

## Endless 351

### Chapter 351: Independent Loop

Time regression.

As it stands, this is the main ability granted to Bologue, which comes with a self-contained cyclical time axis. Whenever he is injured, the time axis advances, returning the injured area to its optimal state; if faced with death, a complete regression occurs.

Under this major rule, time regression comes with numerous limitations, such as the consumption of ether, and the extension of regression time after multiple deaths in a short period.

Knowing these details, Bologue felt calm. He had long perceived the oddity of his blessing, harboring many speculations.

This information merely confirms Bologue's conjectures, sparing him from wild imaginations, but it also raises other questions.

Bologue looked at the portion obscured with black ink, where a name must be hidden below. This [information-covered] individual seems to be the one responsible for this extreme test and proposed the idea of time regression.

More importantly, he later added that he believed his blessing should offer more than just this, likely containing further secrets, yet they were constrained by technical limitations, unable to bring them to light.

This realization troubled Bologue for a few seconds before he dismissed it from his mind. If these guys can't figure it out, why should he bother?

The question returned to the beginning; to unravel it all, Bologue needed to find that damned Devil.

He packed the information back into the dossier, skewering the remaining sausage and cleaned his plate.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, Bologue wanted to do something, but suddenly felt very weary, unwilling to do anything.

Reflecting carefully, Bologue had indeed been rather busy lately, from the venue raid to survival in the Abandoned Land, barely resting after waking, then rushing here to handle all these matters...

Bologue forcefully rubbed his head, then lay down on the bed, letting the softness envelop him, easing his tense nerves.

His breathing gradually steadied. He struggled not to think about these things, trying to relax his mind a little.

Yet, a question lingered endlessly in his mind.

"Independent...time axis?"

Bologue opened his eyes, gazing at the clock on the wall, its ticks reverberating in the silence, the hands gliding smoothly forward.

Everyone's time axis constantly moves forward, but not Bologue's. As he progresses, he also returns to a former time point, looping within a period, allowing him to return to optimal state through countless deaths.

Thus Bologue experiences hunger, grows a beard, lives like a normal person, but differently from normal people, he resides in a time-loop cage; everyone moves forward, while he circles within a foggy time segment.

The person with [information-covered] doubts about the impact this might have but wasn't entirely sure.

If he could, Bologue wished to converse with them — whether they still lived, he knew not.

"Time...regression..."

Bologue murmured softly with closed eyes, a smile inadvertently crossing his face.

At least Bologue finally has some clarity on part of his chaos, a good beginning; he mustn't rush, taking it slow is better.

Confirming Aimou's survival, the truth of resurrection, Bologue finally relaxed completely, temporarily breaking free from the series of events, catching a breath.

Here at the Undying Club, with a group of old monsters overseeing, the nearby Order Bureau gave him less worry about suddenly killing a formidable enemy and being ripped to shreds... even if that happened, he'd revive eventually.

Bologue lay on the bed without bothering to change clothes and fell asleep.

Soon after, footsteps echoed outside the door, hardly disturbing Bologue. In the dim corridor, a bizarre figure crawled along the floor, dressed ludicrously in a mascot costume, styled as a dog.

On all fours, crawling adeptly, deep breaths marked his form as his tongue left repulsing saliva trails.

Sai Zong continued impersonating a dog, crawling clumsily, but abruptly paused outside Bologue's door.

He lifted his head, his gaze inscrutable, fixed on the door.

A dread-inducing sight, Sai Zong's years of mimicking a dog had been flawless, yet now, an anthropomorphic expression crept into the canine demeanor, a fusion torn asunder, grotesque.

Sai Zong seemed to peer through the door, perceiving Bologue sleeping inside.

He paused for a substantial while, fostering an eerie malevolence in the shadows until it almost surged...

Nothing happened.

Sai Zong sniffed around the door before lifting his leg to relieve bladder pressure.

"Sai Zong!"

Bode's shout came from behind.

Before Sai Zong could let go, a skeletal figure sprinted forward, leaping fluently, exhibiting perfect precision.

Following a pitiful dog yelp, Bode executed a swift sliding tackle that brought Sai Zong down.

Unfortunately, Bode was still a bit slow, and the pale yellow, glistening liquid uncontrollably sprayed everywhere, splattering all over the ground.

The world seemed to slow down in Bode's eyes; he clearly saw the trajectory of the liquid as it fell. Like a diver, he twisted his body as much as possible within limited space and time to avoid being covered by the liquid.

The movements were graceful, very extreme... but ultimately useless.

The skeletal man and the dog were flung several meters away, dragged along like a mop with water stains, finally crashing against the wall at the end, coming to a stop.

It took them a while to slowly get up, Bode silent. After a brief calm, he began to punch and kick Sai Zong while cursing, finally grabbing Sai Zong by the scruff of the neck and dragging him out of the corridor.

"You've been a dog for decades, and you still haven't learned how to pee in designated spots!"

Bode cursed, the "woof woof woof" barking followed incessantly, Sai Zong was probably protesting.

Bologue apparently didn't notice any of this; he rarely relaxed and had fallen into a deep sleep on the bed.

Bologue's sleep was great this time, his whole body recharged with strength, and when he woke up, the sound of snoring echoed in his ears like a tractor running beside him. Then, Bologue felt something heavy on his chest.

Opening his eyes, he saw a blob of black pressing down on his chest.

Bologue gave it a nudge, Wei'Er continued snoring and rolled off his chest, sleeping deeply, curling up next to him again.

Wei'Er's inner soul is human, but sometimes its actions are influenced by its form, becoming very cat-like.

Bologue rubbed his eyes. Judging by the clock, he had only slept for a few hours, but those few hours of rest felt really good.

He didn't wake Wei'Er up. Though he wasn't sure why it appeared here, Bologue was long accustomed to the oddities inside the Undying Club.

Nothing in this bizarre place could surprise him.

After putting away the files from Time Rewind, Bologue tidied his clothes and pushed the door open to leave.

He'd slept until evening, and by that time, Serey had already gone out wandering. Bologue guessed he was probably dancing gracefully on a pole at some nightclub now.

To be honest, Bologue always found it hard to connect Serey with the mysterious Night Race Lord, and even harder to detect any deep-seated grudge from that damn smiling face of his.

Bologue could only silently pray that, as another undead, he wouldn't become someone like Serey in the future.

The bar seemed to have just undergone a thorough cleaning, with spotless floors and tables wiped clean. Bode leaned against the counter, looking slightly melancholy at the wall full of liquor bottles.

Bologue remembered Bode's story: he gained an Undying Body but lost all sensation, and the alcohol he once loved felt no different from plain water to him; in fact, he couldn't even feel plain water.

"It's really clean," Bologue commented.

"It's mainly because of that bastard Sai Zong," Bode cursed Sai Zong.

"What happened?"

"Nothing, he peed inside again. I beat him, and he kept peeing while being beaten, yowling and making a mess everywhere."

Bologue's face turned awkward. Yes, it's really hard to imagine associating these lunatics with the illustrious undead, especially Sai Zong.

Being around longer than even Serey, this guy has lived too long and cares for nothing anymore, completely letting himself go.

Who knows if, after a few more centuries, Serey will become like Sai Zong.

Bologue tried to envision it: a skeletal man chasing a dog, shouting, and spraying everywhere...

Heavens, help!

"So... what about Sai Zong? Should he take a bath?" Bologue hesitantly asked.

"Him? I kicked him out, he's probably wandering outside now."

Bode appeared indifferent, "Don't worry. Although he's a dog, he's also an indestructible dog."

No, Bologue wasn't worried about Sai Zong's safety. He was more concerned about the law enforcement in Opus; no wonder the people in the Field Operations Department always had the look of stepping on dog poop when the Undying Club was mentioned.

A person behaving like a dog, rampaging through the streets could make it to the papers!

"Ah, alright, alright."

Bologue nodded, now only wanting to quickly leave this crazy place, and if Sai Zong really bit someone, hopefully, he wouldn't be dispatched to handle it.

"Well... bye, Bode."

## Chapter 352: Time Reversing Axis

In the following week, Bologue's life was very routine. Each day he reported to the Order Bureau, glanced at Aimou to check her condition, then discussed preparations for the upcoming triple trials with Lebius, and occasionally visited Palmer.

In fact, Bologue only visited Palmer once, where he observed him treating the Border Sanatorium as if it were his own home, mingling closely with the nurses every day.

Seeing Palmer in such high spirits, Bologue deeply realized that he shouldn't have been concerned about him.

Since Teda was still missing, the Sixth Group had taken over Bologue's work. During this period, Bologue was essentially on vacation, giving him plenty of time each day to improve himself.

After finishing the necessary tasks each day, Bologue would immerse himself in the practice room, training his Secret Energy and Perception of Ether there.

Nowadays, Bologue had improved significantly in various abilities, even achieving the precision needed to craft mechanical watches, though there were still some minor discrepancies in details.

Fortunately, during battles, Bologue rarely summoned such precise weapons; his current abilities were already sufficient for combat.

After reviewing the data and learning that his Blessing's form of resurrection was time regression, Bologue also noticed the names given by people to this unique Blessing.

Time Reversing Axis.

A unique, cyclic, and independent timeline.

Bologue liked this term; it was much more accurate than vaguely using terms like Undying Body and Resurrection.

Afterward, Bologue also took the data to ask Lebius about some details, such as the unknown situations that might be encountered, mentioned by the person covered under "information concealment."

Lebius didn't know much more about it either. In his words, when the Order Bureau discovered the Blessing · Time Reversing Axis, Lebius himself might not have even been born.

However, during the discussion with Lebius, Bologue deduced some information himself.



First, it's important to know that this data about the Time Reversing Axis was compiled decades ago, when Bologue was not yet a Condenser, merely an unwilling-to-die Debtor.

The Time Reversing Axis still has many undiscovered secrets. One point of doubt is that after Bologue ascended to become a Condenser and fell into death, his time wasn't reset to the stage before he became a Condenser.

Moreover, subsequent self-training, increases in Ether Affinity, and other enhancements were not reset either.

Bologue speculated that each time regression keeps him in his optimal state, and every increase in power refreshes the reset time node.

Standing in the vast practice room, Bologue followed these conjectures to verify his idea.

At this moment, on the ground before Bologue lay a row of Alchemy Potions, all taken from the Sublimation Furnace Core. Their effects varied widely, but all could directly or indirectly enhance the ability of a Condenser.

Alchemy Potions generally have strong side effects, and rarely do Condensers use these potions directly, but Bologue didn't care about that.

Now Bologue considered something else: if he utilized Alchemy Potions, that is, many external forces, to make himself powerful, would his time regression reset to this enhanced state?

In fact, from previous battles, Bologue had long deduced the answer: he would only be reset to his normal state, with all enhancements removed.

Yet, Bologue maintained a rigorous experimental mindset. After a brief reflection, he gulped down these potions one by one.

Like a drunkard, after drinking a few bottles, Bologue clearly felt something was off, as bottles and jars rolled everywhere. Ether surged and roared within the Alchemy Matrix.

Bologue waved his hand to summon, and the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid proliferated into a dense tangle of steel thorns, soaring in all directions.

Centered on Bologue, a ten-meter radius killing web was constructed, the sound of it slicing through the air echoing continuously, while the ground beneath was carved with countless grooves.

Dust filled the air.

Bologue raised an eyebrow; the feeling of taking potions was rather good. If he had the support of Aimou's Shared Chord Body, Bologue believed his combat power could rise significantly.

However, today's experimental goal wasn't to see how strong he could be. After confirming the enhancement from the Alchemy Potions, Bologue reached for a short-barreled shotgun.

Taking a deep breath, Bologue pressed the gun's muzzle under his chin, pulled the trigger without a hint of hesitation.

With a gunshot, Bologue's head exploded, turning into a rain of blood that painted the ground red.

The headless body lost strength and fell backward, but before Bologue completely collapsed, the Time Reversing Axis had already activated.

With all enhancements, Bologue was now in his strongest state. Thus, his first death would lead to an exceedingly rapid resurrection.

The scattered blood began to reverse flow, the shattered flesh reassembled, consciousness began to revive.

The falling figure paused, the swarm of snakes supported Bologue's body, reestablishing him upright.

Touching his own face to confirm his revival, Bologue wrote and revised on paper.

This is a record written by Bologue himself, and it has filled several pages.

After all, one cannot die many times in a short period, so Bologue dies once or twice every day to test his Blessing and keep a record.

After repeated testing, Bologue could confirm one thing: after his death, the amplification effects of the Alchemy Potion would be removed, but likewise, the side effects would also be removed. It could be said that Bologue would return to the state before drinking the Alchemy Potion.

However, if not completely dead and only partially injured, the injuries would revert, not affecting the overall benefits of the Alchemy Potion.

Another thing that Bologue can completely confirm is that these external gains, either direct or indirect, would not be counted in the best state.

Only the improvements from Bologue himself would be recorded by the Blessing and would reset upon death.

"Salt, sulfur, mercury, body, mind, spirit..."

Bologue murmured to himself.

The next significant boost for Bologue could only come from the benefits of the threefold trials.

Like advancing as a Condenser, it's a form of self-sublimation that can be recorded by the Blessing.

For this reason, Bologue can completely confirm that one of his major advantages is this Blessing: Time Reversing Axis.

No matter what difficulties or obstacles are encountered on the path of advancement, as long as he touches that Tier, he will record the time node and reset.

For example... the Crowned.

Bologue is unclear about what King Solomon has gone through, but as long as he can touch that sacred crown, unless he is imprisoned and forever in a state of death, he will eventually return as the Crowned.

Slapping his face, Bologue stopped thinking about such distant matters; the current threefold trials had no definite plan yet.

After applying to Lebius, Lebius forwarded the report to the Sublimation Furnace Core, where the Alchemists were preparing the materials needed for his trials.

In the past, a few days of preparation was enough, but Bologue wanted to complete all three trials in one go, which troubled the Sublimation Furnace Core a bit.

It's not that they didn't want to help, but the stockpile of materials needed some time to sort out, and they also wanted to observe Bologue's trials.

The trials of salt, sulfur, and mercury were common, but conducting all three simultaneously was a first, he wanted to record all of it carefully.

Just like before, Bologue only needed to wait for notification next.

After stretching his body vigorously, it was time to proceed to the next task.

The benefit Aimou provided to Bologue was continuous. In the state of Shared Chord Body, Bologue's affinity for Ether greatly increased, allowing him to clearly perceive those surging energies.

Consequently, during subsequent practice, Bologue's perception of Ether was significantly enhanced. Over the past week, he has been using this familiar memory to train his Ethereal Concealment.

With calm breathing and a slowed heartbeat, the body gradually sank into a silent state, and the Ether within the Alchemy Matrix similarly quieted down.

The Ethereal Radiance around Bologue began to dim until there was no more light; the Initial Activation Phenomenon was completely suppressed.

Now, Bologue's Ether reaction was compressed to the minimum, making it hard for the enemy to detect it in chaotic combat, which meant that Bologue now mastered the Extreme Technique of Ethereal Concealment.

However, as Bologue started moving, his breath gradually became chaotic, and when he swung the folding knife, the power of Ether also began to leak, eventually breaking the Ethereal Concealment.

Bologue appeared somewhat troubled; this was the current predicament he faced. He could concentrate and enter the state of Ethereal Concealment, but once he started moving, maintaining it became difficult.

"Aimou... Aimou..."

Bologue muttered softly; if he had the support of Aimou's Shared Chord Body, perhaps his training would go more smoothly.

Glancing at the time, he realized it was time to proceed to the next task, but at that moment, Bologue sharply sensed something, turning his head to see a figure on a raised platform looking at him with a complex expression.

"Yo, when did you come?"

Bologue greeted the figure, "Sido... ah no, Hart!"

Bologue had a sharp impression of Hart. After all, seeing a fuzzy fellow like Hart in recent times was rare, and he still remembered that movie with the talking dog named Sido.

Hart had gotten used to Bologue's mistaken calling of "Sido." Although he didn't know who Sido was, as if it was a nickname, upon being called that many times, he understood Bologue was addressing him.

Hart's expression was very peculiar now, and Bologue couldn't imagine reading a "what the heck" sentiment from a nearly wolf-like face.

"I was here just now," Hart swallowed and replied, "from when you started that self-kill."

### Chapter 353: Trinity

Hart came to notify Bologue that a message had arrived from the Sublimation Furnace Core, asking Bologue to make a visit. Hart happened to pass by and delivered the message on Geoffrey's behalf.

After a brief conversation with Bologue, Hart, with a distant look, turned around and left.

"Is the preparation for the Triple Trials ready?"

Upon reaching the Sublimation Furnace Core and seeing Balder, Bologue asked. Besides Aimou's repair, the Triple Trials were the only thing he cared about recently. As for his partner Palmer?

If Palmer doesn't return soon, Bologue is about to forget that he even has such a partner.

Reflecting on it now, in daily life, the only use Palmer had was to ride Bologue around. Now that he's temporarily staying at the Undying Club, Palmer's only use is gone.

"It's ready, but the ritual is still being fine-tuned. You'll need to wait a bit," Balder led the way ahead, "after all, it is our first time conducting the three trials simultaneously."

"I understand. It looks like there will be quite a few people watching, right?" Bologue said.

"More or less, some of the old folks learned about it and crawled out from the Scholars' Hall to observe." Balder explained.

"The Scholars' Hall?"

Bologue's expression showed slight surprise. He hadn't expected this matter to involve the Scholars' Hall.

The Scholars' Hall is a branch within the Sublimation Furnace Core composed of a group of Alchemy Masters responsible for researching numerous secretive projects. It is the core research department of the Sublimation Furnace Core and even the entire Order Bureau.

Within the Sublimation Furnace Core, those old fellows who retired from their positions would eventually gather there, dedicating the rest of their lives to Secret Source research.

"Some of those old guys are very interested in you, and even the Minister couldn't refuse them, so they had to let them come." Balder said.

Bologue nodded, indicating his understanding. Although Belli is the Minister, she's not quite esteemed in the eyes of the old folks in the Scholars' Hall.

One of the reasons Belli could become a Minister at such a young age is that eligible old fellows are holed up in the Scholars' Hall, rarely stepping out.

Others with the same qualifications but without Belli's talents can only follow her orders.

"Indeed, these folks could be regarded as forefathers."

Balder rarely cracked a joke, and Bologue couldn't help but smile along.

In the Sublimation Furnace Core, there is a distinct method of position advancement compared to other parts. Although many positions seem to be held by young people like Belli, they primarily handle administrative functions, while the main research is still conducted by the Scholars' Hall.

Those old folks hide away in the pitch-black underground, delegating all troublesome matters to others, focusing solely on their research.

If those events hadn't happened, after Teda stepped down, he should also be a member of the Scholars' Hall now, pouring all his energy into research.

After the chat, Bologue suddenly thought of something and asked, "Can I visit the Scholars' Hall?"

"No, those old fellows are already considered important assets of the Order Bureau. Anyone wanting to go there needs approval from the Decision Room." Balder replied.

These old fellows are like walking books of knowledge, even the least of them who serves tea and water has to be an Alchemy Master.

"Why do you want to go there?" Balder asked again.

"Just thinking, since these guys are so important and eager for the Secret Source... they probably won't die easily, right?" Bologue muttered.

If they die, they have nothing left. Given their obsession, to understand the Secret Source, they would undoubtedly find ways to keep living.

"There's a medical team at the Border Sanatorium directly connected to the Scholars' Hall, and a substantial budget each year within the Sublimation Furnace Core is allocated to keep those old things alive." Balder said.

"Now I understand."



Bologue nodded; he recalled the report about his Blessing.

After so many years, he thought the researcher back then had died, but upon realizing the Scholars' Hall, Bologue felt that perhaps the person was still alive, depending on the medical assistance from the Border Sanatorium, living like the undead, just to get closer to the Secret Source.

If the situation is as such, Bologue might have a chance to talk directly to the person and understand the past.

"Here is the content about the Triple Trials. While waiting, you can take another look and prepare more," Balder then said, "you can wait over there. When it's about time, I'll come to get you."

Following Balder's pointing direction, Bologue knew where he meant. Putting away the document, Bologue indicated his agreement.

After parting ways with Balder, Bologue continued along a familiar route, one gate after another opening, the eerie blue light sweeping over his body.

Bologue found a chair to sit on. Before opening the document, Bologue glanced up at the container behind the glass wall.

After this period of repair, Aimou's condition had improved significantly. She curled up like a baby, legs together and hugging her knees, resembling a fetus.

Many parts have yet to be reassembled, but at least now she looks like a person rather than a tattered piece of art.

The cold metallic shell soaked in solution, Belli had not yet reapplied the coating for Aimou. Presently, she appeared in a metallic silver, with riveted marks along the metal edges.

At this moment, Aimou was no different from a real doll, her pupils flashing with a faint light, still operating stably. Unfortunately, she still could not provide any feedback from the outside world, her sensors still under adjustment.

Bologue gazed for a moment before withdrawing his eyes and turned to open the document about the Triple Trials.

In the theory of Alchemy, an Alchemist can transmute metals, liberating cold matter from its mundane nature, promoting it to a higher tier. This is also applicable in the Condenser's ascension, where the ascension ritual for the sublimation of the soul is akin to the transmutation of metals.

Kill the mundane, expel impurities.

However, before the sublimation of ascension, a mundane soul must undergo the trial of the Triple Law, which is the Triple Trials.

The three elements of salt, sulfur, and mercury correspond to the human body, mind, and spirit.

This is understandable as anyone who has read the "Golden Thesis" can grasp the underlying principles.

The Trial of Salt will reinforce the Condenser's physique, making the vessel that holds the soul more durable and expanding its capacity, allowing it to support a more powerful soul.

The Trial of Sulfur pertains to the Condenser's mind or can be understood as willpower.

The body is the vessel for the Condenser to traverse the world; the soul is the cornerstone of the Condenser's strength, and all this requires a strong will to unite and execute.

The will of the mundane is easily crushed, but a soul that has undergone the Trial of Sulfur will no longer be weak. After this trial, the Condenser's willpower will be greatly enhanced, resisting the influence of malevolence.

The Trial of Mercury tests the soul. After this trial, the Condenser's soul becomes more solid, preparing for the upcoming ascension ritual.

One could say the Trial of Mercury does not significantly enhance the Condenser itself, but it ensures the upcoming ascension is safer, enabling completion of the sublimation.

Thus, Trinity leads directly to sublimation.

#### Chapter 354: Scholars

Balder did not keep Bologue waiting for long. After a while, he led Bologue to a familiar place.

"Is it here again?"

Bologue glanced at the surgery table that could transform into a bathtub, and the array-covered ground beneath his feet, resembling a ritual platform.

This was the very place where Bologue initially implanted the Alchemy Matrix. He remembered destroying most of it, but was surprised to find that the Sublimation Furnace Core had repaired it.

"It's like staying true to the original intention."

A familiar voice sounded, and Belli stood not far away, waving at Bologue.

They pushed a heavy cart filled with sealed containers, each containing the alchemical materials needed for this trial.

Inside the area, many researchers were at work, dragging cables to connect to power, as the lights lit up one by one, and Ether encircled the air.

Every time Bologue saw these, he felt strange, as if preparing for surgery or repairing a large machine.

He had been here once before, and Bologue was very familiar with the process. He stepped aside and took off his top, folding it neatly.

This time, Bologue didn't casually detach a large number of weapons from his body, there was only a cold serpentine entity coiled around him. Once Ether was released, the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid dispersed like mercury, filling the pre-prepared container.

Bologue stretched his body forcefully. It might become painful next, so he relaxed his muscles.

"Should I lie directly on it?" Bologue asked.

"Yes, leave the rest to us," Belli nodded. "What you need to do is endure the pain."

Enduring pain was an easy task for Bologue.

Lying flat on the surgery table, the gentle light filled Bologue's vision, involuntarily bringing back memories of that moment.

It's saddening that Teda, who implanted the Alchemy Matrix within him, had disappeared, becoming his enemy, and may even perish by his own hands or someone else's.

"You know what's going to happen next, right?"

Belli's voice echoed, and then she appeared in his line of sight, blocking a large portion of the light.

"The triple trials, like an alternative embedding ritual," Bologue recalled the knowledge he had acquired, "relying on the ritual to allow the Alchemy Matrix to continue growing until it reaches the Second Stage."

"Good that you know, remember to stay conscious and control your Alchemy Matrix," Belli instructed once more.

Bologue nodded, breathing deeply. Suddenly, he noticed that there were some changes compared to before, such as an observation window added at a height, vaguely visible with several shadows standing behind it.

They were probably the alchemists from the Scholars' Hall, as Belli had mentioned. They wanted to observe him.

"He still looks the same, truly evocative."

Behind the observation window, an old man sitting in a wheelchair said in a low voice.

When he first met Bologue, they were about the same age, but upon meeting again, he had become an old man, yet Bologue still looked the same, unchanged.

"Bologue Lazarus... I'd really like to fully research him."

Another hoarse voice sounded, belonging to another elderly person, hunchbacked like a dried corpse, wearing an oxygen mask on his face.

"So why allow such a guy to regain freedom? Not to mention mastering Extraordinary Power."

"What exactly did he trade with the Devil?"

"Why did the Decision Room choose to hire him?"

The elderly whispered among themselves, their voices rising and falling.

They had all been involved in researching Bologue, and over the years, relying on the medical technology of the Border Sanatorium, the elderly survived on with difficulty in the darkness.

The sound of violent coughing echoed, followed by medical personnel rushing in, taking the elderly person out for emergency treatment.

The others were used to it; their lifespans had long reached their end, with death's breath entwining them as a companion.

By the doorway, Yas watched the elderly being carried out, his expression subtle, but he remained silent.

These old guys looked like they were dying, yet each was an extremely powerful alchemist, an important asset of the Order Bureau.

Each year, a vast amount of funding is spent on keeping these old guys alive, just to allow their wrecked bodies to last a little longer.

Gazing around, Yas easily identified the important figures among them.

The old man wearing a respiratory mask had produced numerous Alchemy Armaments during his life, with a significant portion being incorporated into the Order Bureau's standard equipment, like the folding knife and Arm of Adaptation.

The wheelchair-bound old man was adept at Void Domain Technology; he optimized the Serenity Defense Line and repaired parts of the Ruins District, returning them to the Cultivation Room.

Some elderly didn't have particularly specific achievements, but they had all participated in the writing of the "Golden Thesis."

These old guys were extremely important, which is why Yas personally came today to handle security.

Except for Overlord Xilin, no one could venture deep into the Cultivation Room. Yas's security appeared somewhat excessive, but only those who truly understood knew that Yas wasn't guarding against external threats but was cautious of Bologue.

Those who participated in Bologue's implantation ceremony understood the chaos he had caused at the time. Back then, these old fellows wanted to observe the ceremony, but research issues prevented their arrival.

Luckily, they didn't come; their frail bodies wouldn't have withstood such turmoil. With past lessons learned, Yas needed to protect them from being affected by Bologue this time.

The accident failed to interrupt the elders' conversation, but another deep breath suddenly cut the discussion silent.

The deep breathing gradually approached, sounding like a howling gale rushing through pipes, generating a profound echo.

They all turned their heads, accompanied by the breathing, with the tapping sound of a cane striking the ground.

The old fellows saw the newcomer, an unclear figure—not exactly sure if it counted as human.

Its decrepit face was ghastly like a devil, with skin clinging to the bones, veins visibly clear.

He was barefoot, and with each step, one could see his age-spotted soles, alternating with a metallic prosthetic limb.

An external trachea was inserted in his throat, where the raspy deep breaths originated. The loose white robe clung to his body, outlining angular protrusions in the abdomen, as if his flesh was replaced by some sort of machinery.

The strange breathing persisted, trailing behind the white-robed elderly man was a small cart carrying a mobile ventilator, along with many complex devices that together formed the life-support apparatus keeping the old man alive.

Upon arriving at the observation window, the medical staff brought a chair. They had always wanted to make a special wheelchair for the white-robed elder, but he sternly refused, insisting on measuring the earth with his body, not wanting to be confined to cold steel.

After the white-robed elder stopped, the life-support device behind him injected potion into the IV line, soon flowing into the withered body, easing his physical pain considerably.

His dim and muddy gaze settled on Bologue, and after a moment, he nodded with a smile.

"He still looks the same, just like when I first saw him."

No one responded to the words of the white-robed elder; the other elders were frozen in place, looking as if they had seen a ghost.

The elders, unlike the Undead, were not long-lived, but throughout their lives had witnessed many storms. Yet, the appearance of the white-robed elder left them shocked, like young people.

"Teacher?" One of the elderly tentatively asked.

"Oh? You're not dead yet?"

The white-robed elder turned his head, seemingly recognizing the other, speaking in a hoarse voice.

The other hesitated for a moment, just about to say something when his expression suddenly twitched, clutching his chest, and uncontrollably collapsed.

"Doctor! Doctor!"

Seeing this, Yas quickly shouted, but immediately, after others confirmed the identity of the white-robed elder, wave upon wave of alarms sounded.

The Cultivation Room wasn't invaded; rather, the life-support devices of these elders set off the alarms.



The heart rates skyrocketed, blood pressures were maxed out, their chests heaved violently. A few overexerted themselves, the small ECG showed a flat line, their heads slumped to the side, collapsing onto wheelchairs.

"Master!"

This time, it was the medical staff's turn to panic; it would have been alright if just one incident happened, but how could everyone fall ill all at once? There was no way to save them all.

All these years, these elders had been living well, yet today they all suddenly dropped dead here?

Yas was also stunned; if these guys were going to die, they better not die during his tenure. Dying in such a group would have the deputy director kill him, and what was the necessity to die together like this? Was there some shared sympathy?

Soon, these renowned Alchemy Masters fell like dead fish, leaving only a few with remaining consciousness, wanting to say something, but unable to get the words out clearly.

The white-robed elder glanced around. Just as Yas was about to do something, he lifted his cane, then forcefully struck the ground.

Instantly, the Ether surged wildly, a sudden impact stunned Yas in place, and simultaneously, a green glowing light rose, conjuring countless twigs out of thin air, growing madly over the elders, rooting deep into their flesh.

Yas stood in place, not intentionally dazed, but completely unable to move—the powerful Ether pressure rendered him immobile.

The elders' Rectangular Soul Critical was easily breached, the Ether pervaded the Alchemy Matrix inside, then unleashed a burst of vigorous life.

The elders who were at death's door all gradually came back, their various indicators returning to normal values. After a brief moment of disorientation, they awkwardly climbed back into their wheelchairs.

The medical staff froze, unsure of what to do.

"Teacher, if you weren't dead, couldn't you have said something earlier?"

The elder who fell first got back up, clutching his heart, saying with a lingering fear, "I'm an old thing too; my heart can't take such a strain."

"Indeed, indeed."

The others echoed, everyone was quite troubled by the white-robed elder's mischief.

A person dead for decades suddenly appears before you; anyone would be startled, especially them in their advanced age.

The white-robed elder didn't mind these comments; he merely glanced at Bologue on the operating table and gestured.

"Let them begin."

Chapter 355: Salt, Sulfur, Mercury

The triple trials began, Belli was busy around the operating table, while Bologue lay honestly on it, letting Belli do her work.

"First, awaken the ether."

Belli's voice rang out as Bologue breathed steadily. Intricate light patterns emerged on the surface of his body, with dense trajectories crawling and flashing with a blue glow, outlining a holy and solemn diagram.

Even though Bologue was merely a First Stage Condenser, at such close proximity, Belli could faintly sense the extraordinary in him.

This was an Alchemy Matrix replicated from Overlord Xilin's body by the Sublimation Furnace Core. It could be said that in the whole world, there were only two such Alchemy Matrices: one on Overlord Xilin's corpse and one in Bologue's possession.

Bologue's ether resonated with the surrounding ether, and the ground beneath his feet began to change. The ether concentration around increased steadily, until the ethereal ether directly liquefied out of thin air, becoming golden raindrops that gradually filled the grooves on the ground.

"Quite cooperative, Bologue."

At such times, Belli would not forget to tease Bologue and raised an eyebrow at him.

Bologue showed no expression and simply ignored her.

Normally, Bologue would avoid Belli when he saw her, but now things were different. Belli was responsible for his triple trials, whatever she said, Bologue had to comply.

Sometimes it's like this: if someone suddenly tells you to strip for a physical check, you'd smash their head with a hammer and throw them into the trash bin, but if a doctor tells you this in a hospital, you'd cooperate entirely and even ask how long you have to live...

Well, this is probably what is called doctor-patient trust, but such trust can become strange if mixed with personal feelings.

Bologue resisted the vigilance in his heart and tried to completely trust Belli, believing she would conduct the ritual honestly without suddenly inviting him to some test halfway through.

This was something Belli could possibly do.

"Next, I'll start extracting alchemy materials, and you'll begin to endure tests of body, mind, and spirit. I believe you can get through it."

Belli suddenly became serious, her smile disappeared, "Palmer got through it, you definitely can too."

"Has Palmer become an adjective now?" Bologue rarely joked.

Belli was taken aback for a moment, then laughed heartily.

Bologue was a serious fellow, but that didn't mean he lacked humor. On the contrary, whenever Bologue became humorous, he talked like a professional stand-up comedian.

"As everyone knows, there are three kinds of people," Bologue said to himself during a casual chat, "Men, women, and Palmer Clarks."

After the laughter, the tense atmosphere lightened, and Bologue also smiled.

This wasn't about possibility, it was certain that Bologue could do it, this wasn't about tier advancement, this kind of issue posed no difficulty to Bologue.

"However..."

Suddenly, Belli showed a hesitant expression.

Having just said those words, and now revealing such an expression, it was too ominous, like a doctor sharing good news before preparing to deliver bad news.

Indeed, it was the case, Belli said.

"Doing it simultaneously carries too much risk, you might become lost, you must remain clear-headed."

"It's okay."

Bologue assured Belli, then closed his eyes, ready to face everything.

Whether during trials or ascension, the Condenser resonates with the Secret Source, getting closer to it.

Secret Source.

The origin of ether, the end of all transcendence and unknowns, till today people cannot clearly explain what the Secret Source truly is, and anything connected to it is full of mysteries.

During trials and ascension, some Condensers encounter unexpected situations, with the distance to the Secret Source suddenly shortened, staring directly into that mysterious power, even sinking into it.

After the event, the Condenser's body remains intact, the soul stays complete, but their consciousness falls into the Secret Source, like a vegetative state, unable to awaken.

This is the confusion, one of the many dangers on the Path of Transcendence.

Bologue would not die, but once consciousness falls into the mysterious confusion, what would truly happen, no one knows.

Belli took a deep breath, next it was her turn, obviously it was just a triple trial, yet she was inexplicably nervous.

Maybe because of those old fellows.

Belli thought and looked up, she couldn't see the people behind the observation window, but she could see the heavy shadows, standing like phantoms.

"Start the ritual."

Belli turned her head and gave orders to the others.

In an instant, the ether surged, and golden liquid overflowed, gradually filling the grooves on the ground, until it lost gravity, floating into the air and shattering into countless droplets, transforming into brilliant, golden stars.

The alchemy materials required for the triple trials are neither numerous nor precious, just substances that any regular Alchemist can extract.

Through trials, then transform.

Opening the sealed iron box, she took out one piece of alchemy material after another, and the liquid ether in the sky surged, enveloping them completely.

At this moment, Belli also unleashed her Secret Energy, holding the Light Forged scalpel in her hand, casually slicing through the golden expanse in the sky.

The golden liquid rolled up the fine crystal powder; these were not ordinary crystals but salt processed by an Alchemist.

Now the mortal materials already possessed the initial capacity to fuse with the ether, but it still needed Belli for the final step.

The golden liquid suddenly boiled, with dense bubbles appearing on the white crystal, and amidst the piercing noise, a subtle cracking sound echoed.

The pure white crystal seemed to be scorched by intense fire, acquiring a pitch-black hue, yet it did not become contaminated but rather more sanctified. This is the Corruption of Black during the substance's transformation towards the Philosopher's Stone.

This transformation effect on the Condenser signifies the Sublimation of advancement.

The metamorphosed black salt began to spread, instantly dimming the golden liquid, but amidst the darkness, there still floated dazzling gold, mixing into a deep dark gold, forming Alchemy Material: Dark Salt.

First is the Trial of Salt, corresponding to the body of the Condenser.

But Belli is not eager to conduct the ritual immediately; instead, she begins preparing another piece of alchemy material.

The special aspect of this ritual is that Bologue will undergo triple trials simultaneously, as doing them one by one lacks any particular significance.

Bologue craves power, and Belli needs experimental records; she refers to this kind of matter as a win-win.

"The next one."

Belli pushed the dark golden liquid, which drifted to the other side, orbiting around Bologue like a planet.

Another piece of alchemy material rose, the sulfur also treated with alchemy, enveloped by the liquefied golden ether. Under the glow of the Alchemy Matrix, it began undergoing the Corruption of Black transformation.

A familiar boiling sound arose, with the floating bubbles resembling a planet. Inside, the sulfur ignited, and azure flames soared continuously, like a burning blue stellar core.

"The Sulfur Core Fire is ready too."

Belli muttered, this was the result of sulfur after the Corruption of Black transformation. It appeared as fireworks, but it was still solid, merely extremely flammable, thus in usual circumstances, it remained in a burning state.

The flames spread outside the bubble, igniting the entire sphere. It resembled a burning planet, and then Belli pushed it into a predetermined orbit, revolving with the dark salt around Bologue.

"And lastly... mercury."

The silvery white serpent slowly rose. At first glance, Bologue almost mistook it for Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid, but it was merely mercury that had been processed. Its peculiar properties in such a special environment caused it to display this eerie form.

The scalpel in Belli's hand acted like a conductor's baton, orchestrating this grand symphony. Guided by her blade, the serpent slithered, devouring one floating golden droplet after another.

Amidst the silvery white hue, hints of gold began to infuse. Then, resplendent golden flames ignited on the serpent, as fiery snakes danced wildly.

The intense burning didn't last long; once the flames subsided, the silvery white serpent was gone, replaced with a blinding crimson color.

Bologue lay flat on the operating table, knowing what Belli was doing. She was transforming these alchemy materials, while the advancement of the Condenser could also be seen as a transformation. Yet what puzzled Bologue was that the transformation of mercury shouldn't result in this.

"There are many transformation paths for mercury, Iron-Repelling Paint is just the most well-known one."

Belli commanded the crimson serpent, and it too slipped into the stellar orbit, coiling around Bologue like a serpent encircling the world.



"If the transformation direction of the Iron-Repelling Paint is absolute inertness, resisting steel, then this transformation direction is complete activity, capable of reacting easily with any matter."

As Belli narrated, Bologue slowly recalled the contents from the books and recognized this crimson serpent.

Red Mercury.

Also known as Red Mercury, just like Iron-Repelling Paint, it is a product of the first transformation of mercury, but the slight difference is that Iron-Repelling Paint is often used to make armor, while Red Mercury is regarded as a potent explosive, used in various offensive weaponry.

Both originate from the same source, yet exist at completely opposite poles.

Golden dust scattered, resplendent golden droplets forming out of thin air, like stars suspended high above.

The pitch-black planet and the burning planet continued to orbit, while the crimson serpent slithered between them. The three ran stable for a long time until at one moment, the endlessly lengthening, slithering crimson serpent greedily devoured its own tail.

The instant head and tail connected, it was as if gravity reversed, and the liquid ether in the grooves on the ground rose up, transforming into an upward storm.

The ether roared, and the stars shone brilliantly.

Chapter 356: Lost

The snake holds a particularly special significance in alchemy. Legend has it that the snake was the one that expelled humanity from paradise on Earth, yet it was also the snake that bestowed wisdom upon humanity, allowing them mastery over flame and steel.

The snake is cunning and sinister, dragging humanity into endless darkness, yet it also grants them the power to resist this darkness.

Whenever recalled, Bologue's mind is filled with those abominable beings.

Demons.

They grant hope, then drag it into despair, much like mischievous hunters watching their prey struggle painfully in traps until death.

A crimson snake bites its tail, forming an alchemy matrix that resembles the void realm. In the moment when head and tail connect, it completes its self-closure and cycle.

The ether is bound within, governed by the threefold trials. Likewise, at the instant the tail is bitten, the ritual's possibility reaches infinity.

Evil and good, closure and infinity.

Contradictory attributes coexist and repel within the Ouroboros until, through continuous destruction and rebirth, all mortal qualities are eliminated, reaching transcendence.

"Hold on! Bologue, all three together!"

Belli shouted whilst wielding a scalpel. The crimson snake ferociously devoured its tail, the ring formed by its body constantly sinking, compressing the stars which merged into the only two celestial bodies until the greedy serpent consumed them both.

The crimson snake consumed everything except for one final item.

Its body rose high, its scarlet skin emitting glorious light. Flames and dark gold shimmered as Belli swung the scalpel down, and the crimson snake swallowed Bologue whole.

Rather than being swallowed, it felt more like crashing into Bologue, then splintering into scattered spray, yet these droplets weren't constrained by gravity, flowing onto the ground instead, coalescing on Bologue's body surface and encasing him like in red amber.

"First comes salt... the physical trial."

Bologue whispered in his mind, ready for what was coming next, when suddenly, the murky red liquid violently compressed, as if penetrating entirely into Bologue's body.

After a brief calm, excruciating pain tore through Bologue's body.

The power of the trial effortlessly exceeded the limits of the rectangular soul critical. Within Bologue's body, dense, dark golden crystals formed, sprouting on joints and soft tissues, even breaking through the skin like seeds sprouting outwards.

Destruction and rebirth coexist.

As Bologue's flesh was torn apart, the dark salt continually dissolved, and pure ether flowed into his body, bringing him closer to the secret source, gradually allowing his form to undergo etherealization.

Without pausing for a breath, another wave of agony struck Bologue's heart, madly scorching his will with invisible flames.

Bologue knew this was the Trial of Sulfur, corresponding to will and spirit, with the intangible fire tempering his resolve.

Amidst the pain, chaotic visions flashed before Bologue's eyes, while clamorous voices echoed in his mind.

There were voices of enemies and friends, some were Palmer's ramblings, others were the roars of demons.

Amidst the mixed melody, the tyrant's voice rose.

"How does one show devotion to a god?

Suffering! Endless suffering! Placing oneself in that infinite hell!"

Rarely, the tyrant spoke sensibly.

Wealth is not eternal, nor are vows reliable. Killing for a god might still result in betrayal.

Only one thing remains unchanged, and that is the believer themselves.

Precious, one-time-only life.

The believer suppresses their rationale, plunging into pain, proving their devotion through prolonged asceticism as they further self-harm that precious life.

Bologue suddenly had a strange thought; in his constant deaths and suffering, how he was different from those believers?

The only difference might be that he had no god to serve.

No... he had a god to serve, but rather than a god, Bologue preferred to describe Him with another term.

Devil.

"The time for your trial has arrived."

Belli whispered as the final trial exploded into effect.

Trial of Mercury.

The crimson serpent coiled around Bologue's Alchemy Matrix, crossing the boundary between reality and illusion, directly interfering with Bologue's soul. It delved deeper, reaching beneath the broken void.

The sensation was dreadful, as if a real snake was burrowing inside Bologue's body. But more than the body, this feeling undoubtedly went deeper, triggering Bologue's instinctive resistance.

But soon, all the pain vanished.

Not just the pain.

Bologue watched the golden dust suspended in the air, motionless yet reflecting myriad glows.

Belli stood in front of the operating table, holding a scalpel, her expression frozen, appearing somewhat comical.

Time... stood still.

Bologue was somewhat confused about the current situation, but when it came to time, his first thought was his Blessing: Time Reversing Axis. Yet, according to his deductions, it wasn't time for a reset... he hadn't even died.

This anomaly didn't originate from his Blessing, but from this triple trial.

The frozen golden dust trembled slightly, which didn't escape Bologue's notice. He sharply looked at it, and the trembling intensified, as if time was about to break free from the force that bound it.

"You didn't say this would happen."

Bologue muttered to himself, aware that Belli wouldn't answer him at this moment.

He was caught in some kind of anomaly. Bologue had never heard of encountering such a scene during a triple trial. Or was it something unknown triggered by undertaking all three trials simultaneously?

Unknown, unknown, and still unknown, one following the other, unbearably frustrating.

Before Bologue could take any action, the flow of Ether resumed. It surged like a flood in an instant, shattering the stasis of time.

But the world did not return to the track Bologue expected, instead it plunged into another, more insane beginning.

The distortion started from the spatial dimension, stretching the golden dust into elongated strands, more precisely, all matter was stretched and elongated, turning into glowing lines in Bologue's eyes.

Extending from one end to the other, with no visible start or end.

Even the operating table beneath him did not escape such distortion, followed by Bologue himself, witnessing his body transform into dense, monochrome, infinitely extending lines.

Bologue wanted to do something, but no matter how he resisted, his body refused to respond, as if it were a corpse.

The dazzling lines were woven together like tightly drawn bowstrings.

Release, shoot the arrow.

The infinitely extending lines reset in an instant, and Bologue's eyes reflected the afterimage of that reset, then the things before him began to change and collapse rapidly.

A roaring train sped past his eyes, shattering the golden dust. Then the collapsed walls revealed the streets of Opus, the ground began to sink, and after the collapse, torrents surged forth. The Rhine River flowed across one land after another, swiftly reaching the end of the northern mountains.

Bologue's mind started to go numb. Amid this mutation, the space he had just been in seemed truly drawn into a bowstring, shooting him forth like an arrow.

The scenes continued to intermingle and flash before his eyes; within seconds, his vision had reached the northern end of the Rhine River. But before Bologue could discern clearly, disruptive music blasted from his ears, shattering the tranquility of the green fields.

Bologue liked rock music, but this was hardly a good time to listen.

It was as if he'd crashed into a wall, dizzy and dazed, Bologue found himself at a frenzied party. He turned his head, and in front of him appeared a black-and-white screen. The people in the movie conversed, and then looked at him, reaching out from the screen, breaking the boundary of the story...

Everything he saw felt like a mad montage.

The cacophony gradually receded, and the chaotic scenes began to dim. Yet following this decline, pairs of crimson eyes emerged, and massive black silhouettes towered like mountains, encircling Bologue completely.

Bologue was the delicacy on the table, and these unknown presences were the invited guests, scanning him with greedy eyes, ready to carve him up and feast upon him.

In the maddening chaos, Bologue could distinctly feel these chaotic entities casting their gaze upon him.

He had been noticed, something dreadful was about to happen, and Bologue was powerless to resist it all.

A fear surpassing death erupted in Bologue's heart. Just as everything edged towards its end, a blazing white light burst forth, like a rising sun, obliterating all the silhouettes, transforming them into wisps of smoke that faded into nothingness.

The agitated heart found serenity. Bologue looked towards the end of this table, where in the main seat, pure, holy white light radiated streams of light, like luminous currents, at the edge of darkness, converging into a blazing white storm.

Bologue gazed at it for a long time until an equally brilliant white storm was reflected in his eyes.

### Chapter 357: Land Sailing

The brilliant radiance lifts and spills over, like the divine kingdom on earth, infusing every corner of the cold steel with a sense of sacredness.

Secret Energy: Touch of Revelation.

This Secret Energy belongs to the Secret Revelation School, allowing Belli to bypass the boundary between reality and illusion, directly touching the Alchemy Matrix, interfering with it microscopically, precisely controlling the transformation of metals and the adjustment of the Alchemy Matrix.

Unfortunately, unlike Aimou's Shared Chord Body that can be used both for research and enhancing combat, Belli's Secret Energy is largely limited to research applications.

She has also tried using Secret Energy to harm enemies, but with the existence of Rectangular Soul Critical and Ethereum Mutual Exclusion, Belli's Secret Energy finds it difficult to break through their constraints to directly cause damage to enemies.

This led Belli to completely abandon the idea of becoming an Alchemy Sword Saint, opting instead to earnestly continue with her research.

"So tired..."



Belli gasped for air, her hands drooping by her sides as the scalpel she held dissipated into golden dust with the release of Secret Energy.

For every Alchemist, conducting a ceremony is never an easy task; it requires not only professional knowledge, but also intense concentration, and under those conditions, precise manipulation of the fusion of Alchemy Materials and Ether, ultimately overlapping with Bologue's body, mind, and spirit.

This made Belli somewhat nostalgic for her teacher; with Teda around, she only needed to be an assistant.

"Alright, check his status data."

Belli called out to the assistant nearby, several electrode patches stuck to Bologue's chest, cables extending to the devices on both sides, with the numbers steadily fluctuating over time.

The hardest phase is now over; it's just a matter of waiting for Bologue's transformation to complete.

What's more surprising to Belli is that the ceremony is proceeding unexpectedly smoothly.

Wiping the sweat from her forehead, Belli looked curiously at Bologue lying on the operating table.

Everything related to the Debtor is never that simple, let alone Bologue, who inherited the Power of Dominator; with the uncontrollability of last time's box, Belli made ample preparations before the ceremony, and it seems those preparations might be unnecessary now.

Bologue had his eyes tightly shut, the pain sweeping through his body, mind, and spirit no longer present; at this moment, his expression was unexpectedly calm, as if he had fallen into slumber.

Is this guy asleep?

Belli scrutinized Bologue, filled with curiosity, but she also understood the importance of the ceremony, so she just stood guard beside the operating table, waiting for Bologue to awaken.

High concentrations of Ether shrouded the surroundings, occasionally forming golden droplets out of thin air, reminiscent of a light drizzle, which landed on Bologue's body and were promptly absorbed, replenishing the depleted Alchemy Matrix.

Upon closer observation, one could notice that Bologue's flesh seemed to exhibit slight transparency, as if the light was distorted; his corporeal body replaced by some form of manifest energy.

This is the body Etherealization brought about by the Trial of Salt, where the mortal body gradually ascends, and pure Ether fills the weakness inherent in mortality.

The benefits of the Trial of Sulfur are hard to observe, but from the values on the equipment, Bologue's mental state was very stable, which was a positive sign.

As for the benefits from the Trial of Mercury, they were very evident now; under the trial's support, Red Mercury further solidified Bologue's soul, expanding this foundational stone, and the Alchemy Matrix covering the soul received further growth.

The most direct feedback was the continuously absorbed Ether, with golden raindrops permeating into Bologue's Alchemy Matrix, smoothing out its gaps.

Trinity returns to stability.

"Perfect!"

Belli silently gave herself a thumbs up, indeed a genius.

What follows is merely waiting; waiting for Bologue to wake up. Taking a few laps around the operating table, Belli suddenly stopped, leaned over, and observed Bologue.

Bologue appeared to be really asleep, unaware of what kind of dream he now had.

Belli squinted her eyes, seemingly plotting some mischief, but just as she was about to act, Bologue moved.

Bologue's body shook violently, as if he had stepped into emptiness in his sleep; he furrowed his brows, sweat seeping from his forehead, seemingly undergoing some nightmare.

"Values are out of control!"

A tense voice sounded from the side, a cliff-edge change in values occurred, and Bologue's state instantly spiraled out of control.

"What's going on?"

Belli was caught off guard by the sudden anomaly; everything was going so smoothly, but Belli wasn't easily frightened. Although her Tier wasn't high, she was still the current director.

She waved her hand, the brilliance of the Ether rising along her arm, then the drizzle transformed into a torrential rainstorm.

A large amount of Ether was liquefied, then rushed towards Bologue, as Belli promptly pressed the button next to the operating table, various Alchemy Potions injected into Bologue's body through pre-embedded needles.

For different patients, different treatment plans are required. Belli didn't care about Bologue's life or death, only about the stability of his Alchemy Matrix. Therefore, the side effects of these Alchemy Potions were extremely severe, but the effects were equally apparent. In just a few breaths, Bologue's condition returned to stability.

Belli looked at the nightmare-engulfed Bologue with melancholy, reaching out to gently stroke his cheek.

"What exactly are you dreaming of?"

Bologue stood before the blazing white storm, which seemed to represent the end of the world, the end of all things. The howling wind pulled at everything, dragging them into the pitch-black eye of the storm, returning them to nothingness.

The light dust that spilled out like smoke also wove into brilliant light bands under its pull, as if filling the night sky with auroras.

Bologue was fascinated by this breathtaking scenery, but he also understood the layers of danger hidden beneath this beautiful scene.

"What exactly are you?"

Bologue gazed at the blazing white storm for a long time, until his pupil was filled with the storm as if it were a mirror, and his blue eyes were completely overshadowed by darkness.

A sense of being pulled surged from his heart, as if his soul was about to be yanked out of his body. Bologue, as if compelled by a ghost or spirit, stepped forward, with overlapping shadows appearing on his body, as if those shadows were the soul detaching from his shell.

Bologue advanced forward, seemingly walking on a desolate icefield. Soon after, he saw many silhouettes, moving towards the storm just like himself.

No... something's not right...

Can't keep moving forward, can't...

Bologue instinctively resisted, but he couldn't control his body. He was already captured by the storm and could only step forward mechanically, just like those illusory silhouettes, forever lost here.

Damn it!

Bologue cursed in his heart, still remembering Belli's warning, but just like a crow's mouth, as soon as she spoke of being lost, he seemed to have encountered such a situation now.

"So... are you the Secret Source?"

Bologue retained a sliver of clarity, looking ferociously at the massive, world-devouring storm.

No one responded.

The sound of glass shattering echoed from within his body. Bologue looked at his palm, and different shadows appeared on his body. If he was right, his soul was about to be dragged out.

The storm devoured the blazing white smoke dust billowing between heaven and earth, and his vision cleared. Countless silhouettes appeared around Bologue. They stood like ice sculptures in place, some roaring, some weeping, some curled into a ball unwilling to face such reality.

As the soul gradually tore away from his body, Bologue clearly observed that from where the shadows detached, his body was constantly crystallizing, slowly covering it until he became one of these dead ones.

Suddenly, a distant thunderclap rang out. Bologue stiffly turned his head, looking behind him. He still remembered those towering black shadows and the crimson eyes numbering hundreds and thousands.

They were supposed to be driven away, collapsing under the blazing white storm, but now Bologue saw with his own eyes how the majestic figures rose up, seemingly gazing at him. Then, a massive ship's anchor broke through layers of the snowy storm, fiercely smashing down in front of him.

The chains pulled taut, the rusted anchor dragged backward, crushing countless dead figures, scattering the howling wind as if navigating through earthly waters.

No one told Bologue what to do, but instinctively, Bologue raised his crystallized arm and when the anchor dragged past him, he grabbed onto the protrusion, and shortly after, he was pulled along,

smashing through the whirling snow dust. Broken corpse fragments hit his face, yet he did not let go until he broke free of the storm's pull.

Straight ahead, crashing into darkness, returning to the world of the living.

Bologue suddenly sat up, as if awakening from a nightmare, sitting on the operating table and gasping violently.

His chest heaved incessantly, cold sweat covering his forehead, as if he had just gone through a life-and-death battle, the whole person carrying an air of unreality.

After a brief daze, Bologue felt his body, repeatedly confirming he was still alive. Realizing he had escaped from that damned space, he finally relaxed, letting out a long sigh of relief.

"What are you all looking at?"

Bologue noticed the eyes around him. The researchers had stopped their work, looking at Bologue in shock, with some gesturing excitedly.

Were they shocked because he had completed the triple trials in one go? Were these people really so inexperienced?

Just as Bologue was deeply puzzled, a researcher calmed down and pointed beside Bologue. He turned his head to look.

He saw Belli lying on the ground, clutching her head, curling up in pain.

"Bologue... you bastard..."

Angry eyes peeked out from between fingers, a mournful cry of unwillingness rang out.

In the instant Bologue stood up, he delivered a vicious headbutt that knocked Belli over, clean and ruthless in his actions.

#### Chapter 358: Excellent Traditions

Behind the observation window, the decrepit figures were silent, even the heavy breathing had vanished, leaving only the occasional ticking sounds from the life-support machines.

After a brief resuscitation, the condition of these old fellows stabilized, the sunken eyes beneath flickering with the light of wisdom.

After a while, the breathing returned again, accompanied by coughing and wheezing that broke the silence, stirring up a renewed commotion.

They no longer cared much about this Triple Trial; someone would record it all anyway, and they could review the records later.

Their gazes were all focused on the elderly man in a white robe leading the group, whom they all believed should have died many years ago, yet he appeared so vividly before them now.

Some people had already realized why this was by looking at the old man's body. Despite being clad in a white robe, the flesh underneath long ceased to exist.

To prolong the life of the man in the white robe, most of his internal organs had been replaced with artificial creations many years ago, and what flowed inside him was no longer flesh and blood but some kind of alchemy solution undergoing dialysis periodically.

But this is not why the man in the white robe is still alive; what truly allows him to endure the ages and extend to now is his glorious tier.

His body underwent Etherealization, breaking free from mortal confines, and buoyed by the vigorous life force of his own Secret Energy, he stood firm against the torrents of time.

"Professor..."

An elderly person beside him was exceptionally emotional, eager to converse with the man in the white robe.

"Shut up."

The elderly man in the white robe sternly interrupted him, causing the elder's expression to freeze. Living so long had turned him into an old man, yet his face now bore a hint of grievance.

The others prudently maintained silence, pondering why the old man in the white robe would appear now.

Official records indicated he had died more than forty years ago, yet he was vividly present before them, followed by shock, as these elders realized that the man in the white robe had transcended the shackles of mortality, approaching over two centuries old.

Many words lingered unspoken, yet under the pressure of the white-robed elder, these renowned masters remained silent, like young apprentices, afraid to speak.

Yas from the back gradually deduced the identity of the man in the white robe from the reactions of these elders, falling into the same state of shock.

Startled by the identity of the man in the white robe and even more so by why he was still alive and appeared here suddenly.

There was no prior report, nor any notification; he simply appeared directly.

It felt like working normally, and suddenly the Director of the Order Bureau came with breakfast to see you, asking if your work was going smoothly or if you needed a raise.

Yas swallowed, wondering what was going on recently, with bizarre happenings increasing in frequency.



The man in the white robe was indifferent to the thoughts of those around him; he was solely focused on Bologue below, his aged and frightening face relaxing slightly at the sight of Bologue, as if seeing an old friend not seen in years... although Bologue did not know him.

"Has it been so long? Even he has been released and become one of us."

The man in the white robe muttered softly, though he seemed unsurprised by Bologue's current situation, as if it had been destined many years ago.

He merely sighed softly.

"You still chose to do this, Albert."

Gently shaking his head, the man in the white robe turned his attention to another person crouched on the ground, holding their head and crying.

"Who is she?"

"She's Belli Yiyeta, Teda's student, and the current Minister of the Sublimation Furnace Core," said the student nearby, "sort of your... grandstudent?"

The man in the white robe glanced at the student beside him, who had turned into an old man like him, bald-headed, prompting him to sigh, "Didn't expect you haven't died either, Morgan."

"Well, if you haven't died, teacher, how could I pass first?"

The previously reserved Morgan suddenly began teasing his teacher.

"Teda... Teda Yazhede?"

Recalling these names, though no longer in public view, he was somewhat aware of the current situation of the Order Bureau.

Quickly, the relevant information resurfaced in his mind; old yet sharp-witted.

Recalling those confidential files, his eyes grew sharper, as he continued to ask, "Who is now in charge of the Scholars' Hall?"

"Since your 'death,' I have taken charge," Morgan said.

The man in the white robe glanced at Morgan, then stood up with a cane and looked at the other old folks.

Calling them old folks, yet in his eyes, each one could be considered young compared to him, excluding the Undead, it's rare to find someone older than the man in the white robe.

"So... now I'm in charge of Scholars' Hall; you will be my assistant."

The man in the white robe proclaimed with irrefutable authority.

Morgan froze, realizing something was awry; this old man had emerged from the grave not to see his disciples but to seize power.

"Teacher, you know I always respect you, but this kind of thing requires official notification from the Decision Room," Morgan raised an eyebrow.

The man in the white robe silently stared at him.

Morgan felt a chill in his heart and reluctantly said, "Teacher, you are also a veteran of the Order Bureau; you should know that the rules are paramount."

Upon hearing this, the ominous face of the man in the white robe unexpectedly smiled, and he patted Morgan's shoulder.

"Good disciple, unchanged after all these years."

"And teacher, still robust as ever."

They laughed together; if Bologue were here and witnessing this interaction, he would surely sigh, realizing his mistake.

He thought that the act of betraying teachers and ancestors was limited to Teda and Belli, but it appears more like a longstanding tradition within the Sublimation Furnace Core.

The smile vanished from the man in the white robe's face as he proclaimed loudly, "Now I'm in charge of the Scholars' Hall; who objects?"

Everyone remained silent, implicitly acknowledging the man in the white robe's position.

Partly because they can't protest; the man's expertise in Alchemy overwhelmingly surpassed everyone present, as the first Minister of the Sublimation Furnace Core, his credentials similarly crushed everyone. As for strength?

The comparison is futile; as a Seeker of Glory, he could easily pulverize each oldster physically, smashing them to pieces, and repeat the process several times.

"Anyone still has something to say?" He turned to Morgan.

Morgan pondered for a few seconds, his aged face displaying a flattering smile.

"Teacher, I'll help you push the wheelchair!"

...

This time, the Triple Trial ritual proceeded without any incidents, but if there were unexpected occurrences, it was only Belli's.

"Bologue, you ungrateful!"

Inside the infirmary, Belli held an ice pack to her forehead, which had turned red.

She just wanted to observe Bologue's condition; no one expected him to abruptly sit up like a carp, delivering a headbutt that left Belli feeling dazed.

As an expert, even an unintended headbutt was so fierce that Belli still saw double when looking at things now.

Bologue's expression was somewhat complex, as he obediently sat beside her, remaining silent.

"You nearly killed a minister," Belli remarked sarcastically, "Is this Bologue Lazarus? Easily doing what even the King's Secret Sword couldn't achieve."

Bologue's mouth twitched slightly, wanting to say something, but understood that if he began a conversation with Belli, it would evolve into a foolish dialogue, inevitably ending by him paying some price.

He was well-acquainted with it, as Belli often tricked him like this.

"Cough... sorry." Bologue couldn't resist speaking.

Belli's eyes lit up, ready to launch an offensive on Bologue, but he quickly interjected, "I saw something strange."

"During the ritual, I hallucinated a lot. I know it's considered normal, but I seem to have encountered the 'lost' you mentioned."

Bologue poured out the doubts in his heart, leaving no chance for Belli to interrupt.

"I saw a blazing storm that seemed... capable of pulling my soul outward."

Belli's glib words were stuck in her throat by Bologue's inquiry, freezing her expression, leading her to instinctively ponder these matters, forgetting her earlier plans.

Bologue sighed in relief; when professional matters arise, Belli becomes serious, focusing on them and ceasing foolish dialogue.

"Lost? I'm not quite sure about that," Belli said.

"Why are you unsure?" Bologue didn't understand.

"Literally," Belli waved her hands, "lost is lost, if you're able to return, then it's not lost."

#### Chapter 359: The Monkey with the Toy

"What you've experienced isn't exactly being lost; it's more like taking a detour at the edge of being lost, which is... normal, after all, you are a Debtor. The lack of soul makes any ritual involving the soul extremely unstable for you."

Belli analyzed what Bologue had been through, but Bologue always felt there was more to it.

At the end of the hallucination, he saw those towering, mountain-like black figures, the blazing white storm, and finally, the anchor that saved him.

These things resembled certain imagery, and Bologue had a rough guess of their counterparts in his heart.

"Is that so?"

Bologue took a long breath and stretched his body. Besides these episodes, he had completed the ritual and finished the trial of body, mind, and soul.

"Ascending to a Prayer Believer is free, right?" Bologue suddenly asked.

"Of course, the Order Bureau will provide the necessary Alchemy Materials for the ascension to Prayer Believer for free."

"Are you planning to ascend to Prayer Believer immediately?" Belli shook her head, "Just like after ascending, it takes a while for the soul to stabilize; now, you also need to let your Alchemy Matrix adjust a bit."

Bologue nodded, understanding these things.

The ascension of a Condenser requires three prerequisites: the stability of one's soul, undergoing the trials required at each stage, and the growth of one's Alchemy Matrix.

The soul is the foundation, Ether is the nourishment, allowing the Alchemy Matrix to grow from a seed into a towering tree.

The First Stage of a Condenser doesn't require a long growth period; just sprouting is sufficient.

With this thought, Bologue called upon the Ether, intricate patterns extending on his arm. After the triple trial, his Alchemy Matrix also experienced a degree of growth, spreading to his elbows. Once he ascended to Prayer Believer, it should completely cover Bologue's arms.

After ascending to Prayer Believer, Bologue would need a long time to bond with the Ether more closely, approach the Secret Source, endure trial after trial, then execute various tasks, figuring out ways to collect the Alchemy Materials needed to ascend to Negative Power User.

Bologue stopped thinking about those distant matters, as Belli suggested, "Want to go to the combat room?"

"Why go to the combat room?" Bologue asked in return.

"Aren't all you Field Staff like this? You get a new weapon and you just have to try it out, even if there are no enemies, you punch a wall just to test the new power."

Belli was puzzled. As the minister of the Sublimation Furnace Core, she considered herself akin to an arms dealer, distributing various equipment to different operation groups every day. She had seen such situations too many times.

She often saw some Field Staff, excited like monkeys with new toys, rushing into the combat room to recklessly attack things.

Bologue said expressionlessly, "I'm different."

After saying that, Bologue coolly pushed the door open and left, his will unyielding and untethered by anything.

Belli watched his stylish departure, stunned for two seconds, then the pain from her forehead brought her back to her senses. She got up and chased after him, cursing angrily.

"You bastard, come back here!"

Belli Yiyeta, the youngest minister of the Sublimation Furnace Core in history, since her tenure, no one has gained an advantage over her, and Bologue clearly couldn't either.

Bologue's face darkened as he turned, catching a glimpse of Belli holding her head with one hand and pointing at him with the other, shouting loudly.

"Stop him!"

Belli seemed genuinely angry, paying no mind to her image... did she even have an image?

Anyway, this only strengthened Bologue's resolve to leave.

Go back? How could he go back, to be a live experiment for her?

Bologue quickened his steps and then broke into a jog. It's strange that no matter how much Belli shouted, no one around came to stop Bologue; everyone was minding their own business, only a few glancing at the two before continuing their work.

Everyone seemed unexpectedly calm, as if this kind of thing happened often and they were used to it.

Wait a minute, what does Belli do every day as a minister?

Running away wasn't Bologue's style, but he really couldn't calmly face Belli. This minister was just too much of a handful.

Rather than sticking to his principles, Bologue felt it was unnecessary to make things difficult for himself.

"See you next time! Belli!"

Bologue waved behind him and slipped through the gate.

The elevator swayed, returning Bologue to the Pillar Courtyard. Here, Bologue didn't stop, returning all the way to the Field Operations Department, where he finally breathed a sigh of relief.

He remembered Palmer saying that he'd need to inject potions to stabilize himself afterward, but as an Undead, Bologue clearly didn't need them.



Relying on the power of the Blessing, except for the fatal weakness of the Ether vacuum, it seemed like Bologue could solve most of the negative effects by shooting in his mind.

However, suicide also required timing; if his condition was poor, suicide would only hasten his descent into slumber.

Bologue suddenly stopped, recalling Hart's dazed look when he saw Bologue commit suicide. If in battle, he suddenly committed suicide, what effect would it have?

Once this idea took root, it grew uncontrollably. Previously, Bologue was somewhat hesitant about this, but now, after completing the triple trial, he could clearly feel his own enhancement.

His physical strength increased significantly, his willpower became more resolute, and even his observational skills were enhanced. Aside from that, the most notable change was the strengthening of his Alchemy Matrix.

The Ethereal Amount stored in the Critical Storage of the Rectangular Soul increased, and his Affinity for the Ether also showed significant improvement. Next, he only needed the ascension ritual to combine these three aspects to attain higher authority.

Bologue originally intended to report this to Lebius, but standing at the crossroads, Bologue's gaze unconsciously drifted to the other side.

...

Recently, the Sixth Group replaced the Special Operations Group, and exchanges between the two action groups became frequent. Hart served as the communication bridge and has been seen often in the office lately.

Meeting frequently, Bologue and Hart got to know each other. However, every time they talked, Hart would casually ask about his psychological state.

"Do you have depression? Is the work not good? Or is life having some issues?"

He was like a psychologist, asking Bologue questions one after another.

"Don't keep things bottled up; you can talk to me about them."

Bologue always felt Hart misunderstood something, but he couldn't be bothered to explain. Explaining his thoughts to others was always difficult.

Now, standing together face to face, Bologue felt he was also quite tall, but when compared to Hart, he seemed like a skinny monkey.

Hart's beastly physique made him, in every sense, resemble a raging beast, yet in reality, this beast was very gentle, sometimes even wearing glasses and flipping through the small books in his hands.

"Conducting triple trials simultaneously? Pretty impressive," Hart marveled at Bologue's feat, "I took three weeks to complete those trials."

Normal people would do them one after the other, but only Bologue, being impatient and undying, could undertake all three at once.

"So... why did you ask me here?"

After praising Bologue, Hart stood in the combat room, looking puzzled.

"I need your help."

Bologue said as he distanced himself from Hart, stretching his muscles.

No Field Staff could resist trying new weapons, and Bologue was no different. The reason he tricked Belli was purely to mess with her ostentatious demeanor.

"Hart, you're a good person."

The sudden compliment left Hart a bit puzzled, and Bologue continued.

"With your large build, furry... you look very sturdy."

Sturdy?

Hart felt that something was amiss; then the light of Ether extended over Bologue's arm. He crouched down, touched the ground with both hands, and the azure patterns quickly spread to Hart's feet.

"Help me, and... I'll treat you to a movie afterward."

Bologue was curious about what kind of expression Hart would have when he found out who Sido really was.

In the next moment, the ground collapsed, and numerous sharp Long Halberds emerged from the ground.

## Chapter 360: Witch

With consciousness awakening, the sound of purring resonated in his ears, Bologue opened his eyes, without lifting his head, he could see the black cat nestled on his chest.

Perhaps because no newcomers had arrived for quite a while, during the days Bologue stayed at the Undying Club, Wei'Er was very clingy, even if he ushered her out of the room, she would always be by his side when he woke up.

Bologue sat up from the bed, carefully moved Wei'Er aside, within the Undying Club, there were few people Bologue respected, and Wei'Er was one of them.

It was not that Wei'Er was particularly strong or knowledgeable, but among this group of oddities, Wei'Er counted as one of the few normal cats.

Getting out of bed, out of caution towards the other members of the Undying Club, Bologue never dared to sleep naked here, each time he slept he would only remove his outer coat.

After a simple stretch, Bologue summoned the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid, cold snakes slithered over his palm, weaving like soft fabric into silver-white gloves.

For the past Bologue, such precision in control was extremely challenging, but now it was effortless.

However, with such progress, Bologue gradually discovered certain weaknesses in himself, such as lacking a powerful, one-hit-kill technique.

After the successful completion of the triple trials yesterday, Bologue had sparred with Hart in the combat room.

Hart, despite his simple appearance, fought with great vigor, and upon seeing Bologue as an Undead, he fully unleashed his power.

Then a prayer believer level Ether reaction was released unrestrictedly in front of Bologue.

Only at that moment did Bologue realize that Hart was a prayer believer.

As a prayer believer of the Origin School, under Ethereal Amplification, Hart's movements were somewhat clumsy, but each of his punches was extremely lethal, the long halberd rising from the ground was easily shattered by him.

If Bologue were hit head-on without protection, his internal organs would be smashed into a bloody mess instantly.

Fortunately, Bologue was agile enough, combined with the deceit of the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid, throughout the bout, Hart couldn't touch Bologue.

Regrettably, this duel ended in a draw.

While dodging Hart's fierce attacks, Bologue also tried to counterattack, but no matter what kind of offensive he launched, he couldn't penetrate the Ethereal Barrier that Hart constructed.

Even after passing the triple trials, there was still a certain gap between Bologue and a prayer believer.

Pure Ether forged into a defense encircling the body, all of Bologue's attacks were blocked by Hart with ease, and this was Hart bare-handed, without using his own Alchemy Armament.

Honestly, this made Bologue somewhat disheartened, he initially thought after the triple trials, he could punch Condensers, kick prayer believers, but when faced with Hart, this guy was as hard as a shield wall.

In a way, it makes sense, Hart's role in the team is indeed the shield wall, and during previous actions, the Ethereal Barrier he summoned could even withstand the attacks of Negative Power Users.

Bologue wasn't entirely without options against Hart, he just needed to exhaust Hart, continuously draining his Ether, finding the weak points in the Ethereal Barrier, then launching a fierce attack.

But in the end, Bologue didn't go that far, it was just sparring, not a life-and-death duel, no need to go to such extremes.

"You are strong, just met the wrong opponent," Hart commented afterwards, "I specialize in this Extreme Technique of Ethereal Barrier, though still not reaching the Extreme Realm, it's not something an average person can break through, nimble fellows like you happen to be countered by me."

Bologue understood this rationale, fights among Condensers sometimes rely heavily on luck.

If Bologue were a Condenser of the Void Spirit School, he could bypass the Ethereal Barrier, heavy hit Hart's mind, or create illusions to expose his flaws.

If Hart were a Condenser of the Void Spirit School, he would be slain in an instant amidst Bologue's torrential offensive.

All in all, after the bout with Hart, Bologue realized his shortcomings, previously he had the Bright Light Blade to use, that pure Ethereal Sword enough to pierce most defenses, even having the chance against Hart's Ethereal Barrier.

But during the battle with the Scarlet Bishop Latis, this Bright Light Blade, which once achieved great feats, shattered completely, leaving Bologue without a lethal method.

So...

Bologue's expression soured, lacking an Alchemy Armament, he would have to visit the Sublimation Furnace Core, and upon going there, would surely encounter Belli.

Recalling Belli's furious howl from yesterday, Bologue felt a headache coming on, initially thinking he could avoid her for a while, but had to see her again the next day.

"Good morning."

Stepping out of the room, entering the bar, still the familiar scene, Serey sprawled on the side, amidst a mess.

Bologue sidestepped bottles and jars, avoiding getting his shoes stained with unknown liquids, shortly after he arrived at the Order Bureau.

"Humph, you boy..."

Belli looked at Bologue with a smile, crossing her white legs, her back pressing against the chair, hands on the armrests, displaying an arrogant demeanor as if holding victory.

Bologue directly ignored Belli, glancing around and remarked, "You actually have an office, I always thought you just found a random place to rest when tired."

"Ah? "

Belli tilted her head, momentarily unable to react to Bologue's sarcasm. As the head of the Sublimation Furnace Core, few dared speak to her like this.

Unlike the typical office image, Belli's place was more like a small workshop, various containers crowded the shelves, at the edge of her desk, a small vise was set up.

Coupling with Belli's alluring and mischievous face, Bologue felt she was akin to the old witch living in a tree from a story.

Hmm...

A young witch.

Bologue had prepared himself mentally, yet unexpectedly, this witch didn't pounce to punch or kick him.

What unsettled Bologue more was that Belli's mischievous smile vanished, replaced by a serious look.

Bologue always felt Belli and Palmer had some similarities, like they both had issues, but unlike Palmer who would ramble off-topic even at death's door, insisting on finishing his jokes.

Belli was different, she knew well when to laugh, when to be serious, so whenever Belli became earnest, Bologue understood, the fun times were over, something important was happening.

"I need some lethal Alchemy Armament," Bologue began.

"Rather than research that, there's another matter more pressing right now."

Looking at Belli's expression, Bologue knew she wasn't joking.

Minutes later, Belli brought Bologue to that familiar place, where he came daily.

Aimou floated in solution, continuously reconstructed, overall assembled, yet not coated, still metallic in color, like a finely crafted white doll.

"Aimou's having some issues," Belli said beside him.

"What issues? She looks alright to me." Bologue didn't understand.

"Yes, looks pretty good, just like new, but the problem is, we've reconstructed Aimou's body, but haven't managed to awaken her."

Saying this, Belli spoke cautiously, observing Bologue's reaction.

"Haven't... awakened?" Bologue repeated.

"All of Aimou's metrics are within normal range, the Constant Motion Core and Mind Projection run stably, in theory, she could regain control of the body, but we've tried awakening several times, she remains unresponsive."

Belli racked her brains, trying to convey all this to Bologue, an outsider.

"Like a vegetative state, the shell is intact, yet consciousness can't awaken."



Bologue's brow gradually furrowed, recalling the nightmare he encountered yesterday, lost within the confusion.

"This truly resembles standing at the surgery room's entrance, I'm the doctor, she's the patient, with the teacher absent, apart from you, I can't think of anyone to sign the critical notice," Belli mumbled.

Aimou is exceedingly lonely in this world, connections with her can be counted on one hand.

Relationships are like webs binding everyone firmly within society's lair, but Aimou's different, only a few threads connect her, and when all severed, she'd silently plunge into darkness.

"Do you have any ideas?" Bologue asked.

"The idea is you, certainly Aimou's still alive, but she's unable to wake, you've read similar reports, right? Families shouted endlessly beside vegetative patients, eventually waking them."

Thinking it over, Belli continued, "Though she's my junior, I've had little interaction with her, she likely doesn't remember my voice, but you're not the same."

"Want to try?"