

Endless 301

Chapter 301: A Wonderful Encounter

As an Undead, one of the most fortunate things is that Olivia has a long enough time to learn whatever she wants to learn, making her not only a powerful Condenser but also having deep skills in various arts.

For example, the study of the Void Realm.

To escape the surveillance of the Order Bureau and lead her people to live in this land, she needs them to remain hidden and also requires a sufficiently safe Void Realm to shield from all prying eyes.

For this reason, Olivia spent long periods studying the Void Realm. The Void Realm covering the venue is strong but not without its vulnerabilities.

As an expert in this field, Olivia searches for potential breakthrough points based on her experience.

The venue space is extensive; merchants have almost dug through the entire underground area. Apart from the bloody Beast Fighting Arena, countless corridors extend downwards, with Olivia descending along the dark steps.

The recent explosion has urged her. Someone used an explosion to destroy the Central Courtyard, cutting off everyone's retreat, and the explosion also affected the Void Realm.

After brief contemplation, Olivia guessed it was the Order Bureau's doing. Now, there might be a team of Field Staff eagerly waiting outside the Void Realm, ready to charge inside the moment it collapses and kill everyone present.

Olivia suddenly halted her steps, her gaze solemnly fixing on one side of the wall. The gaps in the wall slightly widened, as if something was growing inside, soon followed by crimson sprouts stretching out, growing wildly like moss.

The spread of the corruption roots was faster than she anticipated. The madmen of the Crimson Sect are consistently like this; when they go to war, they'd often plant these corruption roots, staining the earth with crimson flesh.

They believe the places where flesh touches are the lands of the Crimson Queen. They fight for their mother and are protected by her.

The Tyrant's response to this was to grant his power within the Great Rift to everyone fighting for the Gray Trade Association.

To fight for the Gray Trade Association is to generate value for the Tyrant; generating value leads to receiving the Tyrant's power. This is the rule of the Tyrant's power and the basis for maintaining the wandering crossroads.

Most importantly, the Tyrant has awakened the most evil desires in everyone's hearts.

Greed.

Even without looking, Olivia could imagine that at this moment, blood should be flowing like rivers within the Beast Fighting Arena. Not everyone can resist the temptation of the Fantasy Fruit as she does.

The desire for their wishes fuels their greedy pursuits.

People think they are rational, but from the beginning, they are caught in the Devil's designs, even Olivia is not exempt.

The only resistance she can make is to leave as quickly as possible, avoiding any entanglements.

Olivia quickened her pace, the further she descended, the more she could clearly feel the suppression of the Void Realm weakening.

The Void Realm is a closed, self-circulating space, but it can't achieve absolute closure; there must be a channel to communicate with the outside, and that channel is the Void Realm's most fragile "door". Destroying the door can open a path to the outside.

The darkness gradually engulfed Olivia, silence slowly surrounding her, bringing calmness to Olivia's heart as she stepped into a safe zone.

Yet, she gradually discovered the increasing presence of rubble on the ground, more pieces appearing with each step, until she saw a large door blown open, stepping through it, the haunting singing became faintly audible.

"No one told you when to run, you missed the starting gun."

As she approached, Olivia gradually heard the song more clearly and noticed the figure busy in front of yet a more magnificent door.

Olivia remained silent, hiding herself in the darkness, while the fellow, wearing a black hood, looked like a bandit who stumbled in, placing items Olivia couldn't understand one by one on the door.

"So you run and run to catch up with the sun, but it's sinking."

The bandit hummed his song, indifferent to the sounds of explosion overhead. Dust poured down as he sang even louder to complement the collapsing atmosphere.

Singing with passion, the fellow simply put aside his work and began to sing and dance.

Olivia's expression was somewhat odd; she'd encountered enough eccentrics today, and yet another appeared at this moment.

However... the counterpart seemed to share the same goal as her, preparing to destroy the Void Realm, opening a passage.

But Olivia didn't believe someone could have prepared these things in advance; this fellow seemed more like an inside collaborator with someone.

Yet, regardless, these elements combined to form a scene Olivia found hard to accept.

"Breathing hard! One day closer to death!"

The bandit sang cheerily, twirling, then suddenly felt a cold sensation spreading from his neck. He steadied himself, only to find a sharp Short Dagger pressed against his throat, held by Olivia emerging from the darkness.

"Spare me!"

Without the slightest hesitation, the bandit raised both hands immediately.

"Who are you? What are you doing?"

"Just an unlucky and forgotten wretch, I'm trying to blast this door open; once opened, everyone can escape."

The bandit shouted, and Olivia was stunned; everything was going unexpectedly smoothly.

Ruby-like eyes were reflected in the bandit's gaze, causing him to squint. Amid panic, he seemed to be thinking of something else, and suddenly he shouted in terror.

"Behind you!"

"Are you joking?" Olivia laughed, "This trick is too ridiculous."

"But there really is something behind you."

The bandit didn't care about the short dagger at his throat, raised both hands, and turned his head to indicate something behind Olivia.

In the moment of Olivia's hesitation, a nauseous scent accompanied by a gust of wind blew past her nose.

She turned and swung the dagger almost instantly, shattering a scarlet tendril extending from the darkness into countless pieces of flesh, which fell to the ground like rain. But instead of dying, they rooted themselves in the earth and continued to grow actively.

Olivia's movement didn't end; the dagger drew a pale arc, slicing through the tendril and then slashing towards the bandit. If he stayed motionless, the dagger would hover above his head, but if he tried anything else, it would sever his arm.

However, at this moment, a flying knife flew through the air, as if thrown from the darkness, colliding with Olivia's short dagger. Amid the sparks flying, the bandit, taking advantage of the blockade, rolled and crawled to the door.

"Phew, that was dangerous!"

Palmer murmured a complaint. He had already sensed Olivia's presence through the changing air currents when she approached.

He couldn't determine the strength of the newcomer, or even if it was human. There wasn't any space to hide here, so he had to keep up the pretense and brace himself for the opponent's arrival.

Anyone else might have been trapped and killed by Palmer, but clearly, Olivia was far stronger than him.

Although Palmer always felt luck favored him at critical moments, he hadn't willingly put his neck under Olivia's dagger; he was simply unable to react fast enough—everything happened too quickly.

Raising his head, Olivia was watching him, her eyes brightened scarlet with the burst of Ether.

Around her, decayed roots and sprouts had penetrated here, prying open the soil and squeezing forcefully, filling the cracks in the walls with scarlet moss.

"Wait a minute, we don't have any deep-seated hatred, right?"

Palmer shouted repeatedly.

Olivia acted as if she hadn't heard, grasped her short dagger, her figure scattering into a puff of black smoke. When she reformed, she stepped out ghost-like from Palmer's shadow, slashing the dagger towards his neck.

Palmer sensed the sharpness of the blade, and the worst part was Olivia's speed was too fast for him to dodge.

"Are you going to breach the contract?"

In such a dire moment, Palmer dropped his act and shouted.

Olivia's movement slowed for a second, and from the void, countless blurred chains extended out, layer upon layer, binding her arm and the short dagger, dragging down her motion.

Those delays granted Palmer the chance to unleash Secret Energy—the fierce wind lifted his body, and in the face of mortal peril, he couldn't even control the direction, bouncing high and landing heavily not far away.

"Ah..."

Palmer groaned on the ground, while Olivia, a complex look in her eyes, watched him, getting dizzy from this absurd world.

The short dagger had blood stains on it; without these constraints slowing her down, Palmer would have been a corpse by now.

Her fingers brushed over the dagger's bloodstains, and just by scent, Olivia could detect the nauseating smell of the blood.

"The Clarks' blood..."

Her ruby-like eyes filled with intense killing intent, Olivia gripped the dagger tightly.

"Although I don't know why the Night Race would leave the Land of Eternal Night... but it seems the Dawn Oath still affects you."

Palmer touched the back of his neck, a shallow scratch remained there, with the wound emitting a fierce chill.

"I can still break the Dawn Oath and kill you." Olivia's tone was icy.

"Seriously? You really want to risk it all in this inexplicable place?" Palmer's tone was light but his gaze remained wary, "That's too foolish, isn't it? Can we just pretend we never met?"

Olivia hesitated for a moment; this indeed was a terrible place, with flesh continuously oozing—hard to imagine what the Beast Fighting Arena had become.

The worst was that Olivia didn't expect to encounter someone from the Clarks.

After anger subsided, Olivia regained clarity. The Clark, rather than staying dutifully at Wind Source Highlands, appeared here, in the Great Rift, so his identity was obvious.

"So, this is the Order Bureau's trap?"

Olivia questioned.

"Probably... anyway, it's not aimed at you."

Palmer replied sincerely, eager to quickly send away this member of the Night Race.

Chapter 302: Genius

The two were locked in a cautious standoff, Palmer lacking the ability to defeat Olivia, but fortunately Olivia herself was heavily restricted.

Since the Dawn War, several Extraordinary Clans and the Night Race established a contract where every surviving Night Race member was not only trapped in the Land of Eternal Night but also restricted by the contract, unable to directly attack them.

The Contract School is both loved and hated, fostering many devil-worshipping groups, yet this powerful Power of Contract binds people with differing stances together, maintaining superficial peace.

The contract is not potent; it cannot completely limit Olivia's actions, but one thing is certain: if the contract is broken, it would mean a new round of backlash for the Night Race.

Olivia was quite aware of the Night Race's predicament, struggling to survive, the best state for them now was to remain silent and unnoticed by anyone.

Flesh continued to grow incessantly, beginning to evolve on its own, flesh mingling with layered bones, resembling hands dangling from overhead, clawing fiercely.

Olivia took a deep breath. In the past, she would have never cared for these restrictions, she wouldn't have hesitated to break the contract and decapitate Palmer.

But things were different now. Olivia was acutely aware of her mission. She had been striving for decades for this mission, and she couldn't let it end here.

"Have you decided? If this drags on, everyone will be doomed."

Palmer reminded, appearing relaxed, yet beneath the black hood, sweat had drenched the fabric.

What bad luck, so few Night Race members left in this world and he happens to encounter one in such a damned place, utterly unlucky.

The Clarks and Night Race had a deep-seated hatred, only someone as heartless as Serey would be indifferent to it.

Palmer doubted his words could sway the woman in front of him, he aimed more to buy time, maybe if he waited a while longer, he'd get lucky? Like a group of strong men descending from the sky to chop this Night Race into mince.

The figure slowly maneuvered, trying to distance himself from the vicinity of the door, but this subtle movement didn't escape the woman's notice as she ended her pondering, the black smoke dissipated and gathered by Palmer's side.

Olivia took no effort to conceal her action, while Palmer was unable to resist, Olivia was too fast, with a sharp short dagger appearing before him, poised to slit his throat at the slightest move.

Silence overtook the atmosphere, only flesh continued its relentless growth, soon covering much of the area, turning the darkness into a crimson hollow.

Palmer felt doomed, but the woman in front of him spoke.

"What are you doing?"

Olivia tilted her head slightly, directing her sight to the devices scattered across the door, "Are you planning to blow open the Void Realm?"

"You're an expert! This is a Void Realm explosive device, just one press of the switch and it can blow a hole in the Void Realm, breaking the enclosure," Palmer answered anything he was asked.

"You actually understand the Void Realm?"

Olivia was somewhat surprised, not expecting someone like Palmer to grasp such knowledge, like a monkey able to paint, unimaginable what effort his mentor exerted to teach Palmer this.

"Not fully understand, just been researching how to escape the Void Realm of the Wind Source Highlands since childhood, so I'm quite adept at sabotage."

A flash of resentment crossed Palmer's eyes, judging by the looks, his childhood escape attempts had all failed.

"So... peaceful coexistence, how about it?"

Suddenly, Palmer clasped a hand behind him, eyes playful, his tone growing assertive.

"You're right, this is the Order Bureau's trap, but not targeting you, you can leave quietly, but if you choose to act against me..."

His glance swept past the door as he threatened.

"I may die, but I'd surely blow open the door, wreck the Void Realm before I perish, guess what waits behind the door? Guess correctly and there's a surprise."

Olivia scrutinized the man in front of her, suddenly approaching Palmer, seductive aura accompanying her words, caressing Palmer's cheek.

"Great, peaceful coexistence."

Olivia agreed to cooperate with Palmer, yet Palmer didn't relax, the woman's current demeanor seemed ready to bite him.

Palmer didn't mind a stranger's bite, but dealing with the Night Race, better not, she'd drain his blood dry.

"We can cooperate."

Upon hearing this, Palmer sighed with relief but remained partially cautious.

"What is your Order Bureau up to then?" Olivia probed for information.

"How would I know, I'm just a junior field staff."

Palmer guarded the secret with difficulty, seemingly choosing not to defect.

"Are you certain?"

Olivia slightly smiled, revealing sharp teeth, her eyes radiant like ruby reflecting Palmer's face, causing it to distort under her gaze, akin to ripples on water.

Few can resist Olivia's allure, with a little manipulation, she could control Palmer.

This is considered one of the Night Race's innate talents. These undead creatures possess a strong allure, and those who are enchanted will immerse themselves in a hazy beauty, to the extent that they lose perception of their bodies.

This is a common occurrence. Before the Night Race feeds, they play with their prey in this way, like a strong sedative, making them forget the intense pain of being drained of blood.

"Wait a minute, control yourself."

Clearly, such allure had no effect on Palmer. He quickly raised his hands, attempting to push Olivia away, maintaining a safe distance from her.

The life-and-death struggle just moments before turned somewhat comical.

Olivia looked suspiciously at Palmer, noticing that his gaze upon her was ordinary but peculiar, as if she were a female gorilla in a zoo, and he was a visitor there to observe.

This was the second time today. Olivia truly began to doubt her own charm.

Could it be that she's already old, unable to keep up with the times?

"I have a fiancée."

Palmer straightened his collar confidently.

"Although her figure isn't as good as yours and her personality isn't as nice as yours, she's still my fiancée."

Having resisted Olivia's temptation, he carried an air of pride, but Olivia's gaze was focused on Palmer's hand.

Her scarlet eyes brimmed with killing intent, almost dripping with blood.

Palmer wasn't holding a detonator but a bundle of black fabric. Noticing Olivia's gaze, Palmer quickly explained.

"No, I'm not a pervert. This is my emergency hood!"

Palmer quickly put away the black stockings. He often carried such strange things with him, and when his black hood got damaged, he'd switch to using black stockings as a mask. In emergencies, he'd even grab some trash bags to put over his head.

"You're screwing with me!"

Olivia roared. What she cared about wasn't the black stockings, but that Palmer didn't have a detonator at all.

"Huh? Is that so?"

Palmer appeared harmless, and before Olivia could swing out her short dagger, another strong ethereal fluctuation was released, coming from the door.

The blinding light ignited the door, and in an instant, the roar of an explosion swallowed both of them present.

There was never any detonator from the start. Facing an opponent far stronger than himself, it was highly likely they could chop off his arm, seize the detonator, and these devices required some time to start up.

For safety, Palmer set the Void Realm explosive device to detonate on a timer, and all the nonsense he spoke earlier was just to buy time.

Palmer thought of himself as a genius, though, if possible, he hoped there'd be fewer occasions to showcase these elements of his genius.

Aside from the physical shockwave of the explosion, the roaring ether surged in all directions, the growing flesh withered and shattered, the entire building filled with cracks and collapsed.

In the chaos, a fierce wind suddenly rose. Palmer gritted his teeth and persevered, soaring into the air on the gusts kicked up by the explosion, as the black smoke around him continuously solidified and dissipated, while Olivia's pair of scarlet eyes flickered unceasingly.

She was like a blood-seeking specter, and just as she was about to reach Palmer, a large stone fell from above, covered in crimson flesh.

The flesh had no idea of danger, only following its instincts to consume, reaching out scarlet tendrils towards Olivia. Her attack was thus interrupted, and within moments, all the flesh crumbled apart, causing cracks to appear in the large stone as well.

Moving forward again, it was as if fate was shielding Palmer. Rock after rock fell, blocking Olivia's path. She felt an unfamiliar sense of frustration, and the angrier she became, the louder Palmer's damned laughter grew from the other side of the dust.

"Lucky day!"

Palmer shouted.

The collapse quickly ended. Palmer stood at the doorway of the passage they came through, and Olivia stood amidst the ruins. Behind her, a door was blown open, from which came a poisonous mist, faintly glowing, overflowing like a tidal wave onto the steps.

"You need to leave, friend."

Palmer supported himself against the wall, shouting loudly.

Olivia stared intently at Palmer. He was right; she indeed needed to leave. Beyond the Sea of Mist, clusters of ethereal reactions were appearing, and the Order Bureau's monsters were rushing here non-stop.

If it were someone else, Olivia could handle it, but the Order Bureau was different; they were the Sovereigns here.

"Who are you?"

Olivia asked again. She had already marked Palmer's blood, just as she had marked Bologue's blood before.

"Bologue!"

Palmer answered loudly without the slightest hesitation.

"Bologue Clarks."

Chapter 303: Trap

The Night Race's strength lies not just in their Undead nature; more importantly, it's because they are numerous and have developed a comprehensive system of blood alchemy through years of self-study.

It's said they can extract fragments of memory from blood and track the source of the blood.

Olivia obtained Palmer's blood and memorized his scent, which itself was a threat, reminding him that he had been targeted by a member of the Night Race.

Palmer doesn't trust his luck, but he trusts his partner. They always operate together, and if Olivia truly comes seeking revenge, he believes Bologue, also an Undead, can handle it perfectly.

"Thank you so much, Bologue!"

"You are my best partner!"

Palmer shouted his thanks in his mind to his partner. As for guilt, the word guilt does not exist in Palmer's dictionary.

A huge hollow appeared overhead, and on the broken surface of the rock, countless blood holes were shedding fresh blood, while the severed flesh continued to squirm, growing new tendrils reaching towards the two living bodies below.

"See you next time, Bologue... Hope you survive,"

Olivia said half-threatening, half-jokingly. Despite her anger, she oddly hoped that the two freaks she encountered today would survive.

There are many people in this world, but very few like them. If possible, Olivia wanted to make specimens of them for her collection.

She was not a Devil and could not obtain those bizarre souls, but at least she could preserve their bodies.

The figure began to blur and then completely dissolved into a dissipating mist.

Palmer did not let down his guard, warily watching the spot where Olivia disappeared. After several minutes with no anomalies, he finally breathed a sigh of relief and slumped against the wall.

His mental tension loosened, followed by intense pain coursing through his body.

He and Olivia were both within the explosion's range. The Undying Night Race naturally wouldn't mind, but Palmer's fleshly body suffered serious injuries.

Under his clothes was all bloodstains, delayed along with the scratches Olivia left on him. The wounds weren't deep, but the ether, like a venomous serpent, burrowed in, gnawing on his nerves.

Fortunately, he had passed the trial of salt and sulfur, and his body wasn't that fragile; otherwise, Palmer would most likely have fainted long ago.

Looking at the crawling flesh around him, Palmer knew this was not a good place to fall unconscious. Who knows, he might wake up with only half his body left.

Drawing a folding knife from his waist, Palmer propped himself up with it, while raising his revolver, named Piercing Thunder, with the other hand.

The emerging flesh was taking shape, a pale, spine-like bone structure serving as the main body, with numerous finger-like bones growing around it, followed by a layer of sticky flesh, resembling a giant scarlet worm.

Such worms were increasing in number, and Palmer fired back, every gunshot blasting a worm into blood mist, but they quickly regrew, like weeds hard to annihilate.

"Hurry up!"

Amid constant gunfire, Palmer shouted irritably.

Unclear about what exactly he was calling for, Palmer was completely surrounded by the serpentine worms, on the verge of being devoured, when the Sea of Mist behind the door stirred violently.

Palmer knew what was coming, and amid the pain and blurry consciousness, he struggled to muster his spirit, invoking the howling wind.

He threw all his flying knives, which circled around him, forming a blade storm cutting down the approaching worms one by one.

In an instant, scarlet blood mist enveloped Palmer, the blood permeated his clothing, evenly coating him, nearly turning him into a man of blood.

Flesh fragments and bone shards flew, with many worms dying, yet soon newly born ones attacked, succeeding one another, while the thrown flying knives began to shatter, turning into swirling metal pieces.

The wind gradually weakened, and Palmer leaned exhaustedly, watching these hungry worms.

In the second before death, a vast silence descended.

Palmer felt a sudden suffocation, like a fish out of water, but the worms reacted more violently, twitching as if struck by poison, the severed flesh stopping its regeneration, instead dripping blood continuously.

Heavy breathing emerged from the Sea of Mist, starting with a singular sound, then becoming frequent, joining the silent ensemble.

Palmer saw the gray-white phantoms coming from the Sea of Mist.

Their outfits were strange, resembling modern military uniforms, but at crucial parts like the chest, fabric and iron armor were interwoven.

Each wore gray-white helmets, connected to faceless masks, resembling doll-like figures, with heavy breathing resonating continuously from the masks' breath valves.

Some carried heavy shields, grasping warhammers with other hands; others held machine guns, with ammo belts stretching to backpacks, and two carried flamethrowers, with flickering flames.

A modern yet retro squad, led by a man in simple attire, devoid of the complex equipment others wore, carrying only a military saber at his waist, like a battlefield commander.

No words needed, the commander drew his saber, and instantly the suffocating feeling intensified. Palmer knew exactly what was happening.

Ethereal Prohibition.

Under the commander's order, all the ether is rapidly fleeing this area, leaving every inch of their path in a state of ethereal vacuum.

The rest of the team also moved into action, flamethrowers were activated, and the scorching streams of fire burned the growing flesh, pungent smoke causing Palmer to cough repeatedly.

The growth of the corrupt roots requires ether for support, and in a state of ethereal vacuum, they're no more than a mass of peculiar flesh.

Hoarse screams erupted from the flesh, wailing as they were burned into blackened ash husks.

The shield-bearing member swung their warhammer, smashing the husks to pieces, trampling them to dust, as team members advanced in cross formations, clearing a path through the rampant flesh.

It seemed nothing could stop them; the team advanced in ordered silence, resembling a group of grayish-white death gods.

"The corrupt roots have spread, they've taken root at the topmost Beast Fighting Arena."

Seeing the commander approach, Palmer reported quickly.

"It's confirmed, the Immortal Heart has appeared, and the Xeno-Corruption Cult is here for it," Palmer said without any wasted words, concise and efficient, "The Tyrant has responded to this, granting everyone protection, promising the fruit of fancy."

The commander nodded, then looked at the team member holding a hand crossbow, pausing for a few seconds before speaking, "Indeed, I can feel the support of another power, as we stand against the Xeno-Corruption Cult the Tyrant's power also grants us protection."

"Should we change our target?" asked the shield-bearing member.

He was the tallest in the team, accordingly, his armor was also the heaviest, practically like an iron rhino.

"Sido?"

Palmer had only just composed himself for a few minutes, tentatively asking.

Unfortunately, there was no response; the members of the Violence Suppression Action Group each hid behind masks.

"No, proceed as planned, seal this place," the commander ordered.

"Seal? Higher-ups have already gone mad because of those two damned things!" Palmer shouted loudly, seeing the commander's calm demeanor.

"It's not important," the commander shook his head, ordering the team, "Continue the seal, suppress every Condenser you encounter, we absolutely can't let anyone leave."

Palmer froze; he couldn't understand the man's words, laboriously climbing up, he shouted directly.

"Yas! What are you doing!"

The mission this time was to seize the Immortal Heart, after painstakingly blasting open a path, they should be charging into the Beast Fighting Arena with full momentum, cutting through the Xeno-Corruption Cult to claim the Immortal Heart and conclude their task.

But the situation had changed, and Palmer couldn't fathom the current situation.

The mask clicked open, revealing Yas's face; he looked at Palmer expressionlessly, speaking softly.

"Palmer, I'm ordering you as the leader of the Sixth Group and the Violence Suppression Action Group."

Palmer was stunned, and the following words plunged his mind into utter confusion and fear.

"You have been assigned to the operation against the King's Shield Guard, and until you reunite with your leader, you will be under my charge."

The mask closed, and the repressive sound emanated from beneath the breathing valve.

"Forward."

Yas stopped wasting words, leading the team forward, as another member approached to inject Palmer with a potion, quickly treating his wounds.

Sido walked by, lifting Palmer with one hand, carrying him like a sack; a group advanced menacingly toward the Beast Fighting Arena.

The King's Shield Guard was an unfamiliar term for Palmer, but from Yas's words, he could understand that he would reunite with his leader.

His leader, Lebius Lovisa.

Palmer laughed nervously; this mission was indeed a joint operation of the Sixth Group and Special Operations Group, not only he and Bologue were included in the task, but Geoffrey and Lebius as well.

Hmm...there's indeed nothing wrong, just he never thought these two would also be considered among the task personnel.

Unlike the anticipated chaotic assault on the venue with the Sixth Group to snatch the Immortal Heart, the Order Bureau's target was someone else, someone important enough for even Lebius to be present, and only now did he understand the truth of the mission.

Truly an unexpected surprise.

"Luckily you ran fast."

Palmer muttered to himself, recalling the recently vanished Olivia.

Olivia was right, this was a trap, a trap set for everyone.

Chapter 304: A Little Romance

The rotting flesh grew rampant, and a putrid stench filled every corner of the space. The Beast Fighting Arena had now turned into a scarlet Hell. The roots of decay grew wildly, constantly spreading, devouring the dead flesh as their nourishment and birthing even more grotesque monstrous mutants.

Bologue felt like he was witnessing the birth of an ecosystem, an ecosystem meant to exist only in Hell.

The solid walls and floor were gone, replaced by a bloody fungal carpet. Jagged bones rose continuously, forming a basic framework. Soon after, an uninterrupted flow of flesh draped over them, transforming into monsters that looked both human and beast, attacking the nearest living creatures.

There weren't many living people left in the Beast Fighting Arena. People either died or fled for their lives. Those who remained possessed great power as Condensers. Under the Tyrant's protection, they fought with increasing valor, constantly proving their worth.

Bologue wasn't like them, driven mad by the pursuit of value. He fought while fleeing, searching for a safe place and constantly vigilant for Teda's whereabouts.

"Aimou, are you okay?"

Now Bologue also began to feel that facing such a situation during the first job training was an overwhelming shock for Aimou.

A crimson tentacle snapped upwards, and Bologue slashed it down with his blade. Pieces of flesh remained on the blade and started crawling and growing directly on the blade's surface.

The growth potential of this flesh had already surpassed the limitations of biological capabilities.

"I'm... I'm okay..."

Aimou's voice was somewhat numb. If Bologue hadn't been supporting her, she might have already vomited... if she even could.

The Shared Chord Body significantly enhanced Bologue, and the Constant Motion Core provided a continuous supply of Ether, allowing him to unleash Secret Energy unceasingly. Aimou further strengthened his perception of Ether and even obscured Bologue's actions.

He was like a phantom, traversing the hell of flesh and blood.

More bizarre and frenzied scenes were unfolding. Giant masses of flesh grew from between the walls. After a short incubation, humanoid flesh monsters were released. They had no pupils, but when they opened their mouths to roar, their oral cavities were packed with eyes.

Bologue pulled out a short-barreled shotgun and pulled the trigger at the monsters, shattering their heads into a bloody mess.

The ground began to tremble, and stone pillars rose one by one—not from Bologue's Secret Energy but from other Condensers. They launched a fierce assault on the high platform, trying to seize the Immortal Heart.

As the Scarlet Bishop, Latis was extremely powerful. He could partially control the decaying roots. Several thick branches of flesh flailed wildly on the high platform, their surfaces covered with dense sharp teeth that could scrape off large chunks of flesh with a mere brush.

The Negative Power User's strength was unmistakably released, but this did not deter the people. They circled around the prey like hyenas.

People's faces were soaked with fresh blood, their expressions fanatical and grotesque.

Bologue roughly understood humanity's Original Sin and realized that there was a cost to the Tyrant's protection. The Tyrant empowered these people, allowing their inner greed to be fully unleashed.

"Aimou, do you know what the Fantasy Fruit is?" Bologue asked Aimou in a low voice.

Besides the Immortal Heart, there was another lure—the Fantasy Fruit promised by the Tyrant. Bologue didn't understand this item, but he felt that Aimou should know.

In the state of Shared Chord Body, Aimou was like a walking alchemy encyclopedia for Bologue, significantly making up for his lack of knowledge.

"The Fantasy Fruit..."

Upon mentioning this thing, Aimou's voice sounded peculiar, but Bologue couldn't pinpoint what was strange, as his focus was entirely on the battle.

"It's considered an alchemical product born from Condensers, known as the 'Fantasy Species' that can grant wishes."

Aimou's voice echoed in his ear.

Fantasy Species.

The term sounded familiar to Bologue, probably seen in a book somewhere.

"Do you know about Fantasy Becoming Reality?" Aimou asked again.

"I know, it's the unique power of the Illusion Creation School. What's up?"

"You can think of the Fantasy Species as a materialized power of Fantasy Becoming Reality." Aimou explained.

"When a Condenser reaches the Second Stage, they will extend this to create a sub-school. At the Third Stage, the main school and sub-school will merge, forming a Secret Energy field similar to a domain. The Fourth Stage is the culmination of everything."

Only when reaching the Fourth Stage, with a purely extraordinary Illusion Creation, can the power of Fantasy Becoming Reality be solidified and materialized. Its birth is not simple; on the contrary, it's extremely difficult."

"Why?" Bologue asked.

"The birth of a Fantasy Species requires the life of a Condenser as the price."

Hearing this kind of answer, Bologue's thoughts hesitated for a moment.

"The Fantasy Species itself is stripping away the Defender's Alchemy Matrix, condensing into a fruit that others can wish upon to make Fantasy Becoming Reality."

Aimou continued to explain.

"This cannot be passively stripped, but by the Defender choosing to do so voluntarily... voluntarily dying. You can understand it as an alchemical product; it's not enough just to have the Defender's power or the pathway of the Illusion Creation School. Sufficient alchemical knowledge is needed, using one's life as the material to perform the final alchemy."

"Sounds truly crazy," Bologue murmured to himself.

Among the various Extraordinary Organizations, when the Seekers of Glory do not take action, the Defenders are the true first echelon, possessing terrifying power beyond imagination. Yet such beings would ultimately become a fruit—a fruit for others to make wishes upon.

"Fantasy Becoming Reality..."

Bologue spoke softly, sensing a hint of hysterical madness within.

"Can the Fantasy Species really grant wishes?" Bologue asked.

"It's just fantasy," Aimou cruelly replied, "The power to grant wishes belongs only to the Devil."

"But there are always some people unwilling to offer their souls to the Devil and still want to achieve certain goals. Their obsession is so deep that even the power of the Fantasy Species is distorted..."

Aimou said without any emotion.

"The Fantasy Species cannot directly help people fulfill their wishes, but it can cheat, bypassing the Devil's power to indirectly grant wishes."

"For example?"

Bologue had never heard of any power that could indirectly fulfill wishes.

"To turn an impossible thing into possible," Aimou said, "To change the probability of an absolutely impossible outcome from zero to one."

"But it only gives fantastical wishes a mere chance to be realized, and this chance is minimal," Bologue said.

"It depends on what kind of wish you want to fulfill. If it's to attain an Undying Body, that's obviously difficult, but for other wishes, there might be a full capacity to realize them.

For example, if you are a Defender about to ascend to a Seeker of Glory, and you have prepared everything, yet there remains a slight risk, the Fantasy Species can fully compensate for everything, significantly increasing your success rate, or even directly making you a Seeker of Glory."

"Is this akin to competing with the Devil for business?" Bologue joked.

"Not really, the conditions for the birth of a Fantasy Species are too harsh. Apart from the power of at least a Defender and the restrictions of Illusion Creation, the most important thing is that nobody would willingly die for just one wish. After all, it is a Defender."

Aimou hesitated for a moment and added, "Only some dying individuals who meet the conditions would make themselves into a Fantasy Species before their death."

"Stripping the Alchemy Matrix, condensing into a Fantasy Fruit... It sounds like another Philosopher's Stone."

The Alchemy Matrix is attached to the soul; Bologue had never heard of a method to separate the two. The most likely outcome would be for them to condense together.

"I'm not sure, I also came across these records in some secret literature," Aimou said.

Her words caught Bologue's attention. It was evident that aside from the power of a Defender, Teda met almost all the requirements of a Fantasy Species, and with Aimou's knowledge of such matters, it indicated that Teda surely had such books.

"Is there anything else?" Bologue inquired further.

"No, the power of the Fantasy Species here is too rare. There are only a few records in history; it is like a secret in itself. I suspect that person was lying; such power seems more like a fictional story."

Aimou did not trust the existence of the Fantasy Species, much like its name suggests, it is an inherently deformed fantasy.

"As for the manner in which it fulfills wishes, it's even less known. It is a mystery that nobody knows."

Bologue shook his head, saying nothing. If someone else had promised such power, Bologue might have doubted alongside Aimou, but this time it was different, as it was promised by the Tyrant.

The Devil never deceives, nor does the Tyrant.

The Tyrant's promise was real, and the power of the Fantasy Species was genuine. This fruit possessed the power to make fantasies come true, though it was unclear in what way it would achieve this.

"Fulfill wishes..."

Aimou's voice lingered by his ear, in the crimson Hell, she asked with a hint of confusion.

"Why are humans so obsessed with fulfilling wishes?"

"I'm not sure either. Everyone's wishes are different, as are the reasons driving them. When one becomes overly fixated on a wish, it is inherently an irrational behavior."

Bologue paused for a few seconds, perhaps recalling his own delusions, and then continued.

"But as mentioned earlier, this is a cruel and cold rational world. People need a bit of irrationality to shake the reality where the probability is absolutely zero and thus gain a bit of illusory beauty."

"A bit of romance?"

Aimou remembered the words Bologue had taught her.

"Yes, a bit of romance."

Bologue said, as he swung a curve of light, slicing through the flesh and bones in front of him.

Chapter 305: Slaughterhouse

Sometimes, Bologue would often dream of such a scene, imagining that if one day he found that mysterious Devil and reclaimed his soul, he would be freed from the curse of immortality, and his life would finally come to an end.

Bologue wasn't certain if that moment would be hundreds, thousands of years later, yet he constantly wondered what his feelings would be when that day arrived.

Would he be angry at death, lost in confusion over everything he's done in this life?

At the conclusion of each contemplation, Bologue would always arrive at one result. He would comfortably lie on the sofa, listening to his favorite music. If possible, he would leisurely browse through photo albums and reminisce about his lifelong journey, then... end.

Bologue would calmly accept the advent of it all, considering it romantic, cool.

But that was many years later; for now, Bologue couldn't stop.

Amid the deafening roars, the surrounding buildings began a second collapse. Bologue's first round of explosions heavily damaged the Void Realm and shook its foundations. Under the wild growth of decaying roots and sprouts, these fleshy tentacles, like dense vines, tightened around the heavy rocks, covering them with flesh all while pulling them apart.

One by one, giant trees of flesh shot up from the earth, the trunks covered in engorged lumps, the branches lifting rock masses brimming with veins. Amidst the intense stench of blood, cultists launched a counterattack within their domain of flesh.

The cultists capable of joining the battle were mostly First Stage Condensers. Their own tiers weren't high, but under the protection of decaying roots and sprouts, even severely injured, they could quickly devour flesh and rise again under the Crimson Queen's shield.

During evasion, Bologue had engaged with several cultists. Fortunately, he'd gained experience beforehand, and when dealing with these cultists, Bologue aimed to tear them apart as much as possible.

Regular stabs and slashes had little effect on the cultists. As long as their shells remained relatively intact, they could stand up relying on the shield.

Endless blood and flesh brought forth by the decaying roots.

The Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid violently pierced the cultists' bodies, planting seeds of steel, and then transformed into countless Iron Thorns, tearing the cultists' bodies into fragments and blood mist.

The cultists gradually noticed Bologue's presence, splitting off some people to attack him. Ether surged amidst the blood, and hoarse beastly roars rang out.

Relying on the Crimson Queen's shield, for these cultists, the most suitable Secret Energy school was evidently the Ascent Body school.

For this reason, Bologue mainly encountered cultists from this school, transformed into various bizarre beasts, gradually losing their human forms. They differed little from the flesh monsters born out of decaying roots.

Bologue was no longer the newcomer to the Extraordinary World; though he hadn't worked for long, he felt capable enough to handle these guys.

"Need amplification?"

Aimou asked softly, noticing the cultists encircling Bologue, his pressure mounting.

"No, just maintain normal Ether output. I'll tell you when I need Ether,"

Bologue rejected Aimou's suggestion. To deal with these cultists, he felt it wasn't necessary to unleash full strength yet.

A swarm of snakes crawled over Bologue's body, layers of Scale Armor wrapping him into a silver-white Knight. But this silver-white didn't last long; it was soon drenched in blood due to the frantic battle.

Moreover, this blood possessed highly active properties, attempting to penetrate the Iron Armor and devour Bologue's flesh.

At this moment, Aimou's role became evident. As the creator of the Deceitful Snake Scale Silver, in the state of a Shared Chord Body, she could rely on Bologue's body to influence the Deceitful Snake Scale Silver to a certain extent. When Bologue hadn't time to repair the Iron Armor, Aimou would control it for him.

In a way, Bologue could be seen as having a dual focus: he was responsible for smashing the enemies' skulls with his hammer, while Aimou protected him from the enemies' major blows.

Hoarse roars sounded as beast-transformed cultists swung their sharp claws, easily stirring up a whirlwind.

The Alchemy Matrix burst forth with rapid brilliance, and under Ethereal Amplification, Bologue's speed soared, dodging the attack while swinging the snake swarm. The steel took on a soft quality, like a fluttering silver ribbon, but upon striking the beast-transformed cultists, it solidified into deadly Whip Blades.

Crimson wounds split across flesh. Yet the most formidable aspect of the Ascent Body school was the body's strength, rendering Bologue's attacks insufficient to kill them.

But Bologue wasn't anxious, feeling little pressure despite the grim situation. He was well-armed at the moment.

Bologue, in the state of a Shared Chord Body, was already in his strongest form. Not to mention having the indiscriminate protection of the Tyrant.

No, not just him, but also Aimou. It could be said that currently, two layers of protection were augmenting Bologue. In terms of Ether intensity, Bologue felt no different from the Prayer Believers, perhaps even superior.

In this perfect state and amidst such dire circumstances, what could Bologue still say?

"Let the massacre begin!"

Bologue shouted excitedly, with no intention of evasion, swinging his blade towards the formidable enemy.

The first beastly cultist charged at Bologue with a group of flesh creatures, much like Belli whom he had encountered before. Belli could transform into a giant bear, while this cultist resembled more of a bear-wolf hybrid creature.

Bologue didn't think too much, swinging his blade to decapitate one of the flesh creatures. His long blade transformed into an iron spear, piercing through several flesh creatures, driving their still-alive bodies into the wall.

The distance was closing, and Bologue engaged in battle with this first wave of enemies. Fangs and claws, violent clashes added more scratches to Bologue's armor.

Aimou infused ether into the armor constructed from Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid, making it even more robust. Bologue then swung a heavy punch, first smashing through the chest cavity of a flesh creature, and then swung his blade to decapitate a second one.

The flesh creatures let out forlorn howls, but their sounds were abruptly silenced under Bologue's blade, as if a music record had suddenly been removed.

Bologue thought there should be some music at this moment, but unfortunately, there was no broadcast system here. Otherwise, he would have really wanted to suggest this minor request to the Tyrant, who probably wouldn't refuse.

The bear-wolf cultist charged and Bologue turned to face the blow head-on, raising a round shield with one hand, while the other hand somehow gripped a short-barreled shotgun.

At this moment, Bologue had no need to save anything and pulled the trigger. The alchemy warhead easily penetrated the powerful hull, leaving a huge bloody hole in the cultist's abdomen, like a ruptured water bag, with entrails and foul blood pouring endlessly.

The enormous force carried by the alchemy warhead knocked him back, then the round shield transformed into a long halberd. The halberd blade mercilessly pierced into the abdominal wound, and the iron branch expanded, further crushing the cultist's entrails.

In the sharp wails, the cultist, bearing the long halberd, let it pierce through his body, with a distorted and repulsive face. His mouth, like a beast, gaped open, trying to bite off Bologue's head.

Withdrawing the long halberd, the metal severed his spine, causing his movement to pause for a few seconds. Bologue then delivered a punch along the abdominal wound.

Not only did Bologue's fist sink into the flesh, but also the short-barreled shotgun in his hand.

Pulling the trigger, with a muffled boom, the cultist's upper body, along with his head, exploded into numerous pieces of flesh, beyond dead.

Bologue bathed in blood, his silvery armor turning blood-red. Without time to catch his breath, another batch of flesh creatures surrounded him. Bologue turned and swung a throwing axe, chopping them down one by one on their heads.

The second cultist mingled among the flesh creatures, thinking he could hide his figure that way. Bologue, unhurriedly, replaced the ammo, and a Dragon Breath Bullet tore open a sea of flames in front of him, with countless figures writhing in agony within the flames.

Seeing that he was discovered by Bologue, the opponent, driven by secret energy, contorted into a bizarre beast, but Bologue was quicker. Before the opponent could launch an attack, Bologue leaped like a tiger, swinging a nail hammer down onto the opponent's head.

After a dull thud, the headless corpse stood frozen in place, still retaining a partly beastly form, but soon this sign began to wane, reverting to a normal human and then dying.

Taking a deep breath, Bologue was like an overheated machine, with waves of heat rising from the gaps in his armor.

"Have you been keeping count of how many there have been?" Bologue asked suddenly.

"Huh?"

"Forget it, start over," Bologue replied, shaking his head helplessly, smashing the flesh creature in front of him while mumbling.

"The first one!"

A long axe, after a brief flight, struck the cultist's chest, with the axe blade deeply embedded. Before the cultist could pull out the long axe, a crimson figure approached quickly, gripping the axe handle and lifting it with all his might, slicing through the chest and nearly cleaving the cultist's face.

Under swift slashing, this was probably the fourth, or possibly the fifth.

Bologue had severed yet another cultist's arm, kicking the cultist down the piled corpse mountain, his figure rolling, disappearing into the heavy crimson.

Another flesh creature lunged, and Bologue sidestepped it. While their figures crossed, he grabbed its body, stuffing its head into another flesh creature's mouth.

He thoughtfully delivered a heavy blow to the flesh creature's head, causing its jaw to close. It was unclear whether it bit through the other flesh creature's head or if Bologue's punch smashed both their heads, but after a nauseating blood stench, two headless bodies struggled and collapsed.

After the rage subsided, Bologue realized the surroundings had become much quieter, as if these monsters finally understood that he was invincible.

Looking at the broken and crimson Beast Fighting Arena, under this cruel selection, few were left inside, but due to their frenzied slaughter, they were all under the strong protection of the Tyrant.

On the high platform, Latis's fanatical expression was gone, his gaze, like dead water, observing everyone.

Chapter 306: Intervention

Latis knew one thing clearly, he was dragged here, the Tyrant promised endless desire, making everyone reckless.

Indeed, from the beginning, there was no need for guards here; as long as the value was sufficient, every greedy buyer would become a loyal believer of the Tyrant.

I must admit, the Devil's words are immensely tempting, not everyone can maintain absolute rationality like Bologue.

Bologue also felt that perhaps it was his debtor status that exempted him from such influence, he had long seen through the Devil's essence and established a close umbilical bond.

But what Bologue didn't notice was the golden halo in his eyes repeatedly spinning, as if Aimou was contemplating something complex, something she found difficult to handle.

Their gazes overlapped, Aimou looked up at the high platform, at the Immortal Heart that was contained.

At this moment, the Immortal Heart was still in a sealed state, quartz was filled with cracks, yet it was still able to suppress its activity, Latis dared not directly touch the Immortal Heart, for that purpose, he summoned another believer, using his flesh as a carrier, stuffed quartz into his abdominal cavity.

The Blood Gate was being reconstructed, but its structure was somewhat too fragile, before it was completed, any slight influence would cause it to collapse, trapping Latis here.

Now the Scarlet Cult still held the advantage, but over time, this advantage would turn into danger.

Until now, Latis still felt a wave of fear, like a fierce beast hiding in the bushes watching you, that beast was not the Tyrant, but the Order Bureau.

Mad thoughts continually crashed in his mind, Latis looked down at the ground, his gaze penetrating layers of rock, looking into the depths of the Sea of Mist.

Latis began to contemplate another plan, another insane plan formulated from the beginning that would sacrifice everyone.

"Mother, why do you not watch over us?"

Latis murmured, praying for the Crimson Queen's power.

No one responded.

The faint sound of a man's mocking laughter came from beside his ear, amused by Latis's folly.

Here was the Tyrant's land, although many years ago, it belonged to another King, after his death, the man usurped control of it.

For many years, the Tyrant's power had penetrated every inch of the land, outsiders' power was difficult to interfere, even if that person was his siblings.

The scarlet world slightly agitated, Latis's eyes brightened, he expected something.

Suddenly, fallen bodies mysteriously crawled up, even with limbs severed, they struggle and wriggle on the ground, as if a supreme command was given, they crawled densely toward the high platform, the bizarre scene made everyone pause.

The bodies tangled with each other, they squeezed together, constructing a frame of flesh.

Blood flowed inversely, poured through the gaps between bodies, next formed a membrane of blood, spreading inside the frame, becoming a crimson mirror.

A look of joy flashed in Latis's eyes, Mother had not abandoned him after all, the mad power spread in the door, the blood-colored mirror boiled, like an inverted surface of water.

"Go!"

Latis shouted to the cultist carrying the Immortal Heart, but despite the order, the person struggled to move.

The Immortal Heart was too heavy.

This weight was not physical, but psychological, even though separated by sealing quartz and using one's flesh as a carrier, the power emanating from the Immortal Heart still weighed heavily on the cultist's breath.

The entire person's consciousness began to be hazy, shattered, nerves tortured by twisted power, endless pain inflicted upon them.

This was power not meant for ordinary people to steal, it belonged solely to that once glorious but now fallen and wicked existence.

Calamity.

"Bishop..."

The cultist made a hoarse sound, the protection of flesh rebirth no longer, his body visible to the naked eye began to shrivel, taken by the heart in his abdominal cavity that full life force.

He stretched out that withered arm seeking help from Latis, but there was no hint of compassion in Latis's eyes, he knew very well he could not linger any further.

These people were all sacrifices to reclaim the Immortal Heart, as long as Latis and the Immortal Heart could get away, it was fine.

Enduring the fear in his heart, Latis reached out to the cultist, but just as he was about to touch, an explosion sound came from one side of the Beast Fighting Arena, the road once blocked by boulders was reopened.

Bologue looked with some anticipation there, he guessed it was Palmer, there were only two variables in the Beast Fighting Arena, one was him, the other was Palmer.

Damn it, in his kill frenzy, he forgot about this bastard being part of the mission, and didn't know where he went.

The ether that emerged afterward revealed the identity of the other party.

Power far beyond that of a Condenser was unleashed from the smoke and dust. Judging by the strength of this ether, Bologue accurately determined the opponent's tier.

Another Negative Power User.

More ether reactions arose; the opponent was not just a Negative Power User but also a Prayer Believer and a Condenser.

Latis turned his head to look in the direction of the ether reaction. A blurry phantom rose from the smoke and dust, and the illusory giant swung its long blade towards the high platform. As it swung, the phantom long blade kept solidifying until it finally became a real entity.

"You bastard!"

In fury, Latis ordered the rotten roots. The rising fleshy tendrils were cut down one by one, but ultimately, they still managed to hold up the descending long blade.

Fiery flames erupted at this moment, as if a dragon was breathing towards the high platform. The flames easily burned all flesh along the path to ashes, and the bright light stretched everyone's shadows into impossibly thin lines.

Bologue could only watch everything unfolding in a daze. The flames ended with a thundering explosion on the high platform, destroying even the laboriously built Blood Gate.

As the smoke and dust cleared, these unwelcome guests were revealed. They wore identical silver masks adorned with numerous patterns and hollows, looking like skulls affixed to their faces.

"Perfect timing."

Nade withdrew his hand, and the rolling flames dissipated in his grasp.

Sharp eyes swept over the bloodied Beast Fighting Arena. Everyone was exhausted from the slaughter, and they appeared at the most opportune moment.

Bologue quickly retreated, hiding among the collapsed ruins, carefully observing these newcomers.

Clearly, they were not members of the Order Bureau, nor were they with the Crimson Sect. A new force had joined this chaotic battle, or rather, they had been here from the beginning but chose to act now.

A sea of fire ignited on the high platform, and in the flames, Latis's eyes were crimson as he looked at these people, his face twisted with extreme rage.

"Who are you?"

"Oh? A Crimson Bishop?"

Nade glanced at Latis, judging his identity based on the strength of the ether around him and his command over the rotten roots.

In response, Nade merely chuckled, showing no intention of answering Latis. Boiling flames surged in his hands again, and the heat contracted into a pinpoint of light.

The light collapsed and imploded, and in an instant, an even slenderer stream of fire engulfed Latis, consuming him in flames that turned his form into a charred black shell in the extreme heat.

Bologue felt a sinking feeling; it was the first time he had witnessed the power of a Negative Power User firsthand.

From Nade's power, it seemed that his Secret Energy involved the Illusion Creation school, creating fire in the void, and his flames were exceedingly violent and devastating.

After columns of black smoke rose, a tremor-inducing shiver echoed, and the blackened shell slowly quivered, then cracked, leaking thick blood and countless flesh buds from the gaps.

The shell fell away piece by piece, revealing Latis's hateful face once more.

Negative Power Users were not easy to kill, especially not Latis, a Crimson Bishop.

Nade looked a bit surprised; the Third Seat had anticipated the Crimson Sect would interfere, which was why he was sent. Nade's flames had a formidable destructive power against flesh.

It seemed he had underestimated these cultists, yet everything remained under control. Nade stepped forward, his voice casting back.

"I'll handle him; you guys secure the Immortal Heart."

Behind Nade, the rest of the squad surfaced. Jia Meng held a crimson Secret Sword in one hand and a heavy iron box in the other.

They paid no mind to anyone else in the Beast Fighting Arena. Nade believed that with their arrival, the battle was decided, and no one could resist their power.

Nade unleashed the fiery stream again, illuminating the entire Beast Fighting Arena, as Jia Meng and the other team members rushed to the high platform.

Under the impact of the flames, the cultist who served as the vessel had long been reduced to death. Within the withered body, flesh and quartz clung together, where the Immortal Heart lay still.

Bologue watched all this tensely, unsure of what was happening, but he remembered his mission; he must not let the Immortal Heart fall into their hands.

"Aimou, be ready to go all out."

Bologue spoke as layers of Iron Armor tightly enveloped him, transforming him into a silent iron knight.

Chapter 307: Assassination

This operation was an absolute chaos, with batches dying and new ones joining, endlessly thrown into slaughter.

Bologue had already started giving up on thinking, focusing all his effort on the present.

He still remembered the phrase Geoffrey repeatedly emphasized during his induction training at the Field Operations Department.

Adapt and improvise.

Bologue forced a helpless smile, adapt and improvise? Looking at the current situation, it felt like there was no relationship with improvisation anymore, it was like editing fragments from different horror movies together, then throwing characters into the story.

One climax followed another, thinking the story had reached its conclusion, yet it was just the beginning of another Chapter.

Nade exerted all his force and got engaged in battle with the Crimson Bishop Latis; the shattered platform turned into a true Hell, where massive flesh monsters clashed with roaring flames, flesh was burnt to ashes, only to regenerate again, the flames extinguished, but soon reignited.

Intense etheric currents burst in all directions, stirring up a local ether storm, everyone felt the oppression within, making Nade and Latis the main characters of this chaos, with everyone else staying far away.

Thanks to this sudden upheaval, upon witnessing their power, a part of the crowd snapped out of their greedy frenzy, trembling with fear as they looked at their blood-soaked hands.

None of this escaped Bologue's notice, as time passed, fewer people were left in the Beast Fighting Arena.

Scorching waves mixed with the nauseating smell of charred flesh, even someone like Bologue who was accustomed to slaughter felt nauseated by the scent, unable to resist the urge to vomit.

The extreme heat enveloped around Nade, forming a circle of high-temperature barrier, where flesh would instantly turn to ashes just by getting close.

Latis also revealed his power at this moment; Bologue didn't quite understand his Secret Energy, but thinking of him as a follower of the Crimson Queen, as a Negative Power User, he must have been under stronger protection.

The most direct point was, regardless of how the flames scorched Latis, he maintained a strong vitality, almost like he possessed an Undying Body.

Countless flesh branches coiled around Latis's lower body, merging him with the corrupted roots, rising from the ground like an enormous tree.

It was an extremely bizarre scene, with giant vine-like flesh extending from beneath the flesh earth, ending with the roaring Latis, his silhouette resembling a crimson serpent, dancing wildly.

Nade's high-temperature barrier was indeed powerful, but it required constant ether support, similarly, Latis's undying state was the same.

The two entered into a war of attrition, neither able to defeat the other, but couldn't relax either, a slight mistake and they would suffer heavy damage from the opponent.

More and more flesh draped over Latis's crimson serpent form, more than a serpent, he resembled a worm, with uneven body surface lined with dense eyes, peering into every corner, leaving him with no blind spots.

A multitude of tendrils danced with him like seaweed, violently smashing against the surrounding walls, sending the entire space into another violent tremor.

Bologue was beginning to worry whether the Beast Fighting Arena could withstand it, unlike the small skirmishes with the Condensers, these two were actual Negative Power Users.

The powers of Negative Power Users intertwined, but others weren't idle either, currently the two are locked in deadlock, neither able to defeat the other.

The remaining Cultists stepped into the sea of fire, attempting to collect the Immortal Heart, but before they could get close, an illusory long blade crossed the fire sea and instantly solidified, slicing a deep blade mark, blocking their path.

Looking up, several silhouettes appeared in the fire sea, the leading figure gradually becoming clear, Jia Meng strode forward holding a crimson Secret Sword.

"King's Secret Sword..."

Bologue observed the crimson blade, alarm bells ringing in his mind.

He remembered before his operation into the Great Rift, Lebius once told him there was a King's Secret Sword who had escaped from his surveillance and hid in the Great Rift.

Bologue had been tracing the whereabouts of this King's Secret Sword without success, he even began to think the King's Secret Sword had fled, but now, the two encountered each other.

He had never seen Jia Meng, but Bologue understood the characteristics of Jia Meng's Secret Sword through Lebius's description, only King's Secret Sword would persistently carry such a weapon.

Bologue's eyes turned sharp seeing the involvement of a King's Secret Sword in this operation, old grudges mixed with new ones, he was ready to strike.

After various previous battles, the Cultists' power was clearly inferior to Jia Meng and his men, even on the crimson ground, the consciousness of these flesh masses were all manipulated by Latis, preparing for battle against the roaring Fire Dragon.

The weaknesses of the Cultists gradually became apparent, their flesh creations were indeed terrifying, capable of triggering a local disaster, but this disaster posed no threat to a Prayer Believer like Jia Meng, cautious and careful progress was entirely possible.

Even someone as overwhelmingly strong as a Condenser like Bologue can kill effortlessly within, after repeated selections, those who remain in the Beast Fighting Arena all possess the power to deal with the corrupt roots.

A phantom figure loomed indistinctly behind Jia Meng, as if a deity was standing behind him, shielding him.

The long knife rose and fell, cultists were defeated without a fight, and even if someone came to block him, they were intercepted by Jia Meng's other teammates, engaging in another round of slaughter.

Bologue advanced silently like a thief, while Aimou focused all her spirit, providing him with Ethereal Concealment.

His gaze locked onto Jia Meng and his other teammates, after a brief observation, Bologue found that only Jia Meng held a Secret Sword, and he was the only Prayer Believer, while the Ether strength of the others was at the Condenser stage.

Based on Bologue's limited experience with the King's Secret Sword, he made Jia Meng his primary target, as for Latis and Nade?

Bologue was an expert, but some things were beyond an expert's capability, like the Negative Power User.

If Bologue were a Prayer Believer, he might try to oppose a Negative Power User, but now he was only a Condenser.

Jia Meng looked at the quartz encased in flesh, no matter how much Latis roared, he couldn't slow his pace. He opened the iron box in his hand, which was a specially made container to house the Immortal Heart.

Next, he just needed to load it in and take it back to the Fog Abyss Fortress.

With it, the Shadow King would be reborn, and then...

Jia Meng vaguely thought of that maddening future, with just a simple fantasy, all the blood in his body boiled incessantly, and his body heated up as if it would burn.

The phantom long knife sliced through, whether flesh or bone, it was all severed completely. Jia Meng's heart stirred, and he didn't even notice his emotions becoming extremely fervent, as if a voice was constantly tempting him at the bottom of his heart, expanding that insane greed.

The poison of greed permeated everyone's nerves, fully exposing the ugly side.

In Jia Meng's eyes, only the Immortal Heart remained, he didn't notice the silent approaching figure.

Humans are very fragile, and a sharp metal blade passing through the right place can easily kill a human, in fact, the same goes for Condensers too, despite possessing Extraordinary Power, Condensers still cannot escape their mortal shells.

In the unnoticed corner, Bologue stepped forward quickly, with Ethereal Concealment, he moved like a specter, encountering no resistance, as the cold blade sliced through the throat of a Condenser from behind.

The victim tried to utter a warning cry, but everyone's faces were filled with greedy ecstasy. Before a sound could be made, his entire head was completely chopped off by Bologue.

The body fell, there was no need for Bologue to deal with it, the rampant flesh hungrily devoured it, making it disappear.

Everyone who died here were like that, becoming nourishment for the corrupt roots, merging with this crimson land, entering a cycle, turning into crimson flesh, continuing the endless slaughter.

Bologue continued forward, nerves tense, and Aimou was also fully prepared, she controlled the Ether meticulously, concealing all of the Ether fluctuations and auras, until Bologue swung his next blade.

The blade pierced like a chisel, boring a bloody hole in another Condenser's back, without allowing any counterattack, the blade shattered into dense iron branches, piercing the Condenser's chest cavity, rampaging through his body, instantly mangling his internal organs into a bloody mess.

The spine, heart, and brain, all smashed into a viscous mixture.

Jia Meng was oblivious to this, he wielded the sword to peel layers of flesh, recalling the Third Seat's warning in his mind, he didn't directly touch the quartz, instead, he pried it with the Secret Sword, slowly pushing the quartz into the container.

Overhead, fireworks splattered, Latis noticed what was happening here, he continued to roar, but nothing could be changed, he could only watch as it all unfolded.

No surprises, Jia Meng completely stored the quartz in the container, sealing the valve tightly to close it entirely.

For a moment, Jia Meng felt a bit dazed; everything seemed a bit too smooth.

He turned back, just about to excitedly inform the others of this situation, only to find his teammates who came with him had all disappeared, leaving only a field of blood.

In an instant, violent Ether erupted from behind, the phantom figure solidified at once, Jia Meng turned and swung a massive long knife towards behind him.

The scarlet Iron Knight approached in strides, its round shield blocked the heavy slash, while its other hand clutched a dazzling Light Blade, fiercely stabbing towards Jia Meng's chest.

This weapon was rarely used by Bologue, only during a fatal strike would he pull it out.

Continuous Ether poured into the Bright Light Blade in his hand, the Ethereal Sword pierced through all obstructions, aiming directly at Jia Meng's heart.

Chapter 308: Battle of Offense and Defense

Not long ago, for Bologue, the Bright Light Blade was an alchemical weapon that was a significant burden. Its consumption of ether was so immense that his ether amount as a Condenser could barely sustain it for long.

But now it was different. With the dual amplification from Tyrant and Aimou, Bologue released ether without hesitation, channeling all his power into the Bright Light Blade to strike down the Jia Meng before him.

The opponent was a Prayer Believer of the King's Secret Sword and possessed a Secret Sword that could traverse spaces. It was tough for Bologue to kill him head-on, and once the battle turned into a stalemate, the opponent had the ability to escape.

Bologue had only one chance, to severely injure him at the moment they met, to smoothly advance the subsequent battle.

The pure, brutal Ethereal Sword sang forward, akin to a straight Light Saber. Jia Meng raised his crimson Secret Sword in an attempt to defend, and as the two clashed, they emitted a piercing buzzing sound.

The Secret Sword is worthy of its name, as the Ethereal Sword couldn't destroy it immediately. The blades were locked in a stalemate, and simultaneously the illusory figure behind Jia Meng began to solidify. The colossal figure once again raised a long knife that could split the heavens, ready to strike Bologue overhead.

Bologue had no intention of evading. The next second, the crimson Iron Armor began to wriggle, bursting forth countless steel spines like countless flying arrows, aiming to nail Jia Meng before him.

The ether reaction on Jia Meng reached its peak, his eyes flashed with a scorching light, as if trying to outdo Bologue in ruthlessness. He also did not evade, letting the attacks rain down upon him.

Seeing this, Bologue grimly smiled, pivoting the Bright Light Blade to avoid the Secret Sword as he moved towards Jia Meng's embrace, vigorously swinging to spin the dense iron branches at him.

Raising the Bright Light Blade high, as the long knife descended, the Ethereal Sword also chopped fiercely.

The intertwined ethereal forces erupted, disrupting and collapsing the ether flow, making the ground's flesh crumble and turning into a scarlet storm that engulfed the view.

When everything quieted down, two disheveled shadows slowly emerged.

The illusory long knife fell beside Bologue. It switched between illusion and reality, becoming illusory when swung and solidified when hitting the target for a slash.

In such close-quarters combat, Bologue had no space to dodge, and his Iron Armor could barely withstand the Prayer Believer's power, but he ultimately managed to avoid the slash as much as possible.

For this, the illusory long knife didn't cleave Bologue in half but did slice through his shoulder armor, subsequently splitting half his body, causing an entire arm to collapse, bones and muscles fractured, blood gushing freely.

But Bologue also held a short sword, which had lost its glow, leaving a scarlet blood cavity in Jia Meng's chest.

Moreover, the wildly dancing iron branches sliced repeatedly at Jia Meng's body like myriads of blades, leaving him covered with wounds of various sizes, bleeding profusely and turning him into a man of blood.

Jia Meng glared at Bologue, never expecting a Condenser to dare launch such an attack on him.

The Secret Sword barely resisted the Ethereal Sword's penetration, and Bologue's assassination failed to completely pierce Jia Meng's heart, but did carve out a deep blood cavity, revealing a slight pulse from the heart below when observed.

Fortunately, Jia Meng retained his Immortal Heart. With one hand, he held onto the container tightly, keeping it safe behind him. The intensive wounds on his body were abhorrent but appeared more dreadful than lethal.

Conversely, Bologue, in this sacrificial strike, indeed inflicted severe damage upon himself, but Jia Meng was poised to eliminate Bologue first.

Bologue coughed up a large spray of blood, the blood soaking his Forbidden Mask, and it dripped out.

"Sorry."

Bologue muttered to himself, while a suppressed wail echoed in his mind.

Eager to kill his enemy, he had forgotten that Aimou was empathically linked with him, allowing his entire pain to pass to Aimou without reserve.

Alchemy Puppets didn't have such acute pain senses as humans do, and the intense pain made Aimou's consciousness blur.

"Bologue, you..."

Aimou was enduring intense pain, and she sensed Bologue's terrible injuries, her tone turning frightened.

"It's okay."

Bologue's tone was relaxed, though his body still fell uncontrollably, soon covered by the crimson flesh creeping all over him.

Jia Meng paid little attention to the corpse in front of him. In his view, he just dealt with another madman driven by greed, the kind of madmen easily found within the Beast Fighting Arena.

Clenching his teeth, he endured the pain emanating from his chest. One hand gripped the Secret Sword, the other held the container. His operation was successful, now he just needed to leave here with the Immortal Heart.

Jia Meng was only a step away from the beginning of his grand aspiration, when suddenly a violent ether reaction rose behind him.

Turning around swiftly, the glaring white light engulfed Jia Meng's sight.

"Always remember to check the body!"

Bologue laughed loudly, the severed arm already regenerated, the Bright Light Blade once again activating the deadly Ethereal Sword.

Jia Meng quickly turned, released Secret Energy again, but this time the illusory long knife could not slash in time, instead solidifying in front of him like a shield, trying to block the Ethereal Sword's path.

Bologue had anticipated this, he thrust out the Ethereal Sword with one hand, while his other hand touched the ground, his whole body moving as if he was stumbling.

The moment he touched the ground, a cyan glow flashed, and the rock broke free from its fleshy bonds, erupting into a dense barrage of long halberds growing madly from underneath Jia Meng.

For the Prayer Believers, the same trick wouldn't work as effectively. Jia Meng would surely guard against his Ethereal Sword, but this would make him overlook other things.

The Ethereal Sword was just a feint, with the real lethal move being the long halberds beneath his feet.

Regrettably, Bologue's strategy was perfect, if facing a Condenser, this move would have the power to kill them outright, but Jia Meng was a Prayer Believer, positioned in a tier above Condensers, and his Secret Energy nature had become increasingly elusive.

To kill him was far from being as simple as it was for the Condenser who previously died at Bologue's hands.

A hazy light enveloped Jia Meng, the towering virtual shadow adhered directly to him, protecting him within its illusory outline, which in an instant solidified into reality.

The stone halberds struck as if hitting an unbreakable Iron Armor, emitting a sad wail of shattering, and crumbled into countless powders.

Amidst the swirling dust, Jia Meng glared angrily at Bologue, draped in the Armor of the Formless, crafted from a virtual light.

Bologue retracted the Bright Light Blade, flinging a hook line from the Arm of Adaptation towards Jia Meng, but upon touching the Illusory Armor, as before, it met something tangible and was easily deflected, while Jia Meng's movements remained unaffected.

Secret Energy: Shadow of Illusion and Reality.

Jia Meng could create an illusory projection, its properties hovering between reality and illusion, making it hard for enemies to judge his attacks and defenses.

The shadow no longer overlapped with Jia Meng, who now possessed a strange afterimage, swinging a long knife toward Bologue.

Conventional defenses couldn't intercept the long knife, as previously witnessed, before striking an enemy, it remained ethereal and lacked substance.

Bologue could only step quickly to evade. Boosted by Ethereal Amplification, his speed was swift, the scarlet figure trailing a slender Whip Blade like a fine tail, dodging and counterattacking with movements.

The shadow allowed dust to pass through but would solidify upon a Whip Blade assault, obstructing all of Bologue's attacks.

Jia Meng glared viciously at Bologue, who casually wielded the Whip Blade or hook line, swiftly maneuvering between platforms and stands. Even though Jia Meng's illusory shadow could swing a massive long knife, it was still hard to accurately hit him at Bologue's speed.

A fiery light ignited above once more as Jia Meng clashed with Bologue. Simultaneously, the battle between Latis and Nade continued, the temperature above reaching a terrifying level. The entire space was swept by high heat, flesh continuously dying and regenerating, remnants falling like ash snow or furnace-shed cinders.

Bologue's speed slowed considerably, as he looked up at the hellish scene.

Unknown debris danced incessantly, heated to crimson by the high temperature, clattering down like gray snow, or ashes poured from a furnace.

When settling on the body, the scraps brought searing residual heat, scorching the ground.

Bologue casually pulled out stone spears from the wall; even if he couldn't harm Jia Meng, the relentless assault kept Jia Meng pinned, immobilized.

Wounds, maintaining the Shadow of Illusion and Reality, Ethereal consumption... various factors slowed Jia Meng's pace, making him gradually aware of Bologue's intent.

Bologue wasn't in a hurry to seize the Immortal Heart; it seemed more like he wanted to trap Jia Meng here. The stone spears intentionally or unintentionally struck the containment vessel, forcing Jia Meng to evade.

Jia Meng began to doubt Bologue's identity. This guy differed from others driven by greed; Bologue's violent offensive carried extreme purposefulness, notably his bizarre Recovery Power.

At first, he thought Bologue was a cultist of the Sanguine Sect, but soon he discovered Bologue was completely different from those cultists, as the corrupt roots didn't protect him but launched attacks instead.

As for whether this Recovery Power was Bologue's Secret Energy? Then how did he manipulate matter?

"Jia Meng, what are you waiting for!"

As he pondered, an angry roar came from above. Amidst the blinding flames, Nade shouted at Jia Meng, "Take it and leave!"

Jia Meng snapped out of his rage; indeed, he didn't have to entangle with Bologue; his real goal was to take the Immortal Heart away.

Latis let out meaningless roars, completely suppressed by Nade, while many cultists of the Sanguine Sect had died in the prior chaos, leaving insufficient forces to stop them.

Bologue heard their conversation, seeing Jia Meng fully gathering his defenses, ignoring Bologue, and heading straight toward the passage they came from.

"Aimou, the crucial moment of victory and defeat has arrived."

Bologue murmured, his figure raced forward, twisting into a crimson phantom.

Jia Meng hurriedly fled toward the Beast Fighting Arena's exit, when a hook line planted itself in his path, halting him abruptly, followed by a scarlet rider descending from the sky.

Face of Horror was fully unleashed, extreme terror oppressed every soul that looked upon him, shortly followed by Bologue's eerie voice.

"It's time to end this meaningless offense and defense."

Chapter 309: Double Strike

The scorching fireworks and the rampant flesh clashed incessantly overhead, like an inverted hell in the sky.

Under this hell, the crimson earth was full of zombies driven by greed, wielding swords and spears, fighting relentlessly against each other.

The Devil had never truly descended here, yet with a mere gesture, everyone was plunged into hysterical madness.

Bologue complained about Palmer, even now this fellow was nowhere to be seen, and then there was the Sixth Group led by Yas, why hadn't they arrived at such a critical time?

In the frenzied Beast Fighting Arena, only Bologue bore the mission of the Order Bureau, but helplessly, his strength was still too thin.

Unable to trap Jia Meng, Bologue could only grit his teeth and confront him head-on, while staying alert to others to avoid being killed by his foes.

The Undying Body gave Bologue endless opportunities to make mistakes, but the Undying Body couldn't keep the Immortal Heart here.

Blocking Jia Meng's path, Bologue's intention was clear: the two of them must determine the victor here.

The golden halo in his eyes became even more dazzling, the golden radiance almost melting, filling his entire blue irises.

At this moment, Aimou also perked up, the pain coming from Bologue's body constantly refreshing her cognition. Now, Aimou was experiencing firsthand the human pain and the threat of death.

Willpower wavered between fear and determination, yet under Bologue's tenacious resolve, Aimou also mustered the courage to resist death.

Ether surged endlessly within the Alchemy Matrix, Bologue took a deep breath, stepped forward, and wielded the Whip Blade from his body, sweeping towards Jia Meng.

Jia Meng responded with a slash of his long knife, shaking off many of the Whip Blades, when the deafening gunfire erupted again.

Bologue loved using feigned attacks to lull his enemies into complacency, relying on the ever-changing Summoning Hand, he could always deliver some unexpected surprises to his foes.

The Alchemy Warhead was triggered, spreading projectiles like a torrential rain pelting toward Jia Meng.

He was well aware of the importance of this mission, for these expensive Alchemy Warheads, Bologue didn't intend to spare any, mercilessly pulling the trigger.

The gunfire continued, for a moment, Bologue actually suppressed Jia Meng with the Alchemy Warheads. It was evident that Jia Meng needed to focus when using the Shadow of Illusion and Reality to protect himself, making it difficult for him to perform other actions.

After several shots, Bologue exhausted the Alchemy Warheads, then decisively discarded the Short-barreled Shotgun, brandished the silver Giant Sword, and leaped at Jia Meng with a slashing attack.

Jia Meng had grown angry and frustrated with Bologue's pestering. The towering Shadow of Illusion and Reality emerged from behind, the Illusory Blade and Bologue's Blade clashed, but the expected collision didn't occur. The Illusory Blade and the Giant Sword intersected, yet when it was about to hit Bologue, it instantly became solid.

Bologue was prepared for this, swung out a grappling hook, and his figure swiftly moved through the air, dodging the Illusory Blade's slash. Upon landing, the Ethereal Amplification continued to drive Bologue's body, and he charged towards Jia Meng once more.

After several exchanges, the Shadow of Illusion and Reality proved to be unpredictable and elusive, but its attack frequency was quite slow. Although it was an illusion, when swung, it was as heavy as a real entity.

Perhaps it was an entity originally, but its nature allowed it to become illusory.

Missing an attack, the Illusory Shadow vanished behind Jia Meng, who simultaneously moved swiftly, maintaining a safe distance from Bologue while constantly approaching the passage.

But Jia Meng didn't realize that although he kept some distance from Bologue, he hadn't completely escaped Bologue's Secret Energy range.

When he touched the ground, rows of high walls rose up, hindering Jia Meng's movement. As he broke through the high walls, Bologue had already leapt over his head, landing in front of him again. A larger high wall rose, sealing the passage behind Bologue.

"Do you desire death so badly?"

Jia Meng roared, having never encountered an opponent like Bologue. Bologue wasn't strong, yet every step limited and impeded Jia Meng's actions.

Bologue didn't intend to answer Jia Meng's question, stubbornly charging at Jia Meng, as the Shadow of Illusion and Reality appeared once more, and the giant long knife slashed down.

In an instant, the crimson armor shattered into countless fragments. This was, after all, the power of a Prayer Believer, Bologue was too naive to think he could withstand such an attack head-on. But before Jia Meng could feel any joy, he realized there was no broken body of Bologue beneath the shattered armor.

Instead, countless blood droplets splattered, but they were soaked in the armor, not from Bologue himself.

A chilling cyan light shone overhead, and Jia Meng looked higher up, only to see the hook rope lifting Bologue high. At the moment of impact, he had escaped from the crimson armor. Now the hook rope was retracting, and he was falling straight down, swinging a heavy hammer.

After the deafening impact, the Shadow of Illusion and Reality blocked Bologue's Sheep Horn Shock Hammer.

Bologue was forcefully shaken away, his Sheep Horn Shock Hammer flew out of his hand, exposing his chest, and a crimson Secret Sword flashed before his eyes as Jia Meng seized Bologue's weakness, preparing to strike a lethal blow.

But as he was about to thrust the Secret Sword, an imperceptible delight flashed in Bologue's eyes.

The image of Bologue in Jia Meng's eyes began to change, his identity revealing a layer of hazy golden light track. The light track struggled to detach from his body as if overlapping with the Shadow of Illusion and Reality, and another figure gradually separated, overlapping with Bologue.

A pitch-black arm abruptly extended from Bologue's shoulder, grabbing the disengaged Sheep Horn Shock Hammer, while another illusory face appeared beside Bologue's.

Aimou partially lifted the Shared Chord Body state, and in a semi-detached state, her arm solidified, grasped the Sheep Horn Shock Hammer, and swung it forcefully at the stunned Jia Meng.

Faced with this absurd scene, Jia Meng's mind went blank. He couldn't understand what was happening in front of him and was completely unprepared for the sudden appearance of another person.

It's not that Jia Meng wasn't vigilant; he had considered what other finishing moves Bologue might have, but he never thought Bologue had another person hidden inside him.

What's going on! Was he fighting against two people all along!

Jia Meng was too late to defend; at that moment, Bologue confirmed his judgment. The Shadow of Illusion and Reality was deceitful yet powerful, but Jia Meng seemed unable to simultaneously maintain offense and defense. He either swung his long blade or maintained protection. Both never seemed to appear at the same time, possibly because his current strength couldn't fully control such powerful Secret Energy.

In any case, Bologue had discovered a flaw in his Secret Energy.

Aimou struck Jia Meng's undefended chest with the hammer, but her strength was ultimately too weak to fully exert the violent power of the Sheep Horn Shock Hammer. Had it been Bologue wielding the hammer, it would have been enough to kill Jia Meng, but Aimou merely made Jia Meng cough up blood.

"You do it, then!"

Witnessing this cruelty, Aimou could passively accept it, but now, as she had to actively perform these acts, she was genuinely unable to do so.

Aimou exclaimed, throwing the Sheep Horn Shock Hammer up, her arm became illusory again, retracting back into Bologue's body.

Bologue said nothing, reaching to grab the Sheep Horn Shock Hammer, preparing to finish off Jia Meng, when a strong sense of danger suddenly arose in his heart.

Almost simultaneously, Bologue felt the scorching breath, turning his head to find the roaring dragon's breath so close.

"You think I would let you go!"

Bologue showed no intention of dodging, instead roaring defiantly at Jia Meng.

At this crucial moment, Nade attacked Bologue, thinking he could save Jia Meng, yet Bologue didn't care about any of that.

Before the flames engulfed Bologue's figure, he swung the hammer once more, even though the Shadow of Illusion and Reality gathered defensively, he did not stop but pushed the Ethereal Amplification to its extreme.

A surge of fear and impact erupted simultaneously.

As Jia Meng gazed at the firelit image of the Evil Spirit before him, the relentless changes created a small crack in his iron will, allowing endless fear to seep through.

He felt he was about to die, killed by Bologue's hammer. The following blinding light confirmed his thoughts.

In the other hand of Bologue, the Bright Light Blade once again transformed into the Ethereal Sword.

After extreme fear, Jia Meng did not sit idly waiting for death but instead burst into wild laughter.

The Secret Sword in his hand grew vivid as blood, dense spikes growing from the hilt, piercing through his grip, the crimson curtain enveloped Jia Meng instantly, then collapsed to a point and vanished before Bologue's eyes.

Scorching flames consumed Bologue's silhouette.

Chapter 310: Riot Suppression

The temperature, which had reached its limit, shattered Bologue's pain threshold the moment it touched him. He could feel nothing anymore, only endless numbness, a sensation that also descended upon Aimou.

Bologue forced out Jia Meng's Blood Transfer Sword, but he was struck directly by the power of the Negative Power User. The explosive fire pushed him, a series of burns and impacts driving him toward the scarlet earth, where he ultimately succumbed to the sea of flames.

Aimou tried to call Bologue, but it seemed as though he had lost consciousness, and the surrounding sensations too became a numbing warmth. However, Ether soon poured into his body, and his flesh rapidly regenerated.

Bologue awoke swiftly, and those delayed sensations of pain returned once more. He opened his eyes in the midst of the fire, his whole body charred black, ash-laden flesh shedding away like molted scales, new flesh buds growing and smoothing out dents as they intertwined.

Seemingly unaware of the pain, he propped himself up with the blade and stood with difficulty. In his mind, Aimou felt utter despair, as if every nerve was being cut by sharp knives; the pain was almost splitting her head. Yet, Bologue remained completely unmoved, as if such pain no longer registered with him.

"Are you alright, Aimou?" Bologue inquired.

Aimou did not respond, curling up tightly. If not for her immense resilience, she would have already wanted to dissolve the Shared Chord Body to escape the torment of the searing pain.

After waiting for a moment, Bologue felt some regret. He had become Aimou's shell, able to protect her from injury, but the intense pain still extended to her.

Once again, a raging fire ignited overhead. Latis struggled under Nade's fierce attack. This scarlet bishop did not seem adept at battle, and with Jia Meng having fled with the Immortal Heart, he had no reason to continue the conflict with Nade.

The branches of flesh obscured the view. When Nade burned away the obstacles to pursue Latis, he had already burrowed underground with decayed roots and sprouts.

Unnoticed, the tendrils of the decayed roots had permeated the entire Void Realm. The sturdy land was stretched apart by thick blood vessels. Jia Meng thought he had escaped, but Latis could feel the aura of the Immortal Heart, following relentlessly.

The battle within the Beast Fighting Arena paused with the departure of the Immortal Heart, but at this moment, Nade's gaze fell on Bologue.

He had long noticed Bologue's anomaly. Though not of the Scarlet Decay Sect, he possessed exceptionally strong recovery power, and it seemed as though another person was hiding within his body.

Crimson eyes settled on Bologue, and in an instant, Bologue felt as if he was placed in boiling water, scorching pain surging again from the surface of his body.

The current situation was extremely unfavorable for Bologue. The Scarlet Decay Sect had been nearly wiped out, and the group led by Nade controlled the scene. Bologue could see countless figures beyond the firelight, their silhouettes distorted by the high temperature, becoming blurry, shredded sounds echoing by his ear as if mocking him.

"Aimou, even if I die, don't sever the Shared Chord Body."

Bologue admonished.

He possessed an Undying Body; even if he died, he would merely enter a dormant state. As long as Aimou maintained the Shared Chord Body, she could escape the distractions of reality and hide within his body.

If Aimou were to dissolve the Shared Chord Body, given the intensity of the battle on the scene, this poor Alchemy Puppet would be torn apart in an instant.

"Hmm."

A difficult response echoed in his mind, as Aimou, together with him, remained within the sea of flames.

Bologue fiercely flung a grappling hook, attempting to escape from the sea of flames. This was the most perilous situation Bologue had ever encountered, with several Negative Power Users engaged in battle, different forces having varied objectives, while he was alone.

The worst part was, now Nade seemed to have set his sights on him. Just as Bologue leaped out of the sea of flames, a barrage of gunfire erupted, Nade's subordinates opening fire on him. Fortunately, they were not Alchemy Warheads, and the Deceitful Snake Scale Silver easily blocked them, but then a massive fireball came crashing down.

This time, Bologue couldn't dodge. Its destructive range encompassed all potential escape routes, and with a thunderous explosion, Bologue, trailing scorched embers, slammed hard into the ground.

Neither Secret Energy nor Ether stood any chance against the Negative Power Users for Bologue, not to mention he was already exhausted from the prior battle.

Nade was not in a hurry to pursue Latis. Their manpower this time was abundant, appearing only at the end partly to wait for the depletion of the Scarlet Decay Sect's power, and partly to infiltrate the Void Realm, which now lay completely under their control.

Like a Flame Demon, he strode towards Bologue, curious about Bologue's recovery power, which might serve the Shadow King.

Bologue struggled to sit up on the ground, moving back a few paces, his heart heavy. This operation had been fraught with complications from the outset.

"Will we die?" Aimou asked fearfully.

"No, trust me."

Bologue encouraged Aimou. In the absence of reclaiming the Immortal Heart, he needed to prioritize protecting Aimou.

As for the fleeing Jia Meng, he wouldn't escape easily. From the beginning, someone else in the Beast Fighting Arena had been watching Jia Meng.

In the shadows, Teda sped through the winding and repetitive corridors. Some lingering enemies attempted to block his path, but before they could make a move, they were crushed into pulp by his violent fantasies.

Bologue had underestimated Teda's combat power. He used to be just an alchemist focused on research, but it had been seven years since that past self.

Seven years isn't long nor short, but for some, it is enough time to change everything beyond recognition.

Suddenly, a violent tremor came from deep beneath the ground, as if something exploded below.

Bologue no longer bothered guessing what it was. It was like a battle royale down here, enemies everywhere, and it wouldn't surprise him if a Defender suddenly emerged.

After the tremor came an Ethereal Shock. By the time it spread into the Beast Fighting Arena, the shock had weakened considerably. Bologue's consciousness was somewhat blurry; the Ethereal Shock felt familiar, as if he had just encountered it recently.

But he had no energy to think about it. The crimson Flame Demon stood before him, flames entwined around Nade, as he slowly raised his hand, and the scorching dragon's breath spewed forth.

It was as if it was mocking Bologue. Faced with the engulfing dragon's breath, the Deceitful Snake Scale Silver of his Iron Armor would melt in an instant, and even approaching it would result in burns.

Bologue could only keep fleeing, constantly exhausting his stamina, until a misstep transformed the ground beneath into boiling lava.

He stumbled and leaned against a corner of the wall, with no more routes for escape.

"Aimou, you can reconsider the job offer now," Bologue muttered. "We'll likely encounter situations like this often, might even die unexpectedly."

Waking from the heat of battle, Bologue suddenly felt sorry. Aimou felt the same pain, although he had grown numb to it, Aimou was different; she was still a child.

"It must hurt, right?"

Bologue spoke as he leaned back on the wall, touching the stone with one hand, trying to determine if he could summon the wall to escape from there.

"It's fine, it's nothing."

"You don't have to force yourself, Aimou," Bologue said with concern.

Aimou was silent for a few seconds, her voice feigning cheer, whispering in Bologue's ear.

"It's supposed to be this way. As we can share joy, we should also endure suffering together."

Hearing such a response, Bologue smiled and said no more. He focused his attention, figuring out a way to escape the Negative Power User standing before him.

The extreme blaze surged once more, and Bologue's eyes were stung by its intensity. The brightness was so harsh that even looking directly at it might blind him, or possibly vaporize him outright.

It's over.

At this moment, Bologue clearly and vividly felt the power of the Negative Power User. Thinking this, the Soul Shards within his body all readied themselves for battle, prepared to provide Bologue with robust ethereal support.

But as Bologue stood on guard, the anticipated destruction did not arrive. Instead, there came a sense of oppressive suffocation, affecting not just his senses but also interfering with his Alchemy Matrix.

Golden light surfaced on his body, driven by another force, causing Aimou and Bologue to separate.

Bologue realized that all the Ether had fallen into silence, quickly fleeing, continuously evaporating until an ethereal vacuum was formed.

Even the flames around Nade momentarily faltered, not completely extinguished, but their ferocity diminished considerably compared to before.

Bologue knew who had arrived. At the critical moment, these guys had finally reached the scene.

With the corridor shattered and collapsing behind, the Violence Suppression Action Group made a strong entrance. Ethereal Prohibition engulfed the entire Beast Fighting Arena, even restricting the growth of decaying roots and sprouts.

"King's Shield Guard detected, intensity response as Negative Power User."

Without direct observation, the hand crossbow-wielding team members detected the enemy deployment within the Beast Fighting Arena merely by Ethereal Perception.

"Begin suppression."

The commander raised a hand, issuing the order simply and bluntly.