

Endless 193

Chapter 193: "Devil and Electric Guitar Operation Guide

Waking up to the familiar high ceiling, drawing the curtains, and basking in the familiar green wild sunlight again.

Bologue stood in front of the floor-to-ceiling window in his hospital gown. After staying in gloomy, dark places for too long, he couldn't get enough of this vivid scene before him.

This was Bologue's seventh day at the Border Sanatorium. In theory, a body like his—which was practically undying—should be immune to hospitals, yet after his recovery, Rachel rejected his discharge application without giving a clear reason, only performing some regular checks and blood draws daily.

Bologue thought this must be the idea of the Field Operations Department. Thinking back, what he did on that stormy night was indeed quite outrageous: he eradicated a gang wave affecting Opus's security, crushed a Prayer Believer wielding a Secret Sword, and blocked the mountain of Philosopher's Stones...

With the Order Bureau's way of doing things, he might face interminable interrogations, and the fact that he made a deal with the Tyrant would surely be exposed.

Dealing with the Demon, that was probably the most unacceptable offense to the Order Bureau, Bologue thought as he shook his head in mild frustration.

What was strange was that over the past seven days, the Order Bureau's interrogation team hadn't shown up. Everything remained serene: nurses delivered meals three times a day, exchanging niceties—as if he were on vacation, except for being unable to leave the Border Sanatorium.

This was house arrest, Bologue understood.

Bologue was in pretty good spirits now, as Palmer had said, he felt a lot more cheerful after waking up.

To not waste his time recuperating, Bologue even asked the nurses to help him borrow some books, which they efficiently delivered by the afternoon after a morning request.

Sitting by the chair, Bologue casually flipped through these hefty books, each title more headache-inducing than the last.

"'Alchemy Metals and Heat Treatment,' 'Ether and Sublimation,' 'Golden Thesis'..."

Bologue softly read out the titles. He had attempted to understand their contents but, no matter how eager to learn he was, the obscure and complex text defeated his resolve in half an hour.

From the inner pages, one could see the authors' names and their departments. These were compiled by the Alchemists of the Sublimation Furnace Core, and served as internal educational materials.

Bologue wasn't an Alchemist, and his understanding of these topics was minimal, so it was normal for him to be unable to comprehend them.

Many books at the Order Bureau were written by its staff, like "Secret Energy School Characteristics and Distinctions" which circulated within the Field Operations Department, summarizing the wealth of experience from predecessors to pave the way for newcomers.

Bologue also remembered the elderly librarian when he went to borrow books, who remarked as he handed him the books.

"You youngsters live in an era of prosperity; back in my days, knowledge was gold, and no one would share it with you. Everybody needed to explore on their own... Now, you can just read a book and inject this costly knowledge into your brain."

Bologue resonated with the elder's words. The Order Bureau had established a very comprehensive system, where one could easily find what they need.

It felt like attending 'Condenser University,' except at this school, you had to go out for internships while studying.

Picking up another book titled "Basic Alchemy Materials Atlas," which detailed some common alchemical materials, from the annotations it seemed to be a popular science book written by the Sublimation Furnace Core for other departments.

From it, Bologue found a material called Iron-Repelling Paint, guessing correctly that this was likely what Sandbox used at that time.

Thinking of it, Bologue recalled the shiny golden girl, regretfully he hadn't seen her these past few days, as if she were a mere illusion.

Bologue didn't dwell on it, setting aside the "Basic Alchemy Materials Atlas" and picking up another book.

The book cover was black leather, with copper-yellow metal protective corners, noticeably more precious compared to the others.

Bologue remembered not borrowing this book, but the nurses just delivered it. He thought it was a mistake, but the nurses firmly insisted there wasn't.

This puzzled Bologue. The Order Bureau Library enforced strict permission control, and without sufficient clearance, certain books were inaccessible.

Yet it wasn't that Bologue lacked the necessary clearance, but this book had no stated permission requirement at all, which was clearly against regulations. Within the Order Bureau, even the cafeteria menu marked clearance levels, something Palmer always thought was discriminatory, arguing that those with higher permission ate better.

Hesitantly, Bologue wondered if touching such an unknown book might violate some rule, but given that he had already made a deal with the Tyrant—a crime in itself—he wasn't too concerned.

The title was embossed in gilt, complementing the stern style, resembling some kind of secret tome. Yet, seeing the title, Bologue's feelings were somewhat indescribable.

"Devil and Electric Guitar Operation Guide."

Indeed, that was the book's name. Bologue remembered that authors had the right to title their books, yet everyone chose academic names, but this... it was quite a change in style.

Bologue thought the author must be an interesting person. Out of curiosity about the word "Devil" in the title, he opened the book.

"Nesanel Vaolet."

Bologue whispered; that was the author's name. It sounded familiar, but he couldn't recall who it was.

The content was just like the title. It recounted various instances of dealings with Devils, like the birth of the Demon, the peculiarities of the Debtor, and tricky Contract Objects.

It even included part of an electric guitar operation guide; most absurdly, the author included a few pages of sheet music.

This made Bologue's reading experience feel absurd. Just when he got seriously involved, a puzzling passage of sheet music would interrupt.

However, the content contained within truly surpasses Bologue's understanding, with one blood-soaked example after another, deepening his knowledge of devils.

Until now, Bologue's understanding of devils largely came from the things Geoffrey told him when he joined, but in this book, the author expands on those insights.

"Devils seem to be bound by their own rules, which I've categorized into three laws."

Any intelligence or event related to devils always arouses Bologue's vigilance and attention; he still remembers what the Tyrant said at the time.

In this metropolis full of desire and madness, there are far more beings like him.

It's easy to understand this phrase: not just one devil exists within Opus. Thinking about this sends a chill down Bologue's spine; he lives in the same city as devils, and nobody knows in what shape a devil might appear. Perhaps the passerby he encounters in the morning might just be a wandering devil.

Evil is omnipresent, like shadows following closely behind.

"First, devils abide by the absolute equality in transactions of value."

Bologue knows this well; when he met the Tyrant, he straightforwardly said this, and in the wandering intersection he protected, people also followed this rule.

"Second, devils do not directly interfere in this world."

Upon reading this, Bologue recalls what Serey said to him: debtors differ from demons; demons are the drained remnants of value, whereas debtors are the appendages of devils.

Each debtor seems to have a vague mission, waiting for the devil they transact with to seek them again, becoming the devil's minions to influence the world's course.

"Third, devils cannot change things that have already happened."

Bologue's gaze froze. He understood the first two laws, but the third one was new to him.

The author wrote these three laws categorically, and he considered them absolute truths, though the third law made Bologue ponder.

In Bologue's understanding, devils are omnipotent; his existence and that nest of undead are the best proof.

It seems there is nothing devils cannot achieve in this world—be it splitting mountains or shifting seas, if there's sufficient value, even stopping the stars is not impossible.

Bologue gets lost in his thoughts, suddenly mumbling repeatedly.

"Sufficient value..."

A terrifying speculation arises in Bologue's mind; for a moment, he puts down the book, sitting in the chair with a blank stare.

If devils cannot directly interfere in this world, then another way of putting it: if no one makes a wish to them, could they do nothing?

Once this thought arises, it burns like wildfire in Bologue's mind.

Under Bologue's understanding, he dissects the power of devils, setting aside all oddities and conspiracies, discovering astonishingly that devils are essentially just wish-fulfilling machines with self-awareness.

People make wishes to devils, the devils respond, allowing them to wield dreadful powers. Yet when no one needs them, devils retreat into shadows, waiting for the next wishful soul.

Creatures endowed with power yet constrained by it.

Indeed... that is why devils are so cunning and malevolent; perhaps sometimes people's wishes are twisted, leading astray, not because the wishes are inherently such, but because devils find loopholes in the strict rules under constraints, deliberately directing things towards their desired outcomes.

Thus, the blessing debtors receive from devils is understandable; debtors are the only ones who can bypass the rules to act for devils, directly interfering in this world.

Devils are imprisoned captives, whereas debtors are the deputies outside the prison.

Bologue feels every nerve screaming, as if he touched some secret he shouldn't have known; the closed book before him, with its black leather cover, seems to twist and writhe.

The black book cover is like a small dark window, from which thicker black tar pours, crawling and spreading like it's alive. Bologue tries to stand and move, yet finds himself unable to budge.

This is a conspiracy, so why did he come upon these thoughts now? The opportunity arose precisely because of this book, one not even on his reading list, as if sent by fate.

The intense chill almost freezes Bologue's blood and bones completely, even his heartbeat begins to fade gradually; despite being undead, he suddenly feels he may truly die, never to awaken again.

"Bologue?"

A sudden call shatters the imprisoned world, the chill and death retreat like a tide.

Bologue's gaze is somewhat vacant; he tries moving his fingers, discovering he regained control over his body, as if the eerie scenes were merely hallucinations.

"Pa... Palmer?"

Turning his head, Palmer, with eyes half-closed, looks at him and scratches his belly.

"You're up early, want breakfast?"