

## Endless 198

### Chapter 198: Shadow King

For some people, Oubos is divided into two areas, the Agreement District and other city districts, but in the eyes of others, the city is split into Opus and the Great Rift.

The Great Rift.

For the vast majority of citizens, they will never have any contact with it, after all, the newspapers report daily on the deaths occurring within the Great Rift. For many, the Great Rift is like a deadly place close at hand, fortunately sealed off by countless warning lines and barbed wires, only existing within the rising smog.

Over time, in the eyes of many, the Great Rift is merely a perilous area with a harsh environment. However, in the eyes of those who truly understand its structure, the Great Rift looks completely different. They divide it vertically into three zones: the Upper Section, the Middle Section, and the Lower Section.

The company's mines, wandering crossroads, and Qiushang Town are located in the Upper Section. The Middle Section lies below them, but few have managed to establish stable bases there, only traces of activity. As for the Lower Section, it is shrouded in dense fog, though its boundaries are defined, rarely does anyone succeed in exploring there.

People mainly operate in the Upper Section of the Great Rift and extend into various branching ravines. Given the complex terrain of the Great Rift, there are enough shadows to shelter those desperate fugitives.

Jia Meng clutched the wound on his body as he slowly advanced along a rust-stained corridor, never imagining that he would become one of the fugitives.

According to the original plan, he should have led an entire Long Sword Squad here. But with the interference from the Order Bureau, only he managed to escape, and that came at great cost.

A constant sense of weakness spread throughout his body, while the Secret Sword at his waist emitted a burst of congealed bloody odor.

This Secret Sword was named "Blood Transfer Sword," different from standard Alchemy Armaments. It was a Contract Object needing large amounts of blood to facilitate Curved Path Shuttling.

It does not possess strong offensive power, and its activation even requires self-harm, but Jia Meng really favored this Secret Sword, relying on its Blood Transfer Power, which saved him countless times.

Like this time.

Jia Meng was not afraid of death; he was more afraid of the secrets in his mind being discovered. Unlike the other squad members, who, for safety reasons, accepted memory cuts long ago, they do not remember detailed situations but clearly remember who they are loyal to.

But Jia Meng did not undergo memory cutting; after all, someone needed to stay awake to lead them.

Many unforeseen events happened, but fortunately, he escaped, and even more fortunately, he successfully reached the Great Rift.

Jia Meng proceeded along the corridor, corridors like these set up on cliff faces are commonplace in the Great Rift, with nearly no one to maintain them, hence every step must be taken cautiously.

Ethereal blue mist billowed around him, sometimes making Jia Meng feel like he had entered another world.

He could only see the hazy light falling from above, unable to glimpse the sky, or even those gloomy clouds. Looking down, it was still the rolling, sedimented mist, reflecting some light and obscuring the Abyss beneath the Great Rift.

Sometimes Jia Meng wanted to describe this place as a world beneath the surface, but he thought that was inaccurate.

This is a gap of territory between the sky and the earth, neither one nor the other.

A gentle breeze stirred the mist as if unseen phantoms brushed past him, clearly disturbing the mist's form, followed by a series of ethereal, eerie sounds resonating.

Jia Meng knew it was the sound caused by the sweeping breeze, yet he couldn't help but imagine the scene.

Countless phantoms wandered within the Great Rift, softly singing, waiting for those who fall into the Abyss to meet their doom.

People are twisted by their surroundings; those who stay in gloom too long become sickly pale, and under prolonged sunlight become dark-skinned... Who knows what form one would take after staying too long in the Great Rift.

Rather than continue thinking about it, he quickened his pace. Within the Great Rift, there are no signposts, no house numbers. In this shadowy land, if you wish to hide, few would find you. Jia Meng knew the route beforehand, which prevented his steps from becoming aimless.

The corridor reached its end, where there should have been no road. Jia Meng leaned out to see iron plates inserted horizontally into the steep cliff wall below, like makeshift stairways.

Advancing along such stairs indeed required courage; a misstep could send him plummeting into the Great Rift, devoured by the swirling mist.

Jia Meng endured the intense pain in his body as he leaped down, the iron plate slicker than he had imagined post downpour, almost failing to stand firm. He had to stab his Secret Sword into the wall to stabilize himself.

A few fragments fell, the iron plates swayed unsteadily, and Jia Meng did not linger longer, quickly moving forward.

He was drawing closer to the mist, seemingly on the verge of entering its density, as Jia Meng felt his breathing becoming labored, with a stabbing, burning sensation in his respiratory tract.

This mist is toxic.

He covered his nose and mouth; as he continued forward, Jia Meng's elevation continually decreased. He had left the Upper Section, reaching the Middle Section.

Another basis for the zonal division was the toxic mist. The Upper Section is hardly affected by the toxic mist, the Middle Section is somewhat affected, while the Lower Section is entirely swallowed by the mist.

Residents of the Great Rift were worried, saying that many years ago, the mist within the Great Rift was confined to the Lower Section, with the Middle Section entirely unaffected. Yet in recent years, the mist has continually risen, as if poised to erupt from within the Great Rift itself.

The dense mist utterly consumed Jia Meng, causing his eyes a severe drying sensation, with unstoppable tears streaming down. Everything was a blinding whiteness, but soon Jia Meng saw the guiding lights, one after another.

If he didn't know beforehand, no one would ever be able to find this place. Following the light, Jia Meng eventually stood before an iron door, built snugly against the cliff, as if someone had hollowed out the inside, erecting a refuge.

Knocking on the iron gate, after a brief silence, the panel on the gate was pulled open, and a gaze emerged from the darkness.

"For the true king," Jia Meng said solemnly.

The panel was closed along with the lower panel, which was round and perfectly fit for a gun barrel. If Jia Meng answered incorrectly, he would be shot.

Such a shot would not be enough to kill a Prayer Believer, but it would be enough to knock him off the cliff and into the deep mist below.

No one knows what's beneath the mist, and no one dares to gamble on it.

The iron gate opened, and a black-robed figure gestured in invitation, as Jia Meng entered with a trace of excitement.

The interior space was larger than imagined. It seemed these black-robed figures had hollowed out the entire cliff, resembling a massive chapel built into the rock, with piles of candles on the floor, wax flowing, and weak flames flickering.

At the end of the candlelight, an aged figure in a black robe sat on the ground, holding a fishing rod as if fishing for something. Beside him stood another man, not in a black robe but clad in Iron Armor, like a guard, guarding the aged figure.

Jia Meng immediately recognized the face in Iron Armor, his voice trembling as he called out.

"The Third Seat... you really aren't dead, it's all true..."

The Third Seat, who was supposed to be dead in the secret war, appeared in front of him just like the rumors said. The Third Seat wasn't dead; he had only hidden in the shadows of the Great Rift, awaiting the true king's return.

The Third Seat didn't say much, just nodded to Jia Meng and then indicated for him to proceed.

Jia Meng's gaze fell on the person fishing behind the Third Seat.

Dim light illuminated Jia Meng's face: the floor behind the Third Seat was made of glass, and the large circular glass allowed an easy view of the Sea of Mist below.

A small hole had been punched at the center of the circle, and the person held a fishing rod, fishing for something in the Sea of Mist.

Jia Meng walked up to the person, then respectfully knelt.

As he expected, beneath the black robe was a hunched figure, the ancient body crumbling, the face masked with a delicate silver mask adorned with intricate patterns.

Jia Meng's voice resonated in his throat; he wanted to say something, but a hoarse voice interrupted him.

"Just call me the Shadow King for now. After all, I haven't really ascended to the throne, only hidden in such shadows."

Jia Meng lowered his head, not daring to look up at him, nor did he dare speak. At this moment, the hoarse voice rang out again, and then he pushed a cutting board towards Jia Meng, with a small knife laid on top.

"I need some bait," the Shadow King said.

Jia Meng did not hesitate; he placed his hand on the cutting board, lifted the small knife, and cut off his pinky finger, enduring the intense pain as he lifted the bloody finger.

"Oh? Thank you."

The Shadow King took Jia Meng's finger, threaded it onto the fishhook, and cast it down the small hole into the endless Sea of Mist below.

No one knew how much time passed, Jia Meng's face turned pale, blood painting patterns beneath him, staining the Sea of Mist crimson.

Suddenly, the fishing rod vibrated violently, and the Shadow King shouted excitedly.

"It's on the hook!"

He was as happy as a child, pulling hard on the fishing rod, reeling in a mass of crimson flesh from the Sea of Mist.

The flesh grew wantonly, enveloping Jia Meng's severed finger, emitting tiny chewing sounds as if the mass of flesh was devouring another mass of flesh.

Jia Meng was stunned; he had never seen such a bizarre thing. The crimson flesh writhed and extended, after devouring the severed finger, it continued trying to consume the fishhook, the fishing line, everything it touched.

What made Jia Meng even more uneasy was that this thing had been fished out from the Sea of Mist—it came from below the Great Rift.

What Jia Meng didn't expect was that this was only the beginning. The Shadow King grabbed the mass of crimson flesh and stuffed it into his withered, emaciated body, as if beneath the black robe lay a gaping maw that swallowed the crimson flesh in large gulps.

The Shadow King let out groans of pleasure, and as the flesh was devoured, his hunched form seemed to strengthen, with a bit more blood color to the sickly shell.

Jia Meng was cold all over; he no longer knew what he was facing. At this moment, the Shadow King turned his gaze to Jia Meng and spoke.

"Welcome, my loyal Shield Guard."