damage?

His thoughts suddenly froze, followed by a dizzying chaos.

A dazzling light flashed before his eyes, his shoulder exploded, and blood gushed out.

Bologue almost instinctively flung out his hook, embedding it in the distant ground, dragging himself across the surface in embarrassment. In the next moment, the position Bologue had just been in was hit by a powerful light, and in his view, a blazing Ethereal Sword split the earth.

What happened?

Bologue looked at Kedening in the distance. After missing the strike, the Ethereal Sword in his hand extinguished, turning back into an ordinary short sword.

With intense light rolling in his eyes, Kedening turned sideways again, only this time he hid the short sword behind him, making it invisible to Bologue.

As for Kedening himself, it was strange. Bologue could confirm he aimed at him; at such close distance, Kedening didn't use the Ethereal Sword to block but chose to attack, such dense bullet rain should have shredded his body.

Yet now, not to mention bullet holes, there wasn't even a scratch on him, as if Bologue's shot hadn't hit him at all.

How is this possible?

"Is that your Secret Energy?"

Bologue recalled the moment's sensation, his thoughts briefly plunged into chaos, as if all senses had become disordered.

Then Bologue saw, on the pillar beside Kedening, a cluster of bullet holes appeared. Bologue remembered he hadn't fired there... or perhaps the gun initially aimed at Kedening was shifted in that direction, allowing Kedening to evade the gunfire?

Forget it, speculation is meaningless; only practice can reveal the truth.

Bologue raised his hand, pulling back the chain, while his other hand flung out a Flying Knife. Kedening didn't pause; maintaining a safe distance, he raised his handgun, firing while hiding behind a pillar, causing the Flying Knife to miss its mark.

Kedening emerged from the other side of the stone pillar. In a brief moment, he discovered he had lost Bologue's trail.

He vanished into thin air at the platform.

Where is he?

Kedening's heart grew restless. If it were another Condenser, Kedening had strong confidence he could easily defeat the opponent. Even a Prayer Believer one tier higher, lacking knowledge about him, Kedening could use a surprise attack to hunt them down.

This confidence stemmed from his own Secret Energy and the Alchemy Armament in his hand. Just as Bologue had guessed, the short sword in Kedening's hand was an Alchemy Armament known as the "Bright Light Blade." In its default state, it was an ordinary short sword, but once Ether was infused, it could solidify Ether into a blade.

This weapon was extremely lethal. The Ethereal Blade could cut through almost any substance, but consumed a massive amount of Ether. To conserve it, Kedening would stop infusing Ether whenever he wasn't attacking, letting it extinguish.

The deadly blade, combined with Kedening's Secret Energy, could heavily wound the opponent with a single hit, or even achieve an instant kill.

But this time was different. Kedening faced Bologue, a damned Undead.

"Are you looking for me?"

An icy voice sounded from above. As Kedening looked up, Bologue released the grappling hook, descending from the sky along with the collapsing ceiling.

Under the Summoning Hand's drive, the falling ceiling twisted, warping into a massive cross-shaped gravestone, crashing down toward Kedening below.

Without hesitation, Kedening turned and ran into the distance, the deafening sound of impact following closely, rolling smoke and dust brushing against his back.

After escaping the attack range, Kedening turned, only to see a pair of approaching blue eyes. Bologue raised his folding knife and slashed down.

Kedening swung up his short sword, not to block the falling knife but to cut a wound across Bologue's chest. As for Bologue's knife, just before striking Kedening, it bizarrely shifted by a few centimeters, merely brushing past him.

Once again, that chaotic feeling surged through his mind.

Enduring the intense pain, Bologue slashed at Kedening again, with the same result. After a baffling sensation, his knife missed, and more wounds appeared on his body.

Kedening raised his gun, trying to shoot Bologue. Such gunfire was difficult to hit Bologue, as he could always convert the weapon into a shield, but this time Bologue stumbled and fell.

Bologue wasn't Palmer; he wouldn't make such a mistake at such a critical moment. The chaotic sensation in his mind kept rising, destroying Bologue's balance.

The pitch-black muzzle pointed at his head, but Bologue hammered the ground before Kedening could react.

The short sword ignited once more, the Ethereal Sword ready to cleave through all the long halberds, but instead, rising from the ground were stone walls, separating Kedening and Bologue.

Kedening didn't stop. The Ethereal Sword decisively cut through the stone wall, but behind it lay more walls. Layer upon layer of cover blocked Bologue's silhouette, causing Kedening to lose track of Bologue once again.

"Are you planning to escape?"

Kedening shouted, and his response was the agitated ground.

A sharp blade broke through the earth, piercing Kedening's foot.

"What?"

With Kedening's exclamation, the ground shattered, and Bologue rose with his knife.

Having joked with Palmer earlier about using Secret Energy to dig underground, Bologue didn't expect to put it into battle so soon.

"Void Spirit School's Secret Energy, right? I guess it's something that affects the senses, misleading my actions," Bologue said.

Initially, Bologue had guessed Kedening's Secret Energy was from the Commanding School. He moved his gun barrel to avoid gunfire, but from the earlier battle, it seemed once a weapon was out of his control, Kedening couldn't influence them, only hiding behind the stone pillar.

It wasn't the weapons that were affected but himself. Bologue realized it might be Secret Energy from the Void Spirit School.

Every time he swung his knife, a chaotic sensation arose, followed by a missed attack. Then his staggering steps, at the rise of the chaotic sensation, Bologue clearly realized he couldn't walk properly, as if his senses were completely disrupted, causing him to fall.

"If you've guessed it, then you should understand you can't win against me."

Kedening stated coldly, wielding an unbreakable Ethereal Sword, his Secret Energy·Wandering easily influencing the senses. Let alone swinging a sword, even normal movement was difficult for Bologue in his eyes.

"Indeed, conscious beings will inevitably be affected by your power, but what about cold machinery?"

As Bologue spoke, he tried to raise his hand, but Kedening's Secret Energy enveloped him, preventing him from even standing, falling forward instead.

The sound of gunfire erupted.

Kedening maintained the stance of raising his sword, aiming to sever Bologue's head at the moment of his fall, but he couldn't do it now.

Dense bullet holes appeared on Kedening's body, with blood pouring out uncontrollably.

Turning his head, he saw a short-barreled shotgun mounted on the elevated stone wall, the trigger bound with iron wire, which extended to Bologue's hand. Whether Bologue fell or successfully raised his hand, the trigger would be activated.

Human consciousness would be influenced by Secret Energy, but cold machinery would not; it would faithfully execute commands.

Kedening lowered his head. This was the spot where Bologue had just emerged. Whether by coincidence or long-planned, a cross-shaped scratch was etched in the ground, and he stood right on it.