

Endless 391

Chapter 391: Shadowless Barrier

"It's obviously a beating, so why do I feel so unsatisfied?"

Bologue muttered to himself.

In the past, battles were his outlet for emotions, but the moment he made a move this time, Bologue realized that he had been used by Aimou again. It was an open scheme, yet he couldn't just stand by and watch Aimou be cut by a blade, could he?

Standing before the disordered ruins, at the edge of Bologue's vision, Aimou was already nowhere to be seen.

She escaped quickly. From such a decisive decision, it seemed Aimou had become familiar with the route during previous time reversals, like a cunning rabbit.

Aimou wasn't like this before... or maybe he never really knew the true Aimou.

Thinking of this gave Bologue a headache. He wanted to continue chasing her, but now another problem was holding him back. However, the problem was still within an acceptable range. Bologue had already located Aimou's position; he would be faster and more agile in the next time reversal.

Now the issue returned to the present, with the first enemy Bologue encountered in this crazy reversal.

"King's Shield Guard, huh?"

Bologue's voice was somewhat suppressed, as if someone was gripping his throat.

Not only was his throat gripped, but Bologue's entire body was being squeezed by some invisible force, as if he was encased in cement, unable to move.

The rubble was pushed aside, and a battered figure rose from the ruins. Fast looked at the suddenly appearing opponent before him, filled with rage.

Under Bologue's sudden assault, even though Fast immediately blocked the offensive, he was still wounded by the sharp stone halberd, incurring multiple cuts and extensive abrasions, with blood gushing out.

Fast's eyes flowed with a burning light, and from this intense Ether reaction, Bologue determined that the opponent was a Prayer Believer.

Intricate green patterns climbed onto Bologue's arms, the Alchemy Matrix roaring to life, Ether filling every part of Bologue's body, and at the same time, Ethereal Amplification was bestowed upon Bologue.

Bologue's muscles tightened, veins bulging, as he tried to break free from the restrained state.

The surging Ether overflowed from his body, colliding mid-air with another stream of Ether. Under Ethereum Mutual Exclusion, blinding flashes flickered continuously.

Fast noticed Bologue's struggle, holding a cracked blade in one hand, raising the other as he did when he parted the sea of fire.

He clenched his fist forcefully, and Bologue felt an increase in the pressure exerted by the void-like power.

Commanding School?

The triple trial could only narrow the gap between Bologue and the Prayer Believer, but couldn't fully bridge the Tier chasm. For a moment, Bologue found it hard to resist, with the added pressure bringing acute pain.

But... that was not an issue, just a Prayer Believer. Bologue had hunted them before, even giving a heavy strike to a Negative Power User.

Bologue's eyes turned red, and the next moment, the familiar world vanished, replaced by a madly chaotic Hellscape, where demons howled as they brushed past him.

The Face of Horror erupted fully, a rising fog of fear directly covering Bologue's surroundings, the mental impact indiscriminately crashing around.

Fast's heart was struck by fear, like a nightmare, with bizarre images switching endlessly before his eyes. Even though Fast quickly recognized this as Bologue's doing, it was too late.

In the moment Fast's mind was shaken, there was a slight loosening of the confinement around Bologue, which he easily tore apart.

He smashed his fist into the ground, causing stone walls to rise up, concealing Bologue's figure.

Fast couldn't locate Bologue, and within Bologue's domain, the rocks could all become deadly weapons, stone spikes emerging from all directions, relentlessly pursuing Fast.

No matter how Fast dodged, Bologue pursued him like a ghost, the dense spikes like charging lances, leaving Fast nowhere to escape. If he were hit, he would be skewered into a bloodied mess.

"Get lost!"

An intense Alchemy Matrix flashed on Fast's surface, and the next moment, an invisible Shield Guard appeared, securing him within. The charging lances crashed onto the Shield Guard's shield, shattering into countless fragments, with dust flying.

"Interesting Secret Energy."

Bologue whispered in the shadows. Even with their Tier difference, the initiative in battle was still firmly in Bologue's hands.

It seemed the opponent was part of the King's Shield Guard. Bologue was a bit puzzled; if their target was the Immortal Heart, why pursue Aimou so relentlessly?

Does Aimou also have something they desire?

For example... Time Reversal?

Fast cautiously looked at the shrouding walls all around him. Accompanying a roar from him, those invisible Shield Guards surrounding him pushed forward in unison.

Iron feet mercilessly tread over the ruins like a storm passing through, crumbling the walls Bologue had raised; all shelters were flattened, and amidst the billowing dust, Bologue's figure flickered in and out of sight.

"Found you!"

Fast angrily stared at Bologue, raising his hand to grasp at Bologue, attempting once again to imprison Bologue with that invisible force.

But he still underestimated Bologue.

The ground beneath Fast began to collapse, his legs plunging directly into the earth below, while all the surrounding soil lifted up like enclosing petals, aiming to imprison Fast within.

Once the enclosure formed, Fast would be crushed into a bloody pulp in an instant. At this critical moment, those invisible Shield Guards reappeared, forming a vacuum area around Fast where no substance could penetrate.

Bologue attempted to shatter the ground beneath Fast's feet, but even if the earth was breached, an invisible force constantly blocked him from approaching Fast.

The thunderous sound of gunfire rang out, shattered pellets striking straight at Fast, but like the stone spikes before, they were repelled by an invisible wall before they got close to Fast.

Fast stood steadily within it, looking gloomily at Bologue, while Bologue felt somewhat displeased.

He remembered his own shortcomings, lacking direct offensive capabilities. When encountering Defensive experts like Hart, he would have a tough and draining battle.

From this perspective, after completing the triple trials, he had fought against two Condensers, but both were defense-oriented Condensers.

No, it wasn't entirely absolute. Hart was a Condenser from the Origin School; his formidable defense came from pure Ether, whereas the current Fast was different, his defense stemming from his own Secret Energy.

Just as Secret Energy had its inherent weaknesses.

Bologue stepped forward, a simple movement that erupted with unimaginable power. With Ethereal Amplification, his speed was incredibly fast, charging straight at Fast like a howling wind.

Fast also raised his hand at this time, prepared to employ the same trick, using the invisible force to imprison Bologue.

As Fast clenched his fist, Bologue's clothes began to writhe, as if something was crawling beneath his collar, soon screaming and tearing through the constraints.

Thousands of slender Silver Snakes, originating from Bologue, spread out in a circular shape in all directions like sensing tendrils, touching the ground, reaching the ruins... and encountering the invisible force.

Through the extension of the Silver Snakes, Bologue saw the invisible force appear out of thin air, drawing close to him continuously. With a grasp from the Silver Hand on the ground, Bologue accelerated forward, effortlessly evading the encirclement.

The Silver Snakes attached themselves to the invisible force, constantly crawling along its surface, shifting between solid and liquid states, like silver paint, constantly covering, outlining the shape of the invisible force.

Bologue saw it, a cluster of strange shapes filled with curves. The shape suddenly vanished, and the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid lost support, retreating back to Bologue.

As for Fast, the heavy Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid had completely enveloped him. By his side, an invisible, sphere-like entity surrounded him. Now the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid completely blocked his vision, plunging him into darkness.

The snakes were restless, the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid covering them switched from liquid to solid state, sharp spikes gnawing at Fast's invisible wall; yet no matter how Bologue attacked, it was difficult to break through Fast's defenses.

In darkness, Fast's pupils were filled with the glow of Ether; under this fully defensive state, few could breach his Secret Energy.

Secret Energy - Shadowless Barrier.

The Commanding School's Secret Energy, enabled by Ether's attachment, controls the air within a certain range, solidifying it into an invisible gaseous stone.

Used for defense and as a unique air cannon to smash opponents. More importantly, when this air solidifies on an opponent, much like what Bologue encountered back then, the surrounding air solidifies and compresses, inhibiting the opponent, gradually suffocating them.

Invisible and intangible, it's a Secret Energy capable of both offense and defense. Many enemies don't understand its nature and are suffocated to death by Fast.

But today's actions were somewhat different. First there was the girl carrying the Fantasy Species; he had clearly fully restrained and suffocated her. Yet, she seemed not to need to breathe and didn't die.

Then there was this guy who suddenly appeared—Bologue's swift reaction shattered the Shadowless Barrier's killing blow.

The snakes flailed wildly beside Bologue. Before the air solidified, they could detect its presence in advance. In this, Sandbox was to thank; it wasn't Bologue's first time facing an invisible enemy.

Bologue, rich in experience, was the true expert!

Chapter 392: Suppression

It was as if a silver-white storm had erupted, with Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid fluttering down, outlining all the air solidified by Ether, and those yet to solidify.

To Bologue, the Shadowless Barrier was no longer invisible, as the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid spun wildly, swinging out countless blades, scraping against all obstructions with a piercing humming noise.

Fast was once again suppressed by Bologue, unable to lift his head, lacking any of the powerful demeanor a Prayer Believer should have.

"Bastard!" Fast growled, feeling utterly humiliated as a Condenser, being suppressed by someone like Bologue.

He attempted to counter-attack, but to protect himself, the air around Fast solidified, layered with Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid, plunging his vision into darkness.

Violent attacks came from all directions, and with his sight obstructed, Fast couldn't find a target to counter-attack, forced to endure everything passively.

Amidst the frenzied assault on Fast, Bologue gradually unraveled the nature of his Secret Energy.

This Secret Energy seemed to command the air, different from Palmer's Secret Energy-Wind Source that was freely and deceitfully mutable. Fast's Secret Energy leaned toward altering the nature of air, transforming it from a fluid gaseous state to a solidified, unseen solid state.

The sharp daggers sliced onto the Shadowless Barrier, emitting a metallic hum, unlike the gaseous state Bologue was familiar with, it more resembled invisible metallic armor.

Not only commanding the Commanding School, but Fast's derivative sub-school was very likely the Illusion Creation School, allowing him to impose this fantastical nature onto real materials, enabling such contradictory properties to coexist peacefully.

As Bologue pondered his opponent, the covered Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid wriggled, one after another spheres appeared out of thin air, densely packed, around a thousand, surrounding Fast.

Accentuated by the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid, it seemed like a myriad of bullets, always ready to discharge and penetrate.

If no target could be found, then firepower would cover every corner.

The Alchemy Matrix burned brightly, and under Fast's will, all the bullets were launched at high speed, easily smashing through rock and steel they touched...

Constant roaring blasts, ears completely enveloped by the noisy impacts, even the rock walls around became pitted and pocked.

Fast felt he had hit Bologue, judging from the retreating Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid, indicating the sealing Silver Snake was continuously retreating, light gradually returning to his vision.

Just as Fast felt the joy, another layer of darkness enveloped him.

He looked up, only to see several towering stone hands firmly slapping down towards him, layer by layer covering, completely enveloping Fast and the Shadowless Barrier around him.

Bologue put down the Round Shield, which was full of dents. To resist the Air Cannon shots, Bologue's arms were completely numb.

But correspondingly, Bologue had captured Fast.

The Round Shield disintegrated into Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid and fused into Bologue's sleeve. He half-knelt and slammed into the ground, a green light track instantly covering every inch of the ground, reaching the limit of Bologue's Secret Energy.

"You bastard..."

Fast tried to speak, but he couldn't. The ground beneath him crumbled, while above, layers of rocks continuously covered him, pressing him underground.

Dull sounds continuously echoed from beneath the ground, causing the surface to tremble. Fast struggled furiously, but against the constantly advancing rocks, his resistance seemed so futile. Not to mention, once deep underground, he couldn't manipulate any air.

The weakness of the Commanding School lies in this point; once it loses a target to command, much of the threat from Secret Energy diminishes.

Bologue mercilessly watched the agitated ground, where rocks were tightly compressed together, like a colossal coffin, sealing Fast within.

Bologue originally wanted to destroy the entire ground and push Fast into the Abandoned Land. Unfortunately, the rock thickness was too great, and the Summoning Hand couldn't completely cover it.

Even with insufficient strength, Bologue still suppressed Fast in the deep darkness, and with the passage of time and Ether consumption, Fast, who excelled in imprisoning and killing others, would suffocate and die in Bologue's cage.

Fast at this moment also realized his predicament. The Shadowless Barrier created a vacuum sphere around him, preventing the rock's pressure from advancing.

Defense remained perfect, stalemating with Bologue's offensive, but now Fast could only utilize the surrounding air.

To escape the predicament, Fast needed to inject air into Ether, imbuing it with fantastical properties, transforming it into gaseous stone, and firing it like a cannonball.

But once that's done, Fast's perfect defense will also show some gaps, after all, the air that can be used underground is only so much.

Fast didn't hesitate for long, the ether intensified, fully releasing the power of the Prayer Believers.

The glow of ether shone brightly, followed by a thunderous roar, the rock pressing down on Fast's head was penetrated in an instant, and hazy light poured down.

The Shadowless Barrier is not only suitable for defense, its offensive means are equally strong, the air cannon is like an invisible cannonball, except for the rapidly approaching ether response, the enemy cannot detect its presence at all.

The isolation between Fast and the air was broken, he once again had a target to command, the gaps in his defense were quickly filled, and at the same time a silvery white light flashed by.

In an instant, the silver light surged like a dazzling ribbon.

Previously trapped underground, the glow carried by his own Alchemy Matrix couldn't fully illuminate the darkness, so Fast hadn't noticed these things moving in the dark until the light reappeared, he could see it all clearly.

Countless silver white snakes were swiftly slithering around the barrier he constructed, now, with Fast using part of the air as cannonballs, his perfect defense also showed a gap.

The gap was small, only the size of a fist, but just this little gap transformed into a death gate for him. With relentless searching, Bologue discovered this gap immediately, and countless swirling snakes rushed through the gap.

Fast attempted to fend them off, but he was ultimately too late, by the time he noticed it all, Bologue's attack had already been completed.

A sharp pain came from his ankle, the snakes solidified into barbed arrows, viciously penetrating Fast's flesh, Bologue intended for the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid to continue proliferating, but he clearly couldn't break through the Rectangular Soul Critical of the Prayer Believers, and the silver snakes within Fast's body couldn't extend further.

But this was enough, the silver snakes twisted into a chain, then Bologue pulled it taut, Fast's body was uncontrollably dragged out of the ground by Bologue, in mid-air he launched an air bullet at Bologue.

Bologue couldn't see the air cannon's presence, but he could see the snake swarm being shattered in mid-air, the next second the ground where he stood plunged steeply, as the depression spread, Bologue threw a grappling hook to the side, easily avoiding the attack.

The grappling hook pulled Bologue, who then pulled Fast, he was like a fish hooked by Bologue, being dragged forcefully, rolling embarrassingly on the ground several times.

Unending pain sliced through Fast's will, he never expected to encounter such a tricky enemy as Bologue, Fast struggled to get up, decisively slashing at the silver snake that pierced his ankle, severing the chain's connection with a blade.

Not giving Fast any chance to catch his breath, Bologue pulled the trigger again, bursts of gunfire sounded, and the shattered bullets sped towards Fast.

This level of attack was obviously useless against Fast, not to mention he was already back on the ground, the air solidified into barriers heaped beside him, this time he gave Bologue no chance.

The shattered bullets were deflected, but Bologue stubbornly kept pulling the trigger, rushing towards Fast, continually closing the distance between them.

Another gunshot roared, the searing dragon breath approached head-on.

The Dragon Breath Bullet whipped up immense flames, engulfing Fast, but like Aimou using the Fire-Calling Staff on Fast, Bologue's Dragon Breath Bullet was easily divided by the Shadowless Barrier.

Amidst the roaring sea of fire, Fast panted heavily, bracing himself with his blade, the injury to his ankle completely hindered his movement, now he was powerless to chase Aimou, moreover, he had to figure out how to survive Bologue's ferocious assault, waiting for reinforcements.

What a humiliation, Fast was actually suppressed into such a state by a Condenser, and what's more humiliating was that this Condenser continuously attempted to surpass Tiers to kill him.

The roaring dragon breath dispelled the winter's chill completely, Fast called upon ether, and outside the solid barrier, air continued to be solidified into bullets, slamming towards Bologue incessantly.

Bologue originally intended to rely on the tendrils of the dispersed Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid to sense the air cannon's trajectory, even when there's a delay in perception, it was enough for Bologue to perform certain evasive maneuvers.

But now Bologue suddenly realized something, he could sense the swirling ether, at this moment the amplification of the Triple Trials became apparent, combined with the experience gained from previous battles, Bologue could, to some extent, achieve Ether Perception.

The perception was very faint, but it was entirely sufficient to deal with the current situation, with high-speed maneuvering, Bologue twisted and turned, dodging the bombardment of the air cannon.

In the blink of an eye, Bologue had arrived in front of Fast.

"What a foolish act!"

Fast mocked, fighting with him, Bologue surprisingly didn't widen the gap but rather closed in on him. He was ready to crush Bologue, but a cold chill crept up his spine at that moment.

The Face of Horror, fully unleashed.

Under the rampant terror, Fast could only see a mass of grey mist, and within that mist, a pair of icy green eyes stared coldly at him.

Chapter 393: Fake Body

Everyone here is a battle-tested Condenser, having witnessed countless deaths, traversed the lands piled with corpses and foul blood, and endured the washes of fear.

The fear induced by the Face of Horror rarely completely dominates one's will; it serves more as a momentary impact.

In high-intensity combat with mental tension, sudden fear can greatly affect the opponent's actions.

The duration of fear is very brief, possibly not even lasting a few seconds before the opponent regains clarity, but in a life-and-death struggle, many things can change in those brief seconds.

During their first encounter, when Fast attempted to strangle Bologue, Bologue used the Face of Horror to shock Fast's mind, causing a brief lapse in his control over Secret Energy.

Now, Bologue applied the fear shock to Fast once again, but this time the effect was considerably weakened, which is normal as they have fought several times, maintaining a high level of mental concentration.

But even if weakened, it still had some effect.

Fast's lapse lasted less than a second, but in that crucial second, Bologue had already reached him, facing each other directly, separated only by a Shadowless Barrier.

Under the fear shock of the Face of Horror, minor gaps appeared in the Shadowless Barrier due to the relaxed control of Secret Energy.

Bologue raised his gun and pulled the trigger.

In an instant, raging Dragon Breath engulfed them, exploding into blazing fireballs on the flat ground, the flames reaching high into the sky.

Fast could clearly see the roaring flames spewing out from the gaps in the Shadowless Barrier, which he quickly filled, but the scorching heat at close range still burned his body, even igniting his clothes.

The composition of the Shadowless Barrier is gaseous, and with Ether's enhancement, it possesses extreme hardness to withstand various attacks, but it clearly cannot insulate against high temperatures.

During a previous probing with a Dragon Breath Bullet, Bologue had discovered this. Observing the remnants of high temperatures at the edge of the divided sea of fire made Fast uncomfortable.

Now with high heat erupting directly, even though the flames were blocked, it further scorched Fast.

Fast couldn't understand Bologue's strategy, inclined to think it was Bologue's accidental maneuver, followed by a mocking attitude.

Bologue exerted his utmost effort, exchanging the cost of being swallowed by the sea of fire, merely to cause his own burns.

The Shadowless Barrier advanced outward like released wind pressure, extinguishing the sea of fire; Fast raised his Blade, prepared to slay Bologue.

Beneath the roaring Dragon Breath, he himself was burned; it's hardly conceivable what Bologue, fully covered, must look like now, possibly barely alive.

As the smoke cleared, Fast saw a figure staggering through the black haze. He didn't think much, instead the air around the shadow solidified, compressing inwards.

It was like being compressed between several shields, the force steadily increasing, enough to twist Bologue's skeleton, crushing him into pulp.

Fast clenched his fist, the gas solidified and compressed, simultaneously dispersing the rising black smoke, and the veiled Silver figure was being twisted and compressed.

This wasn't Bologue, but a false body molded from Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid.

A whistling sound descended from the sky, Fast turned his head, his eyes reflecting countless Silver glints.

Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid transformed between solid and liquid states, treacherous and variable, as a dense rain of Silver Snakes dropped like arrows towards Fast, some blocked by the Shadowless Barrier, others littering the ground.

Under the propulsion of Ether, the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid proliferated madly like Silver snow, painting its hue across every surface.

Fast once again resisted Bologue's attack, yet before he could rejoice, biting coldness crept from behind. This time, it wasn't fear induced by the Face of Horror but a genuine sensation from within Fast.

Sharp pain radiated from his back, gradually piercing through his body, until it broke through his chest. Fast watched helplessly as the blood-stained pale Blade pierced through his chest.

What's going... on?

Fast attempted to turn around, the corner of his vision catching sight of the compressed Silver false body, whose Silver gradually faded to reveal a blood-stained form beneath.

Bologue grasped the sword hilt, slowly twisting his wrist to shatter Fast's heart; his expression was pale, wanting to speak, but only tragic wails rose from his throat.

Fast had considered that the true body might be hidden beneath the false body to mislead himself, thus Fast controlled Secret Energy to virtually crumble the fake, intending to crush Bologue if hidden within, especially since Bologue was also scorched by the Dragon Breath Bullet.

Bologue should have died by now...

Fast widened his eyes, hearing Bologue's mocking laughter, witnessing his scarred body healing at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Blood flowed backward, skin reformed.

The Blade penetrating Fast wriggled as spikes extended from its body, resembling a Thorn Sword.

Bologue vigorously extracted the Thorn Sword, pulling out copious blood mixed with flesh, strikingly red against the ground, marking the cessation of the battle.

Fast's face bore despair as he struggled to gaze at Bologue, only to find his turquoise eyes serene as if he hadn't just executed a higher-ranking Prayer Believer but merely slain a nameless foe casually.

"Truly disgraceful..."

Fast murmured, his eyes gradually losing their luster.

All the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid retreated beneath his sleeve; Bologue's mood was unexpectedly calm, though his calmness stemmed from reasons beyond Fast's contemplation.

If nothing unexpected occurs, the next Time Reversal will likely see Bologue face Fast once more.

For Fast, he was slain by Bologue, but to Bologue, it was merely one victory of many between them in the cycles of Time Reversal.

Unless the final Time Reversal ends, determining this forked destiny, such conflicts will remain eternal.

"I need to be faster..."

Bologue glanced at his watch; his confrontation with Fast was brief, barely lasting five to six minutes before a victor was determined.

With this experience, Bologue needs to resolve Fast faster in the next Time Reversal.

Now Bologue can ascertain Aimou is the initiator of the Time Reversal, perhaps the heart atop the Constant Motion Core, emanating dazzling brilliance, is the source of it all.

Regarding the node of Time Reversal, Bologue has a preliminary deduction on this point.

This should be linked to Aimou's life.

Those suspected to be King's Shield Guards are hunting Aimou, and Aimou's death might trigger the onset of the Time Reversal, resetting everything to the beginning.

This also explains why each reset node of Time Reversal is postponed progressively; in each Time Reversal, Aimou, as the initiator, retains the memory, surviving longer under prior experience.

"So what exactly is happening here?"

Bologue's head ached severely, yet he understood one thing; if he could eliminate these enemies and protect Aimou, the reset node of Time Reversal could be continually postponed.

Glancing at the trembling clock hand, seemingly disturbed, swinging erratically, just as Bologue puzzled over how to continue searching for Aimou, another Ether reaction arose.

Bologue leaped keenly, but still too late, his Ethereal Perception remained too inexperienced; when sensing the Ether reaction, the opponent's attack had already arrived.

The ground beneath cracked, rock walls quaked, thick roots crawled from below, winding towards Bologue. He fired a grappling hook, attempting to leap towards the ridge above but couldn't escape the roots' chase.

They reached like countless arms, grabbing for Bologue, judging by the Ether intensity, this is another Prayer Believer.

"Why is it never-ending!" Bologue cursed.

His figure paused in mid-air, the cliff where the hook embedded began to crumble; beneath the debris, thick roots twisted into wooden spears descending, sealing off all of Bologue's escape options.

Chapter 394: Encounter

In mid-air, Bologue was like a target. He tried again to throw out a grappling hook and Silver Hand to move quickly, but this opponent was different from Fast. This time, the enemy's speed was far greater than his own, and almost in an instant, a sharp pain came from his chest.

Bologue was slammed hard to the ground, impaled by several wooden spears. Being pierced and nailed down was not the end; these roots actually used his flesh as a foundation and began to grow wantonly.

The extending roots drilled into his flesh, took root underneath, and quickly grew. Vines wrapped around Bologue, sharp thorns scraped against his skin, absorbing his blood, and bloom scarlet flowers.

This time, Bologue was careless. More than one King's Shield Guard was deployed. As he engaged Fast, other reinforcements were also converging here.

Indeed, when I reverse time the fourth time, I should be faster. Try to find a way to kill Fast instantly on meeting, so Bologue can continue to pursue Aimou and avoid these enemies.

Above the mist, a dark shadow emerged, followed by a long bridge woven of branches descending.

In Gold's eyes shone the glow of Ether, as he leisurely walked towards Bologue from the long bridge. The roots lifted Fast's corpse, bringing it before Gold.

He glanced at his dead colleague, then at the bound Bologue, feeling somewhat puzzled.

"Did you kill him?" Gold asked.

"I suppose besides me, there should be no one else here, right?" Bologue taunted.

"Is that so..."

Gold's expression was indifferent. He glanced at Fast's pale face, waved his hand casually, and the roots tossed Fast's body into the mist below.

"How heartless." Bologue sneered.

Gold replied nonchalantly, "As a Prayer Believer, to be killed by a Condenser like you... he disgraced the Shield Guard title."

Shield Guard? King's Shield Guard?

Bologue stared intently at Gold, completely ignoring the increasing severity of his wounds.

The King's Shield Guard, a group that splintered from the King's Secret Sword. Regarding them, even the Order Bureau knows little.

Fortunately, after the surprise attack on the meeting venue, under Yas's guidance, the Sixth Group captured a Negative Power User from the King's Shield Guard, the one like a Flame Demon, Nade.

The Crow's Nest interrogated him overnight, but this Negative Power User's thoughts were protected by some contract's power, hard to break, just like the Contractor Bologue and Gray encountered before.

The only useful intelligence obtained from Nade was that these King's Shield Guards do not consider themselves to have betrayed the Kagader Empire.

The King's Shield Guards believe the current King of Slaughter is a false king, and they support the true king.

Gold looked disdainfully at everything, his voice cold, "A weakling like him is not worthy to serve our king."

"What do you all consider yourselves to be... fanatics?" Bologue continued to mock.

Gold frowned. Suddenly, extreme pain erupted within Bologue's body as the roots, worm-like, slowly extended within him.

Bologue's hands trembled with pain but he forced a smile.

Judging by Gold's Ether intensity, he was also a Prayer Believer, but compared to Fast, his Ether intensity was much stronger, seemingly close to reaching the tier of a Negative Power User.

Bologue endured the intense pain coming from his body, strategizing in his mind.

The opponent seems to be from the Illusion Creation sect, capable of conjuring these massive tree roots from nothing. In this complex terrain of the Great Rift, Gold's Secret Energy is very useful, easily connecting various perilous places with the long bridge he creates.

How many members are there in the King's Shield Guard?

Bologue wasn't sure, but judging by their setup, they didn't fear being noticed by the Order Bureau, or perhaps for their goal, they would even risk being noticed to fulfill it.

What do these King's Shield Guards want with the Immortal Heart?

If it's awakening the Calamity of the Abandoned Land, shouldn't this task be handled by the Sect of Corruption?

In any case, the Great Rift may now have many King's Shield Guards present, and with only his own strength, it's clear he can't fight them all, especially as they continue to hunt Aimou.

In that case, when I reverse time the fourth time, I'll need some allies to help me.

But who can I turn to?

That Belli trusted me so readily already seems like a miracle, other people...

Bologue's thoughts cleared up. He realized he was trapped in a misconception, doubting others before even trying to seek help, and this should not be the case.

Then Bologue recalled the last time he saw Aimou, what she told him, and the dilemma of choice.

Aimou, you feel the same way, don't you?

You're afraid of rejection, so you simply don't reach out to anyone.

No... it shouldn't be this way.

If you don't try, nothing will happen.

Thinking of this, a difficult-to-describe anger surged within Bologue's heart. He didn't know why he was angry, but he was furious, wanting to shatter this awful situation completely.

The branches and vines rooted in his body tensed and were then snapped one by one, large swathes of blood spilled from Bologue's body.

His abdomen turned into a mass of filthy blood, and something unclear if intestines or roots hung down, swaying slightly.

Bologue's gaze seemed somewhat unexpected. He hadn't anticipated that under these circumstances, Bologue still had the strength to resist him. He raised his hand, ready to kill Bologue completely.

Within Bologue's angry eyes, there was hidden expectation. He was expecting Bologue to kill him.

Now Bologue's condition was dire; instead of natural healing, he preferred to reset himself directly through death, there was still a chance to catch Bologue off guard.

Bologue excelled at such feigning tactics, deceit within deceit, and this was how Fast had died at his hands.

Then... he needed to make the act even more convincing.

The Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid was fully released, a multitude of Silver Snakes rapidly proliferating under the effect of Ether, like silver-white limbs emerging from beneath Bologue's sleeves.

It was soft like liquid, but as it swung, the edges would solidify into blades, cutting all these roots and branches.

The severed branches weren't completely dead, and from the smooth broken surfaces, new, split branches grew quickly, wrapping around Bologue.

But by now Bologue had started moving, charging towards Gold.

Gold maintained his lofty attitude, lightly waved his hand, causing the ground to crumble, and a surge of branches rose from the ground, aiming to wrap around Bologue.

But this time, they couldn't catch up with Bologue. A sudden bright blue light trail appeared, fully unleashing Ethereal Amplification, Bologue moved fast like a shadow, leaving behind all branches attempting to stop him.

Gold's expression finally changed slightly. It wasn't that he felt threatened by Bologue, but he was shaken by Bologue's actions.

Under such severe injuries, every step Bologue took accelerated his own death, large swathes of blood oozed out, internal organs tangled together... he was now completely relying on the power of Condenser; otherwise, in a mortal's shell, Bologue would have already fallen.

"Not bad, you have the qualifications to serve our King, what a pity..."

Even in this situation, Gold was still making meaningless laments.

The swarm of snakes coalesced into a long sword in Bologue's hand, and he swung the blade towards Gold, while the silver-white limbs behind him, like another arm of Bologue, also fiercely smashed towards Gold.

The soft limbs instantly solidified into a door-like silver-white Great Sword, enough to sever a monster's head, raising a piercing whistle, delivering a silver-white judgement down on Gold.

Behind Gold, the wooden Long Bridge had long since vanished, roots extended from the other side, lifting Gold's body to dodge Bologue's slash.

Clearly, Gold's Secret Energy range greatly surpassed Bologue's, he was like a wildcat playing with a mouse, but this mouse wouldn't give up easily.

In Gold's eyes, all of Bologue's actions were the desperate struggle before death, Bologue suddenly leaped, attempting to catch up with Gold, as the two nearly confronted, Bologue heard a booming sound, and then the world spun around him.

When Bologue regained consciousness, he found himself on the ground, his ears filled with a shrill buzzing.

The buzz gradually subsided, Bologue vaguely heard footsteps with another person approaching, Bologue turned his head, catching a blurry glimpse of his figure.

He conversed with Gold, "Beware of his self-sacrifice retaliation."

Gold nodded, this pompous guy unexpectedly heeded someone else's advice, then the person looked at Bologue.

He said, "Fantasy Species has been retrieved, quickly kill him, so we can regroup."

Under the man's orders, Gold raised his hand, the thick roots wrapped around Bologue once more.

Bologue's eyes widened, not because he was dying, nor because the man was special, but for what he was holding.

Though it was in terrible condition, Bologue recognized her at first glance.

"Aimou..." Bologue's voice trembled.

The other seemed to hear Bologue's voice, the silhouette with only half a body slowly lifted its head, the exquisite face returned to its awful state.

Aimou looked aimlessly at Bologue, on her chest, the luminous, bizarre tumor kept flickering.

Chapter 395: Enemies

The roots slowly coiled around Bologue, wrapping him heavily, and with a slight force, a large amount of blood plasma oozed from the gaps. The thick branches crushed the frail mortal body into flesh.

Gold no longer paid attention to Bologue, and he reported to the man, "Fast was killed by that guy... He looks like a field staff of the Order Bureau, and ordinary Condensators don't possess such will."

It seems that Gold admired Bologue's fearless charge, but admiration aside, it didn't prevent Gold from crushing Bologue.

"Is that so? The loss is still within expectations." The man nodded, then looked at the alchemy puppet in his hand that was unresponsive.

The man sighed, "I didn't expect her to be an alchemy puppet and to have acquired a Fantasy Species."

"The Fantasy Species has already been activated, and it's unknown what kind of wish she made with it," Gold looked at the broken Aimou, also feeling surprised, "Should we remove the Fantasy Species first? Once the power is exhausted, this thing is useless."

"Let's take her back first; the Fantasy Species is too rare. I'm not sure how to remove it, and..."

The man frowned, reaching out to play with Aimou's cheek, which remained unresponsive, as if dead.

"And, she has already successfully made a wish to the Fantasy Species. This means her wish is in process, and it's unknown what kind of anomaly this will cause."

Gold nodded in agreement, he unleashed Secret Energy, conjuring massive roots that extended as Long Bridges connecting each cliff.

"Let's go, the containment of the Immortal Heart over there should also be finished," Gold said.

This time, the King's Shield Guard poured all their effort, their primary target being the Immortal Heart carried by Teda, and the Fantasy Species on Aimou was an unexpected bonus.

But in any case, they had already won half of this operation, the action was so sudden that even if the Order Bureau could react, by the time they arrived, it would almost be over here.

"This is just the first step to restoring the throne..." Gold whispered, his eyes filled with ecstatic joy.

As long as the Immortal Heart was obtained, the Shadow King's life could be prolonged, then the subsequent matters would become easier.

To reclaim the things that should rightfully belong to them...

Gold couldn't help but smile, immersed in the beautiful fantasy, therefore he didn't notice the lurking danger.

The man beside him noticed the presence of danger; he tried to warn Gold, but it was evidently too late.

Elaborate radiance crawled along the man's throat, his stance made a lion's roar, and the thunderous roar shook the heavens and the earth.

Ether surged in the sound wave, a lethal impact washing like angry waves, Gold was on the edge of the impact, his beautiful fantasy shattered by the roar, by the time he noticed it all, the silver-white figure was already close at hand.

"Impossible!"

Gold exclaimed, but his voice was completely covered by the man's roar, and he himself was also affected by the roar, constantly shaking.

Only to see that silver-white figure resurrected, silver hands extended from Bologue's body, gripping the ground, even the impact of the sound waves couldn't slow his pace.

The man was shocked by this; even though the sound waves couldn't shake Bologue, this high-pitched sound should have caused a dizzying impact on Bologue, then he saw it.

A few drops of silver liquid oozed from Bologue's ear canal, interspersed with bright red blood.

Now Bologue's world was silent, all he had in his eyes was Gold, the roots were too late to defend, Gold's indifferent expression finally disappeared, replaced by a resistance to death anger.

Ether surged, enveloping Gold's body, as a Prayer Believer, Gold also mastered certain Ethereal Techniques, but due to the nature of Secret Energy, few could approach Gold, hence he seldom used Ethereal Techniques.

"Get away!"

Gold roared, a milky barrier formed in front of him, high concentration of ether gathered within it, condensing into an Ethereal Barrier.

Bologue was blocked by the Ethereal Barrier, his figure blurred, Gold thought he stopped Bologue, but the next second, the rampant evil spirit appeared out of nowhere.

The Face of Horror seemed to have come alive, the extending leather completely wrapped Bologue's face, it opened its jagged mouth wide, rolling flames burned in its throat, emitting sparks with each breath.

The wailing of the dead echoed from within, seemingly reaching the burning hell.

Gold's heart was completely consumed by fear, but as the King's Shield Guard, he quickly sobered up.

As expected, it was all an illusion, the hateful evil spirit in front of him was gone, only the extremely angry Bologue remained.

No... there was still something changed.

Now the Ethereal Barrier was filled with cracks, collapsing sparks continuously, among the dense sparks, a sharp, narrow blade pierced through.

At the moment of the Face of Horror's impact, the ether output sustaining the Ethereal Barrier also stalled for a second, this crucial second allowed the blade to break through the barrier.

"Rule Two!"

Bologue roared, shattering the Ethereal Barrier, and the sharp blade rapidly reflected Gold's face.

"Wait for the opportunity!"

The two figures overlapped, a piercing coldness swept across, and the sharp blade penetrated Gold's chest.

The long sword began to wriggle, preparing to burst into wildly growing thorns, completely churning Gold's internal organs, but just then, the delayed roots finally grabbed Bologue, wrapping around his lower body, forcefully tossing Bologue away.

The blade withdrew, splattering a massive stain of blood in mid-air.

Gold clutched his chest and knelt down, he gasped painfully, blood poured out quickly, accumulating into a pool of blood beneath him.

Bologue's voice rolled in mid-air, this time there were no allies by his side, the man roared in anger, heavy sound waves slammed onto Bologue's body. Even though Bologue had lost his hearing now, the powerful shock pinned him dead against the side of the cliff.

As if countless heavy hammers were ceaselessly hammering Bologue, bones and organs twisted and shattered in an instant, just having revived, at this moment he turned into a puddle of mud again, after the roar ended, fell powerlessly from the cliff, smashing into pieces.

"Are you okay, Gold!"

The man focused intently on the position where Bologue fell while calling out.

Gold didn't respond, he tightly clutched his chest to prevent more blood from oozing out, and his rapid breathing kept on, even the brilliance of ether became chaotic.

"Damn it!"

The man cursed, if Gold died too then they were actually hunted down by a First Stage Condenser, killing two Second Stage Prayer Believers.

This is beyond just shameful.

"Hey, that guy over there."

In a pool of dirty blood, Bologue leaned on his blade slowly standing up, he had already sensed the man's power, that deadly ether intensity crushed him in an instant.

The opponent was a Negative Power User... meaning in the fourth time reversal, there would be at least one Negative Power User and two Prayer Believers here?

Forget it, don't think about these for now.

As the self-healing proceeded, Bologue's hearing gradually recovered, the noisy world returned again.

Hood looked at this guy standing up again, he recalled the intelligence related to the Order Bureau not long ago.

"The resurrected... Lazarus."

Chapter 396: Initiator

In the ambush battle at the venue, the King's Shield Guard stepped into the trap set by the Order Bureau and suffered heavy losses, but the Sixth Group failed to capture all of them. Many Shield Guards still managed to escape, carrying information related to the ambush.

The King's Shield Guard and the King's Secret Sword are mortal enemies in principle, viewing each other as traitors. However, this was Oubos after all, where the King's Secret Sword posed no real threat. Instead, it was the Order Bureau, the master of this place, that made the Shield Guards extremely vigilant.

Bologue thought he was just an ordinary field staff member, but in his short career, he had already outperformed many long-time field staff, drawing attention.

The King's Shield Guard split off from the King's Secret Sword. Even now, many Shield Guards remain hidden within the Secret Sword, infiltrating its intelligence network to a certain extent, making most of the information shared between the two.

When the King's Secret Sword noticed Bologue, so did the Shield Guards.

Soon after becoming a Condenser, Bologue autonomously thwarted the Secret Sword's conspiracy, intercepting the train carrying the Philosopher's Stone within Opus.

The Shield Guards didn't understand the role the Tyrant played in all this and could only attribute the oddities to Bologue himself. Shortly thereafter came the ambush battle, where Bologue was deployed as elite by the Order Bureau and executed the task perfectly.

After the battle ended, information about the Special Operations Group appeared before them, and it was then that the Shield Guards noticed what was special about this group.

"Debtor, is it?"

Hood showed an angry expression, staring intently at the continuously regenerating Bologue. He remembered the intelligence about the Special Operations Group, which was composed of Debtors.

The most special and bizarre among them was Bologue Lazarus, who possessed the Undying Body.

Bologue took a deep breath. Amid the disturbing pain, his body was rapidly healing. Given a few more minutes, Bologue would fully recover, but he understood that his opponent, Hood, a Negative Power User, would not grant him that time.

His gaze fell on the intricate patterns covering Hood's throat, as he could utilize sonic waves to attack, not only shaking the mind but also carrying a massive amount of Ether capable of destroying everything in its path with ease.

With strong destructive power and a wide range, along with Hood's high attack frequency, this deadly enemy reminded Bologue of Nade. Facing the wide-spread raging flames, Bologue could barely get close.

Yet even with such a disparity in strength, Bologue couldn't retreat.

"Aimou! Can you hear me?"

Bologue suddenly shouted, attempting to call out to the battered Aimou in Hood's hand.

More than one person was in pursuit of Aimou. While intercepting Fast, Hood was also chasing Aimou and had captured her easily.

Repaired just a few days ago, Aimou was already in a dilapidated state again. She showed no reaction to Bologue's words; the fatal sound wave had destroyed Aimou's hearing at the first strike against Hood, leading to her dismantlement.

Just as when Bologue saw Aimou in the Sublimation Furnace Core, all that remained was the ever-flickering light in her eyes, unresponsive to external stimuli.

Bologue clenched his fist, Hood's Secret Energy had caused multiple fractures in Bologue's body, his internal organs shaken into blood, yet he staggered and could still move.

Silver serpents spilled out from under his clothes, forming supports that stabbed into the ground, lifting Bologue's body. It wasn't over; the swarm of serpents enveloped Bologue, solidifying into sturdy armor.

At this moment, Bologue resembled some kind of armor-clad monster, with sharp limbs extending from the armor, swiftly descending upon the ground, charging directly at Hood.

"Stop!"

Hood roared at Bologue, and the howling sound wave immediately enveloped the silver figure, shattering the ground and sending dust flying. Under the Ether's impact, the solidified metal was filled with cracks before collapsing.

Large chunks of metal peeled off from the armor, and in an instant, the massive monster became thinner until all defenses were destroyed.

This was, after all, the full-force strike of a Negative Power User. To withstand Hood's roar head-on was already a miracle for Bologue, yet it was still not enough.

Amidst the flying metal fragments, Bologue's figure was revealed. In his immobile state, he used Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid to replace his limbs, aiding his movement.

Now he rushed toward Hood at great speed, with a cold blade in hand.

Hood took a deep breath. Bologue had lost all protection now; a mere casual strike could knock him down... and then he saw the greenish-blue glow flickering around.

In the roar, Bologue's armor disintegrated, and the shattered armor, like snowflakes, brilliantly silver, scattered everywhere. Before they completely fell, green trails of light connected these fragments.

No, it wasn't light trails connecting them, but those slender, nearly indiscernible silvery threads, with ether light shining upon them.

While Hood destroyed Bologue's armor, Bologue had already set up a trap, never believing he could advance in front of a Negative Power User. It was all a feint, devised for this cunning sneak attack.

Bologue swung his blade forcefully, the source of all the silver threads, and with the swing of the blade, all threads were pulled up. The shattered and sharp fragments swirled into a metallic storm, like countless striking Whip Blades, completely engulfing Hood.

Hood's roar is extremely lethal, but it also has weaknesses, unable to fully envelope himself like Fast's Shadowless Barrier, to withstand attacks from all directions.

However, the opponent is a Negative Power User after all, and Bologue doesn't believe this strike will kill, or even harm him. Bologue has always been testing the opponent.

The battle between Condensers is also a battle of information disparity. As long as he gathers enough intelligence in this Time Reversal, he will be able to prepare in advance for the next Time Reversal.

Countless shards filled the sky, reflecting Hood's face like countless mirrors. He opened his mouth, like a dragon breathing flames, with light patterns constantly undulating in his throat.

As the Ether prepared to roar, thick roots rose from the ground, surrounding Hood and blocking Bologue's Whip Blade.

In another corner of the battlefield, Gold struggled to raise his hand. Luckily, he survived and couldn't continue fighting for now, but he could still provide some assistance.

Sharp metal pierced into the roots, followed by a roar from the front.

Bologue heard a loud noise and then lost his hearing again. A maddening pain echoed in his mind, after which he saw himself rapidly falling back, his vision plunged into chaos, and then he crashed heavily into the cliff.

The whole body felt like being trapped under a hydraulic press, crushed evenly by violent Ether over every inch, and Bologue lay among the rubble, his vision veiled with a layer of crimson.

Hood gazed at Bologue with a heavy look. Just a few exchanges, and Bologue had already brought too many surprises; what troubled him the most was Bologue's Undying Body.

As long as Bologue got a chance to catch his breath, he could rise again, like an unfading specter.

"Damn it..."

Bologue coughed up a large amount of blood, casting a glance at Gold, thinking he should have killed this guy first.

This arrogant fellow never regarded Bologue, a Condenser, from the start, hence Bologue's fake death assassination was so effective. But once he became alert, Bologue would face a fully empowered Prayer Believer.

Fortunately, everything can start over; Bologue will have the chance to kill Gold again.

"Undead, huh? Seems pretty valuable,"

Hood murmured, wondering now if he could capture Bologue; the Shadow King would enjoy such surprises.

But at this moment, a strange sensation came from his hand, and Hood turned, seeing Aimou slowly raising her head.

She had only half of her body and one arm left, appearing dead and unresponsive in the previous conflict.

But Bologue knew that Aimou was aware of his arrival; she could sense his Ether reaction.

Under Hood's gaze, Aimou's broken body suddenly became illusory. The silent earring on her earlobe released unimaginable power at that moment.

Aimou's figure fell into absolute illusion. Hood felt he touched a pile of unretainable sand, and thus she vanished from his hand.

Ether converged at the other end of the battlefield, and then Aimou's figure transformed from illusion to solid. Relying on the earring's power, she made a short-range traverse.

"A futile struggle, huh!"

Hood understood the priority of the target, so he rushed directly towards Aimou. But now Aimou had increased the distance, her actions unimpeded.

Facing the assault from the Negative Power User, Aimou had no capacity for resistance. Amidst roaring sounds, her figure teetered, most of her sensory functions crippled, but as Bologue anticipated, Aimou could sense Bologue's Ether reaction.

Bologue arrived, though Aimou couldn't see, she knew he was there.

Aimou didn't want to meet Bologue under such circumstances, nor did she want Bologue to witness what was coming. But Aimou knew if she didn't act now, it'd be too late.

She raised her broken arm and fiercely struck her chest, smashing the translucent, luminous tumor.

From that light, an eerie impact arose and released; each person's figure was forcibly stagnated, and then Bologue saw it.

The familiar scorching white light erupted from Aimou's chest, rapidly expanding within moments, engulfing everything around—from the Great Rift, it soared up, swept like a storm, completely enveloping Oubos.

When the dazzling light dissipated, Bologue was no longer in the Great Rift but had returned to the familiar bar counter, with Serey still looking like death, and in front of him was his heartfelt breakfast and a cup of orange juice.

The third Time Reversal was over.

The fourth Time Reversal begins.

Chapter 397: Time Axis Conflict

The fourth time reversal.

Bologue sat silently at the bar, recalling the information he obtained during the third time reversal.

First and foremost, Bologue confirmed Aimou's location and identified the main enemy he was facing in this time reversal. More importantly, from the snippets shared by the King's Shield Guard and Aimou's final actions, Bologue roughly understood the cause of this time reversal.

Fantasy Species.

Aimou somehow obtained the Fantasy Species and made a wish upon it, causing this crazy reversal. That Fantasy Species should be the translucent tumor located on Aimou's chest.

Previously, Bologue didn't understand what the basis for the time reset nodes in the time reversal was, but at the end of his memory, he saw Aimou's actions.

She raised her hand and destroyed the Fantasy Species on her chest, causing everything to reverse.

The node for time reset is determined by the Fantasy Species. Once the Fantasy Species is destroyed, it will cause everything to revert to the start of the time reversal stage.

Then there's the answer as to why the node for time reset kept getting pushed back. In the first time reversal, Aimou was already attacked by the King's Shield Guard; faced with a mighty enemy, even with the armor given by Belli, she couldn't hold on for long.

To prevent the Fantasy Species from being taken, Aimou proactively destroyed it, causing everything to go back to the beginning.

And then it kept repeating; in the repeated time reversals, Aimou used her retained memories to foresee the enemy's actions, thus extending her own life and pushing the node for time reset further back.

Bologue took a deep breath and drank his orange juice down in one gulp.

The problem now was, despite knowing so much, he still found it difficult to resolve the current crisis.

The enemies he faced this time were too numerous: two Prayer Believers, one Negative Power User, and these were just those chasing Aimou.

On the front battlefield of contending for the Immortal Heart with Teda, there would be even more formidable enemies, perhaps even the appearance of Defenders.

Bologue was well aware that he couldn't handle this alone, but with limited time, who could he turn to for help?

He didn't ponder long before immediately thinking of his team leader. In times like this, even someone as maniacal as Belli showed enough professionalism, and Bologue believed his Special Operations Group wouldn't let him down.

This time, Bologue had already identified Aimou's location, so he didn't need to get a tracker from Belli, nor waste time on the road, thus buying himself more time.

Then there's Aimou's side...

Damn it!

Bologue cursed in his heart, realizing Aimou was unaware of his memory retention ability. From Aimou's perspective, every time reversal would lead her to the Great Rift once that time came.

She might use herself to fend off the King's Shield Guard, but if Bologue didn't show up there, Aimou would undoubtedly be in danger.

Bologue needed to appear there at that time node. Though the Fantasy Species possessed the ability to reset time, Bologue always felt its powers were not perfect.

Manipulating time like this, can it really fulfill such a terrifying wish just by the Fantasy Species? Bologue believed there must be some limitations.

No, he shouldn't think about these distant matters right now; Bologue should figure out a way to get some reinforcements.

He cast a steady gaze in front of him, where Serey appeared unaware, clutching his head with groans from the aftermath of drinking.

"Serey, you..." Bologue said quietly.

"You..."

Serey clearly wanted to say something, but Bologue quickly interrupted him.

"What do you mean 'you'? Hurry up and finish eating! Get to work!"

Bologue spoke swiftly, standing up abruptly, his hands pounding the bar and causing the plates to jolt up.

Serey was dumbfounded; Bologue perfectly repeated what he intended to say. He wanted to continue speaking, but Serey unmistakably sensed something was wrong with Bologue, as if something bad had happened.

Bologue revealed a helpless smile, looking at the clock on the wall, which showed it was just after he woke up; everything was right on track.

Besides reinforcements, he also needed other intelligence regarding the time reversal, and others might not provide answers, but the Undying Club was different.

Bologue regretted forgetting such an important matter. These Undead might be dim-witted, but each one is like a living fossil, having lived for an unimaginable length of time, these rare peculiar questions should be right to ask them.

The time was still decent; Bologue could afford to waste a bit of time with them.

Bologue took repeated deep breaths to calm his restless mood; he now needed to maintain rational thinking, consider his advantages, and organize his plan.

"Do you think time reversal exists, Serey?" Bologue lifted his head and questioned.

"Time reversal?"

Serey showed a pained expression; thinking after a hangover was simply torture.

"Time is a mysterious concept, few Condensers can interfere with time; even if they do, it's largely a trick with many limitations."

"So, do you think there could be a power to make...the entire city, the entire world start reversing?" Bologue asked.

Serey appeared troubled, knocking his head hard, seemingly to shake the alcohol out through his ears.

After struggling for a moment, he thought of something, "Make the entire world start reversing? That sounds too terrifying; even Seekers of Glory couldn't achieve such a feat, right?"

"What if it's a Fantasy Species?"

Upon hearing Fantasy Species, Serey's expression changed slightly, "That depends on who created the Fantasy Species. If it's created by a Defender, it might be a bit of a stretch, but if a Seeker of Glory created it at the cost of their life... perhaps such Miracle Power could exist."

Serey recalled the knowledge in his mind, having not encountered a Fantasy Species in many years due to its demanding creation conditions. But soon, Serey realized another thing.

Why would Bologue discuss such matters with him now, and why did he still have such a serious expression... although Bologue was often quite serious.

Serey remembered Bologue just repeated his words...

The murky crimson eyes gradually became clear, sparkling like rubies; the laziness in his tone vanished as Serey carefully scrutinized Bologue.

Serey asked with seriousness and solemnity, "Bologue, are we experiencing a time reversal?"

"It seems so."

Bologue appreciated this aspect of Serey, knowing when to be whimsical and when to be serious.

It's deserving of being the perceptive Night Race Lord, having guessed the possibility with mere snippets.

"How many times has it reversed?" Serey asked.

"From my perspective, this is the fourth time." Bologue replied.

Upon hearing about the fourth time reversal, Serey's expression showed a bit of shock.

"Which means, you can retain the memories from the previous reversal?" This point left Serey amazed.

Except for the initiator of the time reversal, others couldn't retain memories during the reversal, yet Bologue could.

Facing Serey's questioning gaze, a tingling electric sensation swept through Bologue, running along his spine.

His body shivered slightly; lowering his head, he confirmed his vision hadn't gone wrong, but his palms appeared blurred with afterimages, followed by droplets of nosebleed, bright red and dazzling.

Serey didn't notice the afterimages on Bologue, something only Bologue could observe.

"I guess it has something to do with my Blessing." Bologue answered.

"Time Reversing Axis...my Blessing has an independent time axis; perhaps it conflicted with the time reversal."

Bologue recalled the document's conclusion about his Blessing; the independent time axis sometimes could trigger abnormalities, and retaining memory during time reversal was one of them.

"Independent time axis?"

This term left Serey momentarily puzzled; his view of Bologue took on a hint of change, though he didn't voice his inner curiosity.

"I don't quite understand, but it seems you know why you can retain memory, right?" Serey said.

"Correct."

Bologue nervously watched the clock, even though he had fought for tremendous time, he was still anxiously uneasy.

It was like a time-devouring wolf, pursuing everyone.

Chapter 398: Limited Number of Times

Serey was quite sober, in fact, alcohol had no effect on this Night Race Lord, but he loved the feeling of his nerves being numbed by alcohol, so he often put on an appearance as if he were about to drown.

"So, what do you want from me, Bologue?" Serey said.

"Help. I'm not quite sure what kind of help, but I need to gather all available forces," Bologue answered.

Bologue's words troubled Serey, and he waved his hand, "Sorry, you know we cannot interfere with the world."

"I know," Bologue never expected Serey to take action. "I just thought you might be able to give me some advice."

"Advice?"

"Yes, advice. You are, after all, a Lord of the Night Race. Even if you haven't experienced time reversal, you should have some insights."

Serey fell silent. With Bologue speaking like this, it would be hard to justify if he couldn't offer some skill.

"According to your description, the scope of time reversal is extensive, and it is driven by the Fantasy Species, which requires an immense amount of Ether. Theoretically, it can't last long, which means it will collapse on its own after some time, once the Fantasy Species is fully consumed."

"What are you trying to say?" Bologue pressed further, indeed, he had asked the right person.

"The time reversal caused by the Fantasy Species has a limited number of occurrences. Once the limit is reached, everything will end, and the final time reversal will determine the true reality."

All diverging paths would dim, leaving only a singular trajectory to proceed silently.

Serey pointed out, "This time is different, unlike your Undying Body, this time you don't have countless opportunities to start over. You need to seize every chance, because this might be the last one."

Bologue questioned, "Have you experienced time reversal?"

"Hmm? I was also forced to participate a few times," Serey rubbed his head and poured himself a glass of water. "I wasn't like you back then, unable to retain memories from the reversal, but after the event ended, I still understood the whole process."

"There are many ways in this world to achieve the effect of time reversal: powerful Alchemy Armament, extreme Secret Energy, the Fantasy Species, and... the Devil."

Serey self-deprecated, "One big advantage of the Undead is that as long as you live long enough, you'll encounter some bizarre things."

Everyone is a speck of dust in this tide, but Bologue, due to his Blessing, had a conflict and awakened, becoming an unknown variable in this time reversal.

Now that Bologue had learned new information, he did not feel relieved; instead, he became more anxious.

The time reversal caused by the Fantasy Species has a limit on the number of occurrences. Apart from Aimou, no one knows when the time reversal will end. Perhaps the next time Bologue experiences it will be the last, maybe even this time...

But Bologue knows that once time reversal concludes, an infinite branching future will become fixed and unchangeable.

"Don't rush, let me think. Although I can't help you much, I remember someone who can..."

Serey stood up from behind the bar, his body reeking of alcohol, his golden hair slicked back arrogantly, and his collar open to his chest, revealing muscular pecs.

"Let me think... Let me think... I've got it!"

Serey leaned against the bar, elegantly pointing towards Bologue.

"Go find Lebius and tell him all of this directly."

"I intended to do that anyway."

Bologue said in a deep voice. From others' perspectives, they couldn't sense the existence of time reversal, and Bologue's words and actions seemed like the words of a madman.

But Belli's actions gave Bologue some hope. He should trust his teammates more, even if Belli would make such choices, let alone his mysterious group leader.

Bologue believed Lebius would trust him, but the question was, how long would it take for Lebius to trust him?

To tell Lebius, "Time reversal has happened, hurry and save the world with me"?

And then Lebius would believe him and join in a big fight? Wouldn't that be insulting Lebius's intelligence?

This is just absurd.

"How could it be? Do you think there would be the sort of high-blood-pressure scenario seen in dumb movies, where everyone suspects each other?"

Serey looked at Bologue's worried expression and started laughing to himself, as if mocking Bologue for watching too many movies, confusing them with reality.

"Bologue, you're not the only expert. Everyone here are true professionals."

Serey confidently patted his chest. Despite his confidence, he looked like a customer-enticing stripper.

"I was only forced to join in the time reversal then, but Lebius is different."

The ruby reflected that silent figure.

"Lebius is a personal experimenter of time reversal, navigating different time axes and ultimately steering reality to the most perfect future."

This time it was Bologue's turn to be astonished; he hadn't expected his group leader to have such experiences, but it also meant one thing: that he might really be able to convince Lebius of all this with just a few words and start taking action.

"Towards the end of the Secret War, the King's Secret Sword also launched a time offensive. They orchestrated a time reversal event which, to the outside world, seemed like a decisive battle, but according to those who could retain memories during the time reversal,

they went through hundreds of time reversals, ceaselessly fighting in twisted, branching futures, eventually tipping the outcome towards the most favorable future for them and making it reality."

Serey suggested to Bologue, "Go find Lebius, he will definitely help you."

Bologue nodded and then checked the time. It was still ample, so he could give it a try.

In any case, Bologue couldn't possibly face the King's Shield Guard alone.

As Bologue resolved to take action, strange noises came from outside the Undying Club's door, indicating someone was approaching. He pushed open the door and started walking towards it.

"Did you invite a friend?" Bologue became nervous.

"We only open at night; everyone's asleep in the morning." Serey shook his head.

Bologue felt something was not quite right. Besides Bologue and the others, no one ever visited the Undying Club, especially not at such a time.

The door opened, and someone whom Bologue could never have expected appeared in front of him. Even Serey seemed dumbfounded upon seeing who it was, then he relaxed, as it was expected for someone with personal experience to show up. If he didn't, Serey would find it strange.

Yes, this made sense. This was the terrifying and mysterious Order Bureau he was familiar with.

"Geoffrey said you've been living here recently."

Lebius stood at the door explaining, casually glancing around the disorderly bar. He has always disliked the chaos of the Undying Club.

Bologue intently stared at his suddenly appearing group leader. Perhaps it was his anxiety, because his mouth acted on its own and shouted, "A time reversal event has occurred..."

"Quick, let's save the world together" hadn't finished when his words were interrupted by Lebius.

"Yes, I know, emergency situation 09, time axis disorder event."

Lebius nodded, calmly commanding Bologue.

"According to the Decision Room's order, Bologue Lazarus, you have been included in the Unshakable list, responsible for this time axis disorder event, and I will assist you in handling this matter."

"Assist?"

Bologue didn't know what to say. He has always respected his mysterious group leader, and now their roles seemed reversed?

Moreover, how did Lebius know about the time reversal? Wasn't he the only one who could retain memories?

"I was given the Immovable Armor during the last time reversal. I'm not clear on the specifics of the event... These things, you can explain to me slowly on the way."

Lebius said while pulling open the door, his tone still carrying that indifferent meaning.

"What are you waiting for?"

Chapter 399: Driving without a License

The azure car shot out of the parking lot, racing through the morning streets of Opus. The engine roared without stopping, the tires screeched against the ground, emitting the same piercing wails only demons make when they're crushed.

Bologue gripped the steering wheel and floored the accelerator, the scenery around them quickly receding. Beside him, Lebius sat quietly in the passenger seat, pondering the intelligence Bologue had just shared.

"So, you're saying the King's Shield Guard discovered Teda and is fighting over the Immortal Heart, and that Aimou... somehow obtained the Fantasy Species and triggered a time reversal?"

Lebius recapped the current situation, "Now they're both being pursued by the King's Shield Guard, and soon they'll be captured by them."

"Yes, that's roughly the situation."

Bologue didn't reveal the specific circumstances about Aimou to Lebius. Now that the King's Shield Guard had joined the fray, the priority of the situation had shifted.

What kind of wish Aimou made is not important right now; what's important is the crisis brought by the King's Shield Guard. To save Aimou, Bologue must first find a way to eliminate these damn enemies before he can consider what Aimou is really thinking.

"This is the information I gathered from the first three time reversals," Bologue said, his voice becoming suppressed. "I've heard from Serey that you've experienced similar time reversals. Serey also mentioned that such time reversal has a limit on the number of times..."

After each time reversal, Bologue could receive some good news and some bad news.

Even though his mysterious group leader was by his side, Bologue was not relieved, for there were only two of them at the moment.

A first-stage Condenser, a third-stage Negative Power User, now they were going to shake the King's Shield Guard...

What made Bologue more uneasy was that he somewhat knew Lebius, whose Secret Energy leaned toward an Overlord. Only with the blessing of the Blade-Biting Wolf could Lebius's power be fully unleashed.

But the situation was urgent, and Lebius clearly had no time to mobilize his wolf pack. It was a large group, not something that could be carried like Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid wrapped around one's body.

Lebius didn't express any opinion on this, still looking calm as if, even without the wolves by his side, he possessed the power to counter the enemy.

"King's Shield Guard... Immortal Heart..." Lebius murmured.

"These guys are relentless, still attempting to seize the Immortal Heart," Bologue said, posing a question, "Why do they care so much about that heart? Do they want to achieve immortality with that blasted thing?"

Bologue had seen the Calamity in the Abandoned Land with his own eyes; achieving immortality with such power would only turn one into another monster.

"Immortality? No, it's more like they want to prolong someone's life," Lebius said.

Bologue pressed further, "What do you know?"

As the leader of the Special Operations Group, Bologue trusted that Lebius possessed information unknown to him, "There's no need to be secretive now!"

"Shadow King, the person whom the King's Shield Guard serves is referred to with utmost respect as the Shadow King. Based on the information we have, the Shadow King is at death's door, hence the need for the Immortal Heart to extend his life."

The King's Shield Guard was like an unknowable mist; fortunately, after so many encounters, the Order Bureau was beginning to discern the shape of the fog.

"Using the Immortal Heart?" Bologue listened to Lebius's words, shaking his head, "That's truly not a great option."

"They may have other objectives, but those are beyond our knowledge," Lebius said.

"What about the current situation? The time reversal triggered by the Fantasy Species," Bologue asked again, "Serey said it has a limit on the number of times; is that true?"

Lebius paused for a while before responding, "Yes, if it's a time reversal triggered by the Fantasy Species, due to the limitations of the Fantasy Species' power, there is definitely a limit on the number of times."

He understood the flood of questions in Bologue's mind, and now, as they were on the road, Lebius explained everything in detail to Bologue.

"Do you know how the Fantasy Species was born? It's after all a mortal's power, and the power of mortals is limited.

But if a time reversal is triggered by the Devil, it might continue indefinitely until a certain goal is reached."

Listening to Lebius, Bologue's expression gradually darkened.

Indefinitely continue until a certain purpose is achieved.

Bologue's own Time Reversing Axis is just like that, resetting everything whenever he dies. Unlike the current situation, its scope of influence was not so dreadful, affecting only himself.

If this is true, then what purpose does the Devil intend to achieve through him?

Bologue didn't continue to ponder; he pounded on the steering wheel, causing the car to emit a series of piercing horns.

Now was not the time to dwell on these matters; Bologue forced these thoughts about himself out of his mind, listening to Lebius's further explanations.

"Just like our Secret Energies, narrow and sharp versus wide and blunt.

Your Blessing · Time Reversing Axis is a form of narrow and sharp time reversal, affecting only yourself, resetting indefinitely.

But if it's inclined towards wide and blunt, it's like the situation we're encountering now, where the scope of the time reversal influence covers the entire Opus. It can reverse all things, even life and death, yet its flaw is that it cannot last forever; it has a moment of collapse."

Lebius seemed to think of something as he whispered to Bologue beside him.

"Time... a mysterious and unpredictable power, do you think humans can truly grasp this power?"

"If not, how do we explain our current circumstances?" Bologue retorted.

Lebius pondered for a moment before slowly saying, "This is just a conjecture... an illusion of controlling time."

Bologue didn't understand, "What do you mean?"

"The Devil cannot change what's already happened; once actions are taken, everything becomes the past, unchangeable... Do you understand this?"

"Of course I understand, move aside!"

Bologue said halfway, rolled down the window as he honked the horn and shouted out the window, "Damn it! Watch where you're going!"

At the last second of the green light, the car rushed through the intersection.

"I don't usually drive like this, Palmer usually drives... go on," Bologue said.

Lebius was silent for a second; he suddenly realized it was his first time collaborating in an operation with this group member of his.

"Wait! Damn it! Do these people even know how to drive!"

Bologue cursed again, looking every bit like a person who needs medical attention for his volatile temper.

He honked continuously, narrowly missing another car as the sound of wind howled past and an ear-piercing screeching echoed.

Sparks flew out from between the vehicles; the other car obviously hadn't encountered a driver like Bologue before, scratches made visible marks on its side before losing control and crashing into the roadside bollards.

Bologue didn't even look; throughout the whole incident, this azure car was unaffected, only facing severe friction on Lebius's side.

Lebius, being a professional adept at handling turbulence, was unfazed by Bologue's reckless driving. But with the intense friction, the window on Lebius's side shattered completely, shards of glass spilling into the car, leaving a shallow cut on Lebius's face.

He glanced at the dashboard. Ever since Lebius came aboard, the needle had not left the warning red zone.

Lebius wanted to continue discussing the time reversal issue with Bologue, but even someone as stern as Lebius couldn't help but ask at this moment.

"Bologue, do you have a driver's license?"

"Driver's license? Of course, I do."

Bologue kept his eyes on the road, his tone surprisingly tinged with nostalgia.

"But it expired decades ago, right?"

Chapter 400: Reshoot

After several instances of Time Reversal, Bologue was like a racecar driver, having traveled this road so many times that he fully understood when the light would turn red and when pedestrians would cross.

Glancing at the time, even Lebius thought that Bologue could drive so fast; in just a few minutes, they would be approaching the Great Rift, even faster than taking the subway from the Deep Nest Courtyard.

"Continue, the Devil can't change what's already happened, so?"

The car window shattered, and a fierce wind poured in, roaring in his ears, and Bologue had to shout at the top of his lungs.

"So, look for loopholes within the rules, just like humans tricking the Devil; the Devil also has the ability to play with the rules that bind them.

If you can't change what's already happened, then turn everything into a dream? For example, what if we're all dreaming right now," Lebius said.

"Dreaming? Are you serious?"

"What we're doing now is all part of a dream. Every time Time Reversal occurs, you could understand it as a reboot of the dream, and we'll only wake up and make everything real once we achieve a correct result.

Look, this way, the past is infinitely altered!"

"So, are we dreaming?" Bologue started to have a headache, "That can't be possible!"

"We're not dreaming, it's just a... metaphor," Lebius was not good with words, especially when explaining such complicated matters to Bologue.

"Put it another way, it's like we're shooting a movie, right?" Bologue asked back.

"The whole world is a film, and we are now playing out a scene where Aimou is the director. She's dissatisfied with the direction of the plot, so she used the power of the Fantasy Species to cut a piece of the film out.

Now we're constantly reshooting this scene, until it's what Aimou wants, then it'll be spliced back and align with the world's trajectory."

"Pretty much, we've been removed from the main timeline of the world. The Fantasy Species can't reverse the main timeline, only this small segment, and when the Fantasy Species collapses, we'll return to the main timeline, only then will reality become reality and can no longer be altered."

Listening to Lebius's words, Bologue roughly understood his meaning, nodding to himself.

Bologue murmured, "No one is omnipotent."

The Great Rift gradually came into view. King's Shield Guard, Aimou, Teda, Immortal Heart, Fantasy Species—all the conflicts originated from the depths of this rift, awaiting the arrival of the two like a gladiatorial arena.

Bologue asked, "We're about to arrive. Do you have any thoughts, leader?"

Lebius replied, "I was activated too late, missed the previous Time Reversals, so this operation you're leading, and I'm assisting."

Bologue glanced sideways at Lebius, couldn't help but ask, "Is this really okay? You're the leader, am I not usurping your position?"

"A principle of the Field Operations Department is pragmatism," Lebius answered simply.

Hearing this, Bologue laughed. Though it's called pragmatism, another way to put it is: if it's useful, use it till it breaks.

With a deep breath, a cyan light appeared in Bologue's eyes.

"I need you to clear the obstacles for me, then I'll find Aimou and attempt to end the Time Reversal... no, see if Aimou can be used by us."

Lebius was a bit surprised, as he had thought Bologue would first aim to end the Time Reversal.

"Time Reversal is really handy, and if possible, perhaps after safeguarding Aimou, we can use her Time Reversal to defeat the King's Shield Guard's offensive."

This operation has two objectives: protect Aimou and destroy the King's Shield Guard.

In the experts' eyes, these two objectives were never an option, and Bologue intended to achieve them both.

"After clearing my obstacles, you go confront the King's Shield Guard, and find out what's happening on Teda's side," Bologue explained his plan.

"Me alone to confront?" Lebius murmured.

"Getting scared? Don't worry, just pretend you're the Undead, and I'll reset everything through Time Reversal afterward," Bologue promised Lebius.

Even if Lebius died in battle, during the next Time Reversal, he would awaken once again.

"Of course, hopefully, this won't be the last Time Reversal, or you'd be quite unlucky." Bologue joked.

"I'm not worried about these things," Lebius shook his head.

"I know, I was just joking," Bologue said, "You don't seem like you'd die easily."

Bologue said, shifting his gaze to his leader. All along, Lebius gave Bologue a sense of mysterious strength.

This strength wasn't about Tier, but Lebius's composure as a strong individual, as if no matter what threat he faced, he had the ability to handle it.

Sometimes Bologue felt that even when facing a Seeker of Glory, his leader seemed to have some ability to fight back.

Lebius didn't answer; he closed his eyes in thought, Ether coursing through his Alchemy Matrix, as if an erupting volcano poised to explode.

"One more thing, Bologue," Lebius suddenly recalled something and said, "If all this is triggered by the Fantasy Species, then Aimou has already made a wish."

"Yes, so?"

This information had been discussed before, and Bologue couldn't see why Lebius brought it up again.

"It means that Aimou's wish wasn't what caused the Time Reversal; it was to fulfill her wish that the Time Reversal appeared. You also mentioned that the reset nodes of Time Reversal occur with the damage of the Fantasy Species."

Lebius analyzed.

"But in fact, that's not the case; the reset nodes start with the breaking of Aimou's wish."

"You mean..."

"If Aimou can't fulfill her wish, that's when the Time Reversal would occur, constantly resetting until in some future timeline, Aimou achieves her wish."

"But the power of the Fantasy Species isn't absolute," Bologue whispered, "It can't absolutely fulfill anyone's wish."

"I... I've always felt there's the Devil's presence behind this," Bologue suddenly relayed to Lebius.

Lebius was not surprised by this, as he believed in Bologue's Perception of the Devil and the words spoken by that person in the Inverted Hall.

"Your judgment is correct, this incident is indeed being manipulated by the Devil."

"If the Fantasy Species can't fulfill her wish, then after it shatters, she only has one choice left."

Bologue gritted his teeth, not saying aloud the dreadful outcome; this was a vile conspiracy.

His feelings of anger intensified, with a judgment filled with hatred stirring deep inside. Bologue still remembered his oath; he would take down all the evil ones, even if they were endless. But in turn, Bologue was also undying—a notion that he would endlessly entangle with them until the world's end.

Similarly, Bologue also remembered what Adelle had once told him, he possessed extraordinary power, and it would be a shame to use it solely for destruction.

He could not only be a Destruction; sometimes, he could also be a Savior.

"Hold on tight! Leader! We're almost there!" Bologue shouted to Lebius.

Lebius was somewhat puzzled; at the edge of the Great Rift, they should be slowing down, yet Bologue's driving was speeding up.

A loud noise interrupted Lebius's thoughts; Bologue kicked open the car door beside him, reaching out to touch the ground.

The cyan light trail flashed by, the ground began to shake and rise, the runway was pulled up from the earth, continuously rising higher with the speeding car, until the tires left the ground, rushing into the Sea of Mist.

Lebius felt a moment of weightlessness, his body slightly leaving the seat.

Only then did Lebius understand why every action Bologue took was so swift, and why whenever Bologue acted with Palmer, Palmer was the one driving the car.

Lebius's vision turned dim, as with Bologue's cheers, they plunged straight into the Sea of Mist.