

Endless 561

Chapter 561: Invincible Iron Fist Mode

The Bloodthirsty explosion triggered a heavy firelight, easily shattering the windows along the way. Flames surged into the Fortress of the Morning Wind, burning the carpet and curtains together, ancient paintings turning to ashes in the fire.

Strong winds rushed through the wind channel behind the walls, dense whistling overlapping together, like a grand symphony. In this passionate and winding tune, the ancient castle endured the test of history.

Vasilina and Aimou held each other, lowering their bodies, relying on the fallen long table behind them as cover. Fragments from the explosion were nailed into the thick tabletop.

After the hot flow of fire, Aimou helped Vasilina stand up. At this moment, both of them were covered in a layer of ash, looking dirty and messy.

Vasilina coughed a few times, even though she wasn't affected by the explosion, the intense impact was still unpleasant. With the surge of Ether, a blue light trace appeared on Vasilina's body. The addition of Extraordinary Power made her feel much better.

Aimou, however, remained in her usual state. Under the Steel Body state, with her body's strength, unless facing the explosion directly, such impact had little effect on Aimou.

Aimou cautiously observed the surroundings, "Is it the Night Race attacking?"

"Other than those lunatics, there should be no one else," Vasilina frowned, "But how could it be so smooth?"

Vasilina didn't understand how this magnificent castle group standing at the edge could be breached so easily.

"Stop thinking about those for now!"

Aimou fumbled blindly over the shard-covered ground, rummaging through boxes.

"What are you doing?"

Vasilina suspiciously looked at Aimou. Now Aimou's actions were very much like looting, searching for any valuables within the Fortress of the Morning Wind.

"Silverware! As Extraordinary nobles, the Clarks family should have quite a few silver items, right?"

Aimou said, raising a candlestick, carefully rubbing its surface, wiping off dust, revealing a bright silver sheen.

"Found it!"

She excitedly waved the silver candlestick. Vasilina understood Aimou's purpose and immediately joined Aimou's search, trying to find more silverware before the enemy arrived.

"Exactly, there must be many silverwares here, let's search more!"

Vasilina recalled the history of the Fortress of the Morning Wind. In times earlier than the Dawn War, the Night Race had many conflicts with it. To prevent various crises, the Clarks family forged many silverware. Even if no crisis comes, this counts as a form of accumulation of wealth, nothing bad about it.

Monster roars came from the corridor. Aimou raised her hand, signaling Vasilina to stop. Aimou tightly grasped the silver candlestick, intricate mechanical noise sounding from beneath her shell, like a wind-up machine ready to unleash a killing blow.

The flickering firelight cast a menacing shadow. He smelled the scent of the living, approaching the corridor. At the moment of turning, the silver candlestick quickly reached out, like a whipping silver lash.

In an instant, the Bloodthirsty creature's terrifying head exploded into a mass of foul blood. The agitated blood came into contact with the silverware, making a piercing sound of strong acid corrosion. But this time, it wasn't the silverware being corroded, it was the blood itself.

The vigorous blood wriggled, evaporated. On the severed surface of the Bloodthirsty head, flesh turned into dead gray and black, with no vitality left, completely collapsing.

"Watch out!"

Vasilina shouted as Aimou smashed the head of this Bloodthirsty. Another Bloodthirsty crawled in from the collapsed wall.

From the cabinet, they found a decorative silver tray. The sturdy metal in Vasilina's hands was like clay, easily twisted into shape, turning into a simple silver fist guard tightly clinging to her fist.

Vasilina stepped forward, causing a slight tremor in the ground. Then she almost appeared suddenly in front of another Bloodthirsty, using the silverware on her fist, she hit the Bloodthirsty in the chest.

The Bloodthirsty stood dazedly in place, chest slightly sunken. The mighty impact penetrated layers of flesh and the Alchemy Armor beneath, crushing internal organs, shattering bones, then the whole back exploded. Shredded flesh mixed with foul blood sprayed everywhere.

Vasilina took a deep breath, her heart racing. Even as a Condenser, her cardiopulmonary function remained poor.

More footsteps approached. At the end of the corridor, Vasilina saw those grotesque figures, different from the Bloodthirsty she just killed. They carried unfamiliar alchemy devices. Out of caution, Vasilina did not rashly attack.

Another figure passed by Vasilina.

"I think this job is great everywhere, except it's difficult to maintain elegance at all times."

Aimou took off her coat, revealing her Second Skin. Dim flames reflected on the smooth Second Skin. She seemed like a dolphin leaping from the darkness.

"I'll go first,"

Aimou said to Vasilina.

This was taught to her by Bologue. As a Steel Body, she had enough trial and error cost to pave the way for her flesh-and-blood teammates.

Aimou didn't give Vasilina time to respond. She strode forward, raising her right hand. Complicated mechanical structures began to rotate. A crack extended from her palm to her wrist, and then a sharp blade protruded from it. As the crack closed, the blade locked firm in her palm.

Since Bologue's suggestion, Aimou had been trying to modify herself. This emergency blade was one such modification.

More importantly, this blade was considered part of Aimou's body. That means Aimou's Secret Power-Shared Chord Body could also take effect on it.

Aimou's pace gradually increased, eventually sprinting hard. The Bloodthirsty approached head-on, both like charging bulls.

In the instant before contact, Aimou suddenly leaped to the side, stepping on the wall to jump diagonally and leaping over the head of the Bloodthirsty.

Aimou kicked off the ceiling again, like a guillotine falling, the blade precisely hit the Bloodthirsty's head, penetrating down to the neck vertebra.

One hit, kill guaranteed.

The Bloodthirsty's body went limp, but with its death, the alchemy device was triggered, and its raging blood boiled uncontrollably.

In an instant, the already robust body of the Bloodthirsty swelled a few more sizes; Aimou sensed the crisis, but in this narrow space, she had no time to dodge.

Vasilina tried to rescue Aimou, but everything was too late. Blazing flames rose at the end of the corridor, the roar of the explosion deafening, and the oncoming heatwave forced Vasilina to the ground.

After the impact and smoke cleared, Vasilina scrambled up, seeing only the gray-black ruins, and further away, more Bloodthirsty standing up again from the aftershocks of the explosion.

"Aimou..."

Vasilina called softly, her sorrow was cut short by a familiar voice.

"I'm here!"

A vague phantom walked out of the rubble, and with the dissolution of the Shared Chord Body, Aimou's body materialized, reconstructing among the golden trails of light.

Relying on the penetration ability of the Shared Chord Body, with no Ethereum Mutual Exclusion obstructions, Aimou could move freely through the building.

"The explosion should have been caused by these guys!"

Aimou cautiously confronted the Bloodthirsty; even if they could be easily killed, their death still caused severe destruction.

If they didn't escape quickly, the exploding flames would consume them.

Aimou could evade the blast shockwaves using the Shared Chord Body's swift traversal, but Vasilina clearly couldn't. Upon simple observation, Aimou noticed Vasilina's fatigue.

They were not suitable to continue tangling with the Bloodthirsty. Neither Aimou nor Vasilina was adept at frontal confrontation, and those responsible for the frontal battlefield were now missing.

Aimou stopped complaining, realizing that with Bologue's temperament, there was no need for the enemy to find him; he would seek them out himself. The guy was probably fighting joyously now.

"We're leaving this place," Aimou hurried to Vasilina's side, grabbing her, "You know this place; where should we go?"

Several options flashed through Vasilina's mind. She hesitated slightly, saying, "You need to take refuge; I have something to do."

Aimou asked, "What is it?"

"These Night Race ones have only one goal, to tear up the , " Vasilina analyzed, "I need to see it with my own eyes. You take refuge; I'm going to the Wind Cellar."

Aimou tried to stop Vasilina, "Are you crazy?"

Vasilina said, "You are guests, but I am not. I am part of this place."

Aimou held onto Vasilina; after a brief internal debate, she made a decision, "I'm going with you."

"There's no need for you to take such risks."

Vasilina shook her head. After all, they had only known each other for a few days, not enough to risk life and limb for.

"No, no, it's necessary," Aimou and Vasilina analyzed the situation, "You're Palmer's fiancée; Palmer is Bologue's partner..."

Aimou didn't continue speaking; she summed up simply and crudely, "Helping you is like helping myself!"

"Huh?"

Before Vasilina could continue speaking, Aimou moved behind her and embraced her waist. Vasilina was much taller than Aimou, making Aimou look like a child pleading.

"I was quite resistant to this before... although still a bit uncomfortable now, there's no choice!"

Aimou spoke words Vasilina couldn't understand, "People have to try to change, right? Like accepting others!"

"What are you talking about?"

"Get ready, the next feeling will be a bit strange!"

Aimou responded to Vasilina with action. Golden trails of light enveloped Vasilina's body, and various strange sensations lingered in Vasilina's mind.

"Take a deep breath; it's normal to feel a bit strange!"

Aimou's energetic voice sounded, but this time, it echoed directly in Vasilina's mind.

The Canyin trails covered Vasilina's body, overlapping with her Alchemy Matrix, and cheerful voices echoed by her ears.

"Now it's Invincible Iron Fist Mode!"

Chapter 562: Bloodthirsty Squad

The Fortress of the Morning Wind is immensely vast, and even though the Night Race has shattered the void realm's defenses and broken into the castle complex, the raging fires of war have only affected a small area. To deal with the bloodthirsty intruders within the castle, most Condensers have been dispatched to the breach for interception and defense.

The roaring explosions continue, and for tonight's operation, the Night Race has released almost all of the bloodthirsty beings. As the battle progresses, figures clad in black armor gradually appear on the sea's surface.

The Silent Legion descends onto the battlefield, and to withstand these loyal mercenaries, the majority of forces are concentrated on the front lines. The intense etherial reactions rise and fall, stirring up etherial tornadoes.

Some Condensers, whose ethereal perception is too keen, have absorbed too much information amidst the ether's mixed environment, even resulting in negative mental states.

Blood and corpses pile up in the ruins, and the tides wash the bloodstained land clean, dragging the bodies back into the deep sea like a hungry monster.

There is never a shortage of the dead on the battlefield, bodies continually collapsing, and the land is once again dyed red.

The blood aura of the deceased fills the entire area, and even with the howling winds, the ascent of this aura cannot be cut off. Derby walks through the silent corridors, where the blood aura remains distinct, carried by the night wind.

"So beautiful..."

Derby looks through the open window. The fire rages within the Fortress of the Morning Wind, with countless figures flickering within the sea of flames, as if dancing around the blaze.

Closing his eyes, Derby's vision plunges into darkness, and immediately within the darkness, dense points of light emerge. Each spot represents a bloodthirsty being, gathered at the breach to restrain the Fortress of the Morning Wind's forces, battling with the Condensers.

These points of light are far from Derby; the area he is in is deep within the Celestial Dome Castle, a critical site for the Clarks. Despite the Condensers' counterattacks, keeping the flames of war outside... Derby has still infiltrated.

Derby does not open his eyes. Amid the tumultuous noise, light buzzing reverberates as nimble hummingbirds circle him, providing a field of vision for Derby.

The hummingbird swarm not only hovers around Derby but also advances into various corridors' branches, rapidly surveying the surrounding terrain and clearing the paths.

Derby advances a bit further, encountering no obstacles or guards, which eases his previously alert heart.

Even now, Derby feels a bit dazed; he never expected to infiltrate the Celestial Dome Castle like this, the very core of the Clarks.

Yet, this is the reality: all forces are focused on the frontal battlefield. Even Fuen has mobilized, with thunderous roars echoing through the night sky.

Since the Order Bureau's inception, on the Rhine Alliance's territory, all Extraordinary Organizations and Secret Societies have experienced a brief peace, even the All Secrets Order, unwilling to join the Order Bureau, has maintained peace with various organizations.

The Wind Source Highlands have not encountered warfare for many years. As the Clarks' autonomous region, most of the Clarks' Condensers are spread across the vast Wind Source Highlands, guarding each town or hunting down demon-worshipping evil groups to maintain order in the Extraordinary World.

The power within the Fortress of the Morning Wind is not the entirety of the Clarks, yet, it is enough to stir hearts. Derby had pondered the action's ferocity, even prepared for his possible death...

Yet, he arrived here without any significant hitch, a smoothness that inspires after-the-fact fear.

Clearing his mind, Derby continues searching for the Wind Cellar. Whether conspiracy or trick, as long as the "Dawn Oath" is torn apart, it is all worthwhile.

A heavy breathing sound emerges behind Derby; besides the hummingbirds, many towering figures follow him. They are also bloodthirsty but, judging from their extent of modification, are undoubtedly far stronger than the regular bloodthirsty beings of the front lines.

Most of their skin has disappeared, replaced by sturdy alchemy armor. Infusion tubes crisscross the armored seams, and their deformed muscles bulge like massive lumps, with intricate mechanical structures penetrating their internal organs.

Depending on different needs, their arms have been transformed into various weapons: some wield large shields, others brandish war axes and long blades, while others bear firearms, with ammo belts extending to their backpacks' ammo boxes.

This is an elite squad of bloodthirsty beings, entirely under Derby's control, and rather than bloodthirsty entities, they should be considered alchemically enhanced creatures based on bloodthirsty beings.

Shielded by them layer by layer, with the intensity of the alchemical modifications and Derby's control at the Negative Power Tier, Derby could easily win even if surrounded by Condensers.

Suddenly, Derby opens his eyes. In his perception, a hummingbird sends a joyful feedback, it has located traces of the Wind Cellar.

Derby immediately takes action, gathering the other hummingbirds to patrol the squad's perimeter while he leads the squad closer to the Wind Cellar.

Reaching into his pocket, Derby retrieves a dagger. The dagger's design is quite unique, featuring a container affixed to its back, with several tubes extending from the container, allowing the poison within to be injected along the blade's grooves.

As the core stronghold, the Wind Cellar must be protected by a complex void realm, and the poison within the dagger is key to Derby shattering this realm.

The poison is refined using ether collected from Zefirin; it enhances the effect of the Soul-Breaking Poison, allowing it to corrode ether. At the start of tonight's war, Derby relied on this enhanced Soul-Breaking Poison to pierce the Fortress of the Morning Wind's Void Realm defenses.

Following the hummingbird's guidance, Derby proceeds, his mood soaring as he approaches the destination, and even his cold blood warms up with excitement.

Once the "Dawn Oath" is torn apart, Derby will be the one to alter the Night Race's history, and if he can escape alive, he might even be personally summoned by the Night King and granted blood.

With the "Dawn Oath" destroyed, the Night Race would no longer be bound by its constraints, free to leave the Land of Eternal Night and spread the plague of immortality across the mortal realm.

Derby ponders that no one would refuse immortality, such a wondrously prolonged life, with its only cost being the refusal to witness sunrise and a small part of one's soul.

Many claim noble and pure intentions, yet when facing the temptation of immortality, do they not show their true, pitiful, and hypocritical hearts?

The spiral descent is within reach, and just as Derby is about to step into it, he notices a hummingbird missing from the perimeter, and then several more disappearing from his perception.

Judging by the time and location of their disappearance, an unknown entity is rapidly approaching Derby as indicated by the hummingbirds' constructed radar.

Derby looks to the end of one corridor, and without the need for verbal command, one bloodthirsty entity raises a machine gun, aimed at the identified position.

"Fire!"

Derby's voice echoes, immediately drowned by the piercing gunfire, with the reverberating roars shattering the glass along the path, a deadly rain of bullets pouring out, turning the entire wall into a beehive.

The expected enemy does not appear, yet given her speed and direction, this should be the accurate position.

Derby is puzzled when an ethereal reaction clearly emerges in his perception. He quickly turns his head, as the wall beside him instantly collapses.

A lithe figure bursts through the wall, delivering a straight punch to a bloodthirsty being's abdomen. The tall robust figure is effortlessly swayed by her, uncontrollably smashing backward, collapsing a window, plummeting behind the high walls.

Vasilina breaks into the bloodthirsty cohort, exploiting the time earned by her surprise attack, launching a whip-leg strike at another bloodthirsty being.

This attack should have snapped the bloodthirsty being's bones, but covered in a layer of alchemy armor, Vasilina only slightly shakes them, causing no effective damage.

At this moment, the bloodthirsty beings have already reacted. Entering battle mode, the infusion tubes pump immense amounts of stimulants into their bodies, causing the already grotesque, twisted muscles to swell further, making them appear as tall as giants when compared to Vasilina.

Before the heavy blow descends, crimson streaks erupt from the bloodthirsty beings as sharp sword flashes avoid the armor's coverage, slicing through scores of flesh and severing infusion tubes.

Aimou lightly leaps, extending a hand to grab Vasilina, merging their figures; the power of the Shared Chord Body once again envelops Vasilina as she pivots and swings a heavy punch, denting the bloodthirsty being's chest armor.

Chapter 563: Heart of the Wild

A series of surprise attacks, Vasilina teamed up with Aimou, briefly pushing back these Elite Bloodthirsters, but it was just that—pushing back.

Derby hid behind the Elite Bloodthirsters, ghostly red light flickering in his eyes, corresponding to the Bloodthirsters as if protected by some force, beginning further transformation.

The Alchemy Device roared with noise, scorching waste gas spewed out from the pipelines, deep red liquid surged inside the infusion tubes, indistinguishable whether this was some Alchemy Potion or searing blood.

The Bloodthirsters' bodies expanded once more, squeezing the already limited space in the corridor, forming a flesh wall, completely surrounding the two.

Vasilina's heart sank, she could clearly see, the wounds carved out by Aimou on the Bloodthirsters were healing at a speed visible to the naked eye. Bloodthirsters shouldn't have such regenerative abilities.

A strange sound came from behind a shattered window ledge, followed by a gigantic hand grasping the edge, sharp claws piercing into the brick.

The Elite Bloodthirster wasn't knocked down from the high wall by Vasilina; on the way down, he spread his claws, controlled his descent, and climbed back up again.

"This isn't something we can solve."

Aimou's voice echoed in Vasilina's mind, unwilling to admit this fact, but Vasilina nodded with difficulty, signaling agreement.

Currently, both of them were just First Stage Condensers, not adept at direct combat, with slim chances against these Elite Bloodthirsters. Not to mention the lurking Derby.

Vasilina comforted, "Delay time, reinforcements will come eventually."

Vasilina was certain Derby's appearance here wasn't a coincidence, knowing the Wind Cellar was nearby; retreating and leaving Derby to enter the Wind Cellar would have unimaginable consequences.

No time to think too much, Elite Bloodthirsters' eyes showed similar red flashes, metallic claws scraping against each other, creating a harsh, grating sound.

Vasilina clenched her fist, dense tracks of light covered her right arm, light gathering like pulsating water, eventually converging on her fist.

"Help me out!"

"Alright!"

Aimou unleashed his own Ether completely, compensating for Vasilina's physical weakness, elevating their Ether strength to its peak.

Elite Bloodthirsters tensed their muscles, directed their armored parts towards Vasilina, preparing to withstand her next heavy punch.

Seeing their response, Vasilina just sneered and then smashed her heavy fist into the ground.

Though Vasilina never lived within the Mountain Ridge, nor was truly one of the Philrads, under Fuen's persuasion and having Palmer as a fiancé, the Philrads finally relented, allowing Vasilina to implant the Philrads' Alchemy Matrix within the Fortress of the Morning Wind.

Secret Energy·Wild Heart.

Unlike many Secret Energies from ascension sects causing bodily deformities, the Wild Heart doesn't affect form; it simply grants Condensers raw power, conquering every powerful adversary with absolute might.

As Fuen stated, the wild essence isn't just a descriptor for the Philrads; they genuinely possess terrifying power, no complicated effects, just unparalleled strength.

Under Aimou's enhancement, this should be the heaviest punch Vasilina could deliver at this stage, the entire building trembled with the impact, cracks spread across the ground, and in the next second, it collapsed swiftly downward.

Lacking ground support, Elite Bloodthirsters collided chaotically, amidst the chaos, some tried to attack Vasilina, but she had already leaped high, climbing along the wall's edge, distancing herself as much as possible.

Among the collapsing rubble, Derby focused intently on Vasilina's figure, unaware of the Shared Chord Body's nature, yet he could keenly sense that both were merely First Stage Condensers.

Derby leaped backwards, avoiding the cascading debris, stepping into the safe zone, then leaned against the corner, his pitch-black robe seemingly alive, convulsing violently, enveloping Derby's body, and then his figure blurred, merging with the shadow behind.

An iron chain snapped upward from the gap below, its pointed head piercing the ceiling, and before Vasilina could make her next move, the chain straightened, dragging a menacing silhouette back into the fractured corridor.

To deal with varying battle scenarios, Derby prepared various types of Elite Bloodthirsters.

The chain retrieved the rough, mottled pointed head, which was clutched in the Bloodthirsters' hand, used as a blunt weapon in combat, as for the leaping Bloodthirster, his frame was considerably smaller than other Bloodthirsters, lacking excessive armor, only protected at vital parts.

Slender sharp steel claws scraped against the ground, the upper half of the Bloodthirster's face shielded by steel, revealing only an ugly maw.

"Damn it... that guy's gone!"

Vasilina suddenly noticed Derby's disappearance; despite exhausting all means to delay time, she couldn't stop Derby's actions.

Utilizing the Bloodthirsters as obstructions, Derby sneaked into the shadows, advancing towards the Wind Cellar.

"He... he's in that direction!"

While the eye couldn't locate Derby, Aimou relied on his sharp Ethereal Perception to roughly discern Derby's position.

Vasilina attempted to chase, but her path was blocked by the Bloodthirsters; to stop Derby, she had to first break through the Bloodthirsters' barrier.

Break through?

Vasilina smirked bitterly; to say nothing of breaking through, whether she could survive their siege was still unknown.

No matter how lowly their lineage, these creatures were Domination Objects of the Negative Power User.

The Bloodthirster first launched an attack, shattering the calm, using his lightweight armor for rapid movement, like a flash of scarlet lightning.

Vasilina withdrew instinctively, then the pointed head smashed into the ground before her, shattering it, and this was just the beginning, the stench of blood flew towards her, a sharp claw slicing at Vasilina from the side.

No time to defend, Vasilina could already imagine herself torn apart, indeed she was too overstrained, yet she couldn't persuade herself to stand idle.

A nameless fury burned within Vasilina's heart, even with death looming, she clenched her fist tightly.

"Do what you must!"

Aimou's voice rang out, Canyin's brilliance soared, a black arm stretched out, using itself as a shield, protecting Vasilina's flank.

The sharp claw struck Aimou's arm, even with the protection of Iron-Repelling Paint, the Alchemy alloy arm showed white cracks and dented slightly, yet Aimou at least blocked this strike.

Simultaneously, Vasilina successfully landed a heavy punch, enhanced by dense Ether, punching the Bloodthirster's elbow, crushing the bone through flesh.

A piercing wail erupted, the Bloodthirster's claw arm drooped down, he attempted to continue his assault but Vasilina turned and crashed through a side wall, leaping towards the space behind the high wall.

In her descent, Vasilina saw the ferocious figures behind the shattered window; originally only one Bloodthirster came to hinder her, while the rest followed Derby, advancing towards the Wind Cellar.

Vasilina grabbed onto the window ledge to halt her fall, now she had two choices: continue to impede Derby—a move nearly impossible to succeed due to the vast Tier gap between her and Derby, and the numerous Overlords at his disposal.

The other choice is to retreat; Vasilina was familiar with the terrain of the Fortress of the Morning Wind. As long as she wished to flee, these Bloodthirsters wouldn't be able to stop her, especially with Aimou's boost.

Without words, Aimou, through the Shared Chord Body, sensed Vasilina's vague thoughts, thereby suggesting.

"Do you trust me?"

"Trust?" Vasilina smiled in reply, "Though we haven't known each other for long, I think I can absolutely trust you."

The mind fell silent for a few seconds, Aimou similarly smiled and answered, "As he said, we've been through thick and thin as dear brothers."

"He?"

Aimou didn't have the intention to explain, instead directly reciting to Vasilina his straightforward plan.

Vasilina briefly contemplated, her heart raced fiercely, it had been long since she felt this tense.

Holding onto the window ledge, she flipped back into the corridor, sprinting down the hallway, quickly closing in on Derby's position.

Chapter 564: Gathering at the Wind Cellar

Relying on the dispersed hummingbirds, the surrounding terrain clearly imprinted itself in Derby's mind. Surrounded by the elite Bloodthirsters, he steadily approached the Wind Cellar.

Thanks to the information gathered by the Domination Object, numerous pieces of intelligence flashed through Derby's mind, including the escape of Vasilina and Aimou. The two chose to escape through a window rather than entangle with the elite Bloodthirsters.

Derby felt slightly relieved; it seemed the opponents weren't fools, realizing victory was impossible, hence choosing to retreat.

But this sense of relief didn't last long. Derby understood that once these two left alive, they would surely seek reinforcement, which would affect his subsequent actions.

Therefore, Derby remotely commanded the elite Bloodthirsters to continue pursuing Vasilina and Aimou. During the earlier skirmish, Vasilina's fist had suffered a scrape, leaving traces of blood. Although scant, as members of the Night Race, they were exceedingly sensitive to blood.

In the distance, the elite Bloodthirster lowered its body, sniffing amidst the shattered ruins for the faint scent of blood, soon capturing Vasilina's presence, and charged down the corridor like a hunting dog.

Despite both being Overlords, Derby and Lebius had vast differences.

The Blade-Biting Wolf under Lebius's control was essentially just Evil Wolf Armor entirely crafted from Alchemy Metal—a mindless dead entity with all actions reliant solely on Lebius's command.

Thus, Lebius had long been training himself in precise Ether manipulation and focusing his will, enabling him to simultaneously operate multiple Blade-Biting Wolves.

Derby's Domination Object, however, consisted of elite Bloodthirsters, monsters possessing a certain level of intelligence. They could accept Derby's mostly rudimentary instructions. In comparison, Derby was like a Beast Tamer, and the elite Bloodthirsters were his beasts.

With simple commands, the elite Bloodthirsters would autonomously execute orders and engage in combat, significantly reducing Derby's mental exertion.

Just like now, Derby ordered the elite Bloodthirsters to hunt down Vasilina, and the frenzied creature sought the target on its own, occasionally reporting back with the latest progress.

Derby focused his attention on what lay ahead, squinting his eyes to perceive the surrounding Ether fluctuations. The Wind Cellar was the core domain of the Clarks, surely possessing numerous defenses at its entrance.

An elite Bloodthirster advanced ahead, larger in size than the other elite Bloodthirsters, clad in heavy armor and holding a massive shield.

Holding the shield before it, accompanied by the Bloodthirster's progression, it moved like a heavy wall advancing down the narrow road, crushing all debris in its path.

Derby clenched the dagger in his hand, its poison was limited, able only to break a few defenses in the Void Realm.

Contemplating this caused Derby a wave of frustration since not long ago, the hummingbird accompanying Zefirin was damaged, causing Zefirin to lose contact.

In this operation, Zefirin was very important; her Secret Energy restrained Ether and possessed powerful functionality.

In their last conversation, Zefirin had been attacked; the opponent was extremely strong. For this, Derby had dispatched Haiqi to support her, but soon after, the hummingbird with Haiqi was also damaged, and Haiqi too lost contact...

Derby didn't want to think pessimistically as it would only hinder his actions.

Raising the dagger, he stabbed the air, to the naked eye, there seemed to be nothing there, yet the dagger struck something invisible, its metallic tip shimmering with radiant light, hindering its advance.

Derby exerted all his strength on the dagger; the poison released and vaporized upon contact with the air, the toxin corroding the invisible Ether. The sound of shattering glass echoed all around.

Suddenly, the crisp sound of shattering intensified, as if a glass wall before him collapsed, shattering to the ground with a crash. Simultaneously, the obstruction felt by the dagger vanished; Derby had breached a defense.

Derby was preparing to delve further when he sensed the elite Bloodthirster he had sent after Vasilina was now approaching him.

Before Derby could feel puzzled, an Ether reaction spontaneously emerged nearby, with the opponent making no effort to conceal their intent, releasing their Ether fully, allowing it to escape from their body.

Derby angrily said, "Here to die, huh!"

He was intimately familiar with this Ether reaction; it belonged to Vasilina, who had just escaped from him. Now she wasn't only back, but was making sure Derby wouldn't miss her by fully releasing her Ether.

If their tier was evenly matched, Derby would interpret it as a declaration of war, but with such a significant tier gap between them, it seemed more like her provoking him.

Vasilina moved swiftly, her Ether reaction continually closing in on Derby, and from a rough perception, Vasilina's movement path had no twists and directly headed towards him.

She has arrived.

Almost immediately upon realizing this, the rumbling sound of collapsing material ensued, as Vasilina punched through a wall, breaking through.

Derby commanded, "Deal with her!"

This time, all the elite Bloodthirsters sprang into action; Derby had already wasted too much time on Vasilina—he had no leisure left to toy with her.

Upon entering, Vasilina wasn't quick to attack. Instead, she spared Derby a glance before crashing into another wall, retreating into another room, like a bothersome little bird pecking at you before flying away.

Derby wasn't planning to let her off lightly, the elite Bloodthirsters crashed through the walls in unison, the booming noise relentless, pursuing Vasilina.

Behind the swirling dust, what awaited him was a blade that slashed down from above.

Vasilina wasn't skilled with blades, but with enough brute force, even a clumsy swordsman could unleash a lethal sword dance.

A slender wound extended along the shoulder of the elite Bloodthirster. Vasilina intended to slash through his throat with a single strike, but the elite Bloodthirster wore a neck guard, sparking flashes.

The elite Bloodthirster intended to continue attacking, but from the wounded shoulder came an unbearable searing pain. The wound didn't heal; instead, it turned gray-black and decayed, like a burnt-out shell.

Standing afar, Vasilina wiped the blood off the blade, the metal emitting a hoarse sound of corrosion.

The Clarks own a vast estate, even the decorative swords hanging on the walls are made of silver. Who knows who had the idle time to sharpen all these blades?

Vasilina was gasping for air, her chest heaving rapidly. She exuded a strong Ether reaction, but it wasn't Vasilina's Ether; it was Aimou's.

Like a backup energy source, Aimou provided Vasilina with Ether support, while releasing Ether widely. In this area, Aimou's Ether reaction stood like a burning torch.

The mechanical spinning sounded from one side; Vasilina quickly rolled towards the cover nearby. Immediately, dense bullets rained down on the spot where Vasilina had just been, piercing through everything in their path.

Without giving Vasilina a chance to catch her breath, heavy footsteps sounded from behind the wall, Aimou shouted, "Get down!"

Vasilina crouched down just in time as a heavy blade broke through the wall, and if she hadn't dodged, she would have been cut in half through the wall.

Using her nimble body, Vasilina leapt back into the corridor through the smashed gap, but other elite Bloodthirsters were already waiting there.

"You have nowhere to escape."

Derby taunted, as if declaring his victory.

Indeed, Vasilina had nowhere to run. She glanced outside the window; the elite Bloodthirsters launched their claws, anchoring themselves to the walls. If Vasilina jumped out of the corridor, she would be attacked by them.

Now Vasilina was left with one choice, to flee back. But in this straight corridor, no matter how fast she ran, she couldn't escape the elite Bloodthirsters' pursuit.

Derby gazed at the solitary Vasilina, a more loathsome smile suddenly broke across his face.

A vague Ether reaction was rising from the end of the corridor. With the hummingbirds scattered around the outskirts, Derby recognized who it was—it was Zefirin.

Zefirin finally arrived, effectively blocking Vasilina's last escape route.

Things were going smoothly again, Derby was about to laugh, while Vasilina and Aimou felt it was hopeless. The situation that was already unwinnable became even more bleak.

Zefirin's footsteps were like approaching funeral bells, an irresistible pressure descended on both of their hearts. Zefirin's figure gradually became clearer, completing the encirclement.

Then another fiercer Ether reaction erupted, not within the building but outside it.

"Duck and cover!"

Vasilina heard a familiar voice; without a moment's hesitation, she immediately ducked and rolled several times, hiding behind the wall.

In an instant, a massive wind pressure descended, shattering glass windows under the intense squeeze; the fierce wind rushed inside, mixed with debris, blowing so fiercely that Derby couldn't keep his eyes open.

"What the..."

Derby didn't have time to question before a piercing sharp sound echoed, like a knife scraping his eardrum.

Wind guns shot in from outside the building, striking the tall elite Bloodthirsters. The powerful impact pushed their bodies, knocking them down and crashing them into the rooms behind.

The beastly cries were endless; after the raging howling wind, numerous distorted broken decorative swords appeared in sight. Some embedded in the elite Bloodthirsters, while others stabbed into walls and the ground, turning the area into a wasteland in an instant.

At this moment, Zefirin also arrived from behind. As her figure came into Derby's view, he was terrified to see Zefirin's dreadful state.

Zefirin was covered in wounds; her abdomen was a bloody mess, and her blood-red pupils were filled with terror.

Zefirin wasn't coming to meet with Derby but was fleeing, seeking aid from him.

"I've told you, follow her, and she'll lead us to others."

A cold voice echoed in the ruins, a touch of cyan flame ignited at the end of the corridor, and then more cyan flames surged through, engulfing the surrounding matter like a tide.

From the end of the fiery path, a rugged Armored Knight strode forth.

Chapter 565: The Perfect Undead

The bombardment of the Wind Gun and the burning of the Flame of the Cauldron brought a momentary silence to the chaotic battlefield. Neither Derby nor the Elite Bloodthirsters dared to make a move, and Palmer and Bologue didn't launch another attack.

Both sides maintained a delicate balance. In the ruins, Vasilina and Zefirin were the only ones still moving, each running towards their respective camps. They didn't even glance at each other or make any attempt to attack as they crossed paths.

Vasilina retreated to a safe zone, and Palmer rushed in with the wind, crashing in clumsily and rolling a few times. Zefirin's poison continued to affect Palmer, limiting him to using simple attack methods like the Wind Gun.

Upon seeing Vasilina unharmed, a slight joy flashed across Palmer's face. Before Palmer could say anything, Vasilina greeted him with a head-on embrace. Without slowing down, they collided and rolled on the ground several times before stopping.

Palmer was somewhat dazed from the collision, and the consciousness he had just regained almost faded again. Vasilina noticed Palmer's condition; his face looked terrible, and he had an injury on his abdomen.

"What happened?"

Faced with Vasilina's inquiry, Palmer lifted his hand with difficulty and pointed at Zefirin, who had merged with Derby, with words filled with hatred, "That bastard..."

The brief encounter between Palmer and Zefirin had been the worst nightmare in recent memory.

Vasilina turned her head to look at Zefirin. Compared to Palmer, Zefirin's condition was even more disheveled.

Zefirin thought he could silently elude the pursuit of the two by relying on Ethereal Concealment, but under Bologue's wide-ranging Command, Zefirin was quickly discovered in such a crude manner.

What followed was a childish game of cat and mouse, with Zefirin fleeing in front and the two pursuing behind, occasionally launching attacks as if urging Zefirin along, toying with him.

Normally, this would be fine, but during his recovery, Palmer had unearthed a batch of Silverware and handed it over to Bologue for Command. These metal materials were forged into a series of lethal weapons under the Flame of the Cauldron.

The majority of the wounds on Zefirin's body were inflicted by the Silverware, making them difficult to heal.

"Help me..."

Zefirin gasped painfully. Although most of the Silver wounds were superficial, the torment from the Silver incessantly plagued Zefirin's nerves.

Derby realized the severity of the situation and decisively extended his hand, with pale skin and visible blue veins beneath.

Zefirin bit into Derby's wrist, extracting blood from Derby's body. Relying on the blood of a High Tier Night Race, Zefirin accelerated his body's recovery and struggled to resist the effects of the Silverware.

Releasing his bite, Zefirin exhaled deeply, his face stained with a large blot of blood, resembling a beast that had just feasted.

Being drained of one's blood was not a pleasant feeling, but in light of the current battle, Derby had no other options.

"Is it that person?"

Vasilina stared at Zefirin, clenching her fists, eager to try.

Palmer grabbed her and asked, "Are you okay?"

"I... I'm fine, just some scrapes."

Hearing this, Palmer noticed the blue halo in Vasilina's eyes. In the next second, the blue halo vanished, and a familiar figure appeared behind Vasilina.

"Thanks, Aimou."

Palmer gave Aimou a thumbs-up. Aimou didn't respond verbally but returned the gesture with a thumbs-up in reply.

Palmer requested Vasilina, "Help me up."

After being freed from Zefirin's Secret Energy influence, Palmer first regained his Rectangular Soul Critical. Ether once again filled his body, but the toxic physical injuries took a long time to heal. Throughout, he relied on the support of the fierce wind.

Vasilina nodded and easily hoisted Palmer onto her shoulder. For Vasilina, Palmer's weight was no burden at all.

"Wrong! Wrong! Turn around!"

Palmer tapped Vasilina's back repeatedly. This manner seemed like she was going to carry him away.

"Oh."

Vasilina adjusted and cradled Palmer instead. Palmer's expression was somewhat complex, and he persuaded, "Just help me a little."

Palmer struggled out of Vasilina's embrace, propping himself up with her shoulder to barely stand upright.

"Shy?"

Vasilina's voice whispered beside Palmer's ear. Palmer's eyes darkened as he retorted softly, "You're starting again, aren't you?"

Bologue stood at the forefront like a shield wall, blocking the enemy. The Flame of the Cauldron blazed fiercely beside him, chains stretched from his armor, hooked onto the Silver Swords scattered among the ruins, and hurled them backwards, embedding them one by one in front of Palmer.

Palmer reached out, casually drew a Silver Sword, his gaze wandering between Zefirin and Derby, like a hunter with a taut bowstring, waiting for the moment to release and kill.

"Don't we need to join the battle?"

Noting Palmer's abnormal behavior, Vasilina held himself back to avoid getting dragged into the fight.

"Leave professional work to the experts."

Palmer wrapped an arm around Vasilina's shoulder. As the breeze passed, the Silver Sword in his hand lifted, positioned directly in front.

"We just need to wait for the right opportunity."

The jagged armor kneeled halfway, a gap opened in its back. Bologue lazily stood up, simply sweeping over the battlefield.

A Negative Power Overlord, a Prayer Believer, several Elite Bloodthirsters...

Bologue felt a hint of pressure; the enemy was not simple nor easy to deal with, but victory wasn't impossible.

Most importantly, this battle didn't necessarily need a winner; it was about stalling time. Each passing moment increased the possibility of failure for the Night Race.

Derby asked, "Where's Haiqi? Didn't I tell him to assist you?"

"Haiqi..."

Zefirin recalled the terrifying scene, taking a deep breath, "Haiqi is dead, I... I don't know if he can come back to life."

Haiqi's body shattered into numerous pieces, sealed inside an Iron Coffin with Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid. Even if Haiqi could revive, it would take substantial time to escape from the coffin.

"The other side... the other side is an Undead too."

Zefirin disclosed key information, "His immortality is more perfect than ours."

Even after several clashes, Zefirin hadn't discovered any flaws in Bologue's immortality. His self-healing speed was unbelievably fast, able to revive from fatal neck wounds quickly, and moreover, each revival reset many of Bologue's negative statuses.

Things were getting troublesome, but the real trouble was yet to come.

Aimou walked over leisurely, placing both hands on Bologue's shoulders. Golden light twisted, Aimou vanished, replaced by a blue ring floating in Bologue's green pupils, with gilded radiance flickering on his body.

Without a word, Bologue's armor burned with blue flames, the Dead Giant rose again, engulfing Bologue. Then, the giant's form began to collapse, more lethal Scale Armor layered together, making the heavy figure increasingly slender and deadly.

Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid formed a blade in hand, Bologue raised his other hand, the Silver Swords embedded in the ground began to melt, evenly covering the blade, performing a simple silver plating which spread across the armor, coating it with deadly Silver.

Without any warning, Bologue suddenly stepped forward, his figure twisting into a rapidly advancing silver light, the lethal blade slicing through multiple obstacles.

Derby's eyes glowed with a crimson sheen, Elite Bloodthirsters swiftly stationed themselves in front, forming a defensive line. Although the Silver Sword struck his body, under the enhancement of Potion and Secret Energy, these injuries weren't enough to be lethal, especially with critical areas covered in armor.

The clash was like cars colliding on a highway, the towering figure of the Elite Bloodthirster surprisingly shaken, retreating uncontrollably, Bologue's figure paused momentarily in mid-air, then he flung a hook line, piercing the Bloodthirster's body.

As he pulled, the Elite Bloodthirster, before it could fall, was dragged crashing into Bologue.

Crashing into the blade in his hand.

Even surrounded by much armor, some parts of the Elite Bloodthirster's seamless metal were left unprotected.

The blade pierced through the Bloodthirster's eye, shredding his brain, protruding from the back of his skull.

Bologue gripped the sword hilt, allowing the deadly silver toxin to invade the Night Race's flesh, until his brain was completely scorched by the Silver.

Withdrawing the blade, Bologue stirred up a wisp of black smoke and ashes, drifting with the wind as the towering figure collapsed.

Chapter 566: You Die or I Live

To the Night Race, silverware is as deadly as sunlight. When it touches their bodies, it leaves scorch marks, as if burned by invisible flames, reducing flesh to warm ashes mysteriously.

The Undying Body that the Night Race prides itself on loses its regenerative power under the suppression of silverware. When struck in a fatal spot, they die as helplessly as ordinary mortals.

Under Bologue's swift assault, the head of an elite Bloodthirster was burned hollow, with sparks flying from the slender wound.

"Derby, there's something wrong with this guy," a blood-colored glow rose in Zefirin's eyes. "He's different from ordinary enemies."

Zefirin wanted to continue speaking about Bologue's special traits, but when the words reached his lips, he found that he had no answers to offer.

The feeling Bologue gave off was strange, like some incarnation of evil power, a symbol of domination. Even facing him, one would feel endless pressure, even if Bologue remained silent, uttering not a word.

Derby, with a somber face, pulled Zefirin close, and the two clung tight to each other.

"Priority on action, under no circumstances can we be stopped here."

The robe on Derby's body began to writhe and change, with the shadows cast beneath his feet undulating as if possessing substance, like a bog, as murky, dark liquid rose from the shadows, heavily enveloping Derby and Zefirin.

Alchemy Armament·Manta Cloak.

Under the cloak's influence, Derby and Zefirin's figures blended into the darkness, disappearing from Bologue's sight, vanishing into the vast night.

This was a disguise and stealth type of Alchemy Armament, able to drag targets and the materials within a certain area into darkness while applying Ethereal Concealment.

Just before Derby and Zefirin disappeared, their eyes emitted endless crimson glows, akin to ominous blood moons.

In an instant, Soul-Breaking Poison permeated the battlefield, covering the surrounding area, careening through the gaps between doors.

Palmer immediately summoned a gale, but the air's movement couldn't dispel these ether toxins. They stubbornly clung around, like obstructive miasma.

Bologue sensed the rising ether reaction beneath him, the elite Bloodthirster, who should have been dead, his corpse began to swell rapidly.

Secret Energy·Blood Boiling.

Derby's command is based on blood. He can inject his blood into the elite Bloodthirsters, subject them to his control, and render the blood as potent as Red Mercury, like liquid dynamite, triggering extremely destructive explosions.

Just a little blood is enough for Derby to transform all the blood in an elite Bloodthirster's body into that potent explosive.

At this distance, even protected by Iron Armor, Bologue would be battered by the blast's impact, causing surrounding buildings to collapse along with him.

Bologue was faster than Derby, much faster!

The Flame of the Cauldron devoured the surrounding buildings, as Silver Hands gripped the elite Bloodthirster's corpse, easily dragging it, cracking walls along the way, and in the last moment of the explosion, Bologue hurled the corpse out of the building.

Walls gathered up like a fortress; the moment they stacked, intense brilliance like a blazing sun erupted, seizing everyone's sight. Deafening explosions left hearing in silence, a violent shockwave rolling out as if a storm were crashing upon the place.

Bologue swung his blade into the ground, yet he was still pushed by the shockwave, gouging a deep scar into the earth.

Vasilina gripped a shattered wall in one hand, with the other arm braced around Palmer's neck, struggling to maintain stability in the surging turbulences.

Palmer didn't look too good, his face flushed with strain.

As the explosion raged, Blood Boiling acted upon other elite Bloodthirsters. Their skin turned red, their body heat rising continuously, as their hearts thumped fiercely, lungs contracted widely, drawing fresh oxygen inside.

Rather than a combat Negative Power User, Derby considered himself more suited as an Alchemist.

Derby developed and applied his Secret Energy·Blood Boiling in the design of Alchemy creatures; the elite Bloodthirsters and those howling Wind-Eroded Birds were his masterpieces, infused with Derby's blood.

Through the combined effect of Alchemy Devices and numerous Alchemy Potions, the Blood Boiling not only caused explosions but also enhanced the elite Bloodthirsters' strength, significantly boosting their regenerative ability.

The chaotic shockwave kicked up numerous sands and stones, scraping against the cold Armor. Hoarse roars abruptly rose, and in the shattered, collapsing building, an elite Bloodthirster set up firearms, rampant gunfire blazed, tracing fiery lines of light.

Bologue swiftly rose, at first a few bullets hit the Armor, leaving dents of varying depths, but immediately, Bologue accelerated forcefully, disregarding gravity, swiftly maneuvering through the fractured bricks.

The other Elite Bloodthirster swung its claws and blades, trying to halt Bologue's actions, but the next moment the Flame of the Cauldron covered the entire area.

Bologue leaped into midair, his ether reaching its peak with Aimou's blessing, like a roaring tsunami poised to destroy everything in its path.

The ground, walls, ceiling, shattered bricks, exposed steel, scattered silver decorative swords...

All the substances within the Flame of the Cauldron's coverage followed Bologue's command, twisting and rising, transforming into a swarm of roaring serpents that coiled around the bodies of the Elite Bloodthirsters.

The Elite Bloodthirsters tried to struggle, but more and more material fell within Bologue's commanding presence, and the swarm of serpents quickly grew, until they easily swallowed the Elite Bloodthirsters like a tide, entombing them.

Iron Embrace.

The swarm of serpents tightened, like taut ropes, layering over the surface of the Elite Bloodthirsters, breaking bones, crushing organs, and even with thick armor protection, under this extreme pressure, the Elite Bloodthirsters kneeled one by one.

Their eyes flickered with the last red light as their bodies began to rapidly expand, about to explode into dazzling fireballs.

This time, Bologue was familiar with the subsequent changes; he swung his hand down, dragging all the commanded materials to crash the Elite Bloodthirsters downward.

The building collapsed layer by layer, penetrating the ground, and then fire spread wildly.

The explosion provoked by Blood Boiling merged into a scorching pillar of fire, rising as a fire spear piercing the sky.

The exposed steel burned red-hot under the high temperature, and the fire spread, consuming all combustible materials.

The spreading impact turned the area into a smoky wasteland, and Derby's hidden figure was forced to reveal itself amid the roaring airflow.

After this series of battles, the area presented a bizarre void; all substances within the range disappeared, leaving only the crackling fire burning.

The ceiling crumbled, revealing the deep, dark night sky, and a distant spire was also affected, beginning to tilt and collapse.

Palmer had no time to complain about Bologue's killing spree; after all, he wouldn't be staying long in the Fortress of the Morning Wind.

After the raging airflow dissipated, Palmer confirmed Derby's location; because of the change in terrain, he was forced to emerge from the shadows.

The Wind Gun shot forth, and the silver sword in hand launched like a bullet, carrying an intense intent to kill straight towards Derby.

"Watch out!"

Zefirin pushed Derby aside, swinging his Hand Armor to collide with the Silver Sword.

After the resounding echo, the broken Silver Sword fell to the side, Zefirin took a few steps back, and a shallow dent appeared on his Hand Armor, rendering his arm numb.

Silverware is extremely deadly to the Night Race, but as long as one is not hit, silverware is just an ordinary precious metal.

"Damn it, this madman!"

Derby got up in disarray, wanting to advance towards the Wind Cellar, but now the other end of the road was piled with rubble, as if Bologue deliberately did so, changing the terrain and destroying the building, using this reckless act to block the two's path.

Bologue had no intention of explaining; from the start of the battle, he remained silent, like a cautious Hunter.

Derby raised his head, his Tier was of a Negative Power User, but he mainly relied on the Domination Object to fight, and Bologue's lethal strike had decapitated several Elite Bloodthirsters, the resting Elite Bloodthirsters gathered around Derby, safeguarding their commander.

Zefirin said softly, "If we don't deal with them, we can't proceed."

Zefirin was the first to engage with Bologue, and she had gradually discerned Bologue's character; this guy didn't care about stopping actions, rather than trying to protect the Dawn Oath, Bologue preferred to fight the enemies to the death.

As long as the enemies are dead, the target is safe—a very simple, straightforward truth.

"To the death, huh..." Derby gritted his teeth, "In that case, as you wish!"

The ether reaction of the Negative Power Tier surged, blazing and roaring, the invisible ether turning into resonant currents, hovering around Derby, setting off furious waves.

Not long after, sharp cries echoed from above the heavens; thousands of Wind-Eroded Birds came with the wind.

Chapter 567: Breaking Fire

Strange waves released from Derby's body, causing violent turbulence in the blood of everyone within range. It felt like a heavy hammer was pounding incessantly on their chests, causing persistent heart palpitations and intermittent pain.

Among them, Vasilina felt the impact most intensely. She uncontrollably fell to one knee, taking deep breaths to resist the influence, her eyes gradually filled with blood, and blood started to spill from the corner of her mouth.

"Vasilina!"

Palmer looked at Vasilina with concern, filled with panic.

"I'm... I'm okay," Vasilina pushed Palmer's hand away, "First, solve him! We can't let him get close to the Wind Cellar!"

Palmer glared at Derby with anger, triggered the release of the Wind Gun, and another Silver Sword shot rapidly forward.

Zefirin raised her fists, attempting to shield Derby from the attack. Another booming sound erupted as two Wind Guns launched forward, their paths crisscrossing and overlapping, and the two Silver Swords collided at high speed.

In an instant, the blades shattered into dense fragments, smashing toward Zefirin like pellets from a shotgun. Her fists could not block these fragments, making it difficult for her even to protect herself.

Zefirin could only shield her head and chest. The silver fragments cut open her body, leaving gray-black scars, while many fragments struck Derby, carving dense wounds on his body.

Unlike Zefirin's gray-black, hard-to-heal wounds, Derby to some extent ignored the suppression of Silverware on Blood of the Night Race; what flowed from his wounds wasn't blood but some kind of glowing liquid.

"Etherealization..."

Vasilina recognized the phenomenon occurring on Derby at the moment. Derby, with a grim face, further unleashed his Secret Energy.

A massive amount of Ether was released, and the Ether concentration in the environment soared sharply, manifesting as blood-colored ribbons dancing in the air.

The Condenser's path to ascension is like the gradual sublimation of mundane substances, akin to a pawn in chess charging forward, overcoming layers of obstacles, reaching the baseline, and completing an "Ascension."

After Condensers ascend from the First Stage, each Tier elevation brings a certain degree of qualitative change.

The Second Stage Prayer Believers develop derivative sub-disciplines, thereby complexifying their Secret Energy, rendering it more bizarre and deadly. The Third Stage Negative Power User, with flesh and blood constantly filled with Ether, gradually trends towards Etherealization.

As flesh begins to ascend and become etherealized, it weakens external physical damage while greatly enhancing affinity with Ether, even to the extent of shaking off mortal shackles to avoid the Scythe of Death God.

The longevity familiar to Condensers is just one effect among many of Etherealization. As the Tier continues to elevate, Etherealization continues.

This is vividly manifested in the elders within the Wind Cellar. A century's time flows upon them, with mundane flesh having aged significantly, yet with the support of Etherealization, they can still linger in high concentrations of Ether environments.

Derby's blood has etherealized into liquid Ether, pure energy.

Elite Bloodthirsters issued hoarse battle cries. Accompanied by the boiling of blood within them, their reinforcement reached the limit, their muscles had swelled, and their veins protruded like worms crawling over flesh.

Before the Elite Bloodthirsters' attack came, the Wind-Eroded Birds joined the battle first.

Bologue destroyed the building, sealed the road but enabled the Wind-Eroded Birds to charge at the few people, with sharp claws and Iron Feathers like the blade of hastening swords.

With a piercing sharp screech, the surrounding material shattered into debris, scattering everywhere.

As an Overlord, Derby's strength compared to other Overlords lies in his ability to control a terrifying number of Domination Objects.

Bologue turned his head, swinging an Iron Spear toward the advancing Wind-Eroded Birds, reminiscent of when he first came to Wind Source Highlands and fought against the flock of Wind-Eroded Birds. Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid spread and transformed into countless dense steel structures, followed by Red Mercury igniting, with successive explosions.

Amidst the heavy bursts of fire, pitch-black shadows progressively emerged. The explosive impact resolved only a small portion of Wind-Eroded Birds, with the swarming army of Wind-Eroded Birds overwhelming Bologue.

In the chaotic shadows, the blinding sparks flickered persistently. The Wind-Eroded Birds left indentations of varying depth on the Armor, some even cutting through the Armor and injuring Bologue's body, bringing a splash of blood.

"Ha... merely a Prayer Believer."

Derby panted heavily, having called almost all available Wind-Eroded Birds to this place.

Hundreds? Or thousands?

Derby couldn't calculate anymore; the vast Command and control left his will exhausted, feeling his consciousness had fragmented into numerous parts, making uniform movements.

Ether consumed rapidly, as if draining the body dry.

Amidst the sweeping flock of birds, some sparks erupted, and faint flames flickered in the fierce wind, but with the ignition of the flames, it became unstoppable.

Something was coming, as Derby could feel.

Even relying on instinct-action Alchemy Creatures, their instincts would warn them of those fearsome entities approaching.

Derby could clearly sense that the Wind-Eroded Birds were afraid, the flock was afraid.

Each Wind-Eroded Bird transmitted the emotion of fear back to Derby. This fear accumulated and compounded, transforming into a tidal wave of despair that engulfed Derby's will.

Derby felt his blood turn cold, his heart fell into a brief stasis, accompanied by a blankness in his mind.

This blankness didn't last long; within the flock of Wind-Eroded Birds came the metallic tearing sound of flesh, a noise that made one's teeth ache, crawling along Derby's nerves like notes, composing the prelude of despair.

He's coming.

A creation forged from cold iron was striding forward in the storm, with every swing cutting down countless flying birds.

Scorching blood spewed over the cold armor, smeared on the metal surface filled with dents, infiltrating the cracks and seeping into its depths, transforming it into a blood-colored knight from the inside out.

Secret Energy·Boiling Blood!

Derby wielded his own power; the blood scattered within the flock of Wind-Eroded Birds began to boil and evaporate under the catalyst of Ether, releasing enormous heat and blinding flames roaring ceaselessly.

In the tornado of flames, there was a brief silence, after which the heart of the war drum resumed its beat.

"Zefirin! Stop him!"

Derby shouted while the remaining elite Bloodthirsters also sprang into action. Some raised heavy giant shields, swiftly moving toward Derby, transforming themselves into obstacles to block the upcoming attacks for Derby.

Other elite Bloodthirsters revealed their sharp teeth and claws, waiting for the enemy to storm out of the storm. Zefirin readied her fists, the Soul Breaker brimming with Ether, the Soul-Breaking Poison wafting around.

Zefirin wasn't suited for the front lines; her Soul-Breaking Poison, at best, could hardly affect the enemy when preparation was made. She too wished to act as an assassin, but to assassinate an Undead? It seemed too laughable no matter how you think about it, forced into desperation, she could only stand under the glow of Ether.

Suddenly, the flock of Wind-Eroded Birds let out a coarse wail, the fiery armor broke through their encirclement, the armor pitted and riddled with cracks, even though the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid proliferated defense as much as it could, it still couldn't withstand the constant onslaught from the Wind-Eroded Birds.

Yet he still broke through the storm, unstoppable.

Derby was waiting for this moment; the elite Bloodthirsters advanced toward the armor, their sharp claws easily puncturing the dilapidated armor, and before they could rip it into pieces, Zefirin leaped up, relying on the power of the Soul Breaker to pound the metal surface with heavy fists.

Ether was disturbed, the constrained built power began to crumble, and in an instant, the heavy armor shattered into fragments scattered all over, but behind this crumbling wreckage, she didn't see Bologue's figure.

"No..."

Zefirin realized she'd been tricked, everyone had been tricked.

"Careful! Derby!"

Zefirin turned to warn Derby, but it was already too late. A Wind-Eroded Bird detached from the flock; in this chaotic battlefield, its action didn't attract attention, but as it swooped down, Bologue appeared on the back of the Wind-Eroded Bird.

Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid pierced through the bird's body, metal clinging to its bones, controlling the bird's actions in this brutal manner. Worse still, Derby had too many Domination Objects under his command to even notice this anomaly.

By the time Derby realized Bologue's arrival, it was too late; the Wind-Eroded Bird let out a wail, exploding into a fiery ball under Derby's command, but then a Silver-Plated Greatsword cleaved through the flames.

The elite Bloodthirsters raised their giant shields, blocking Bologue like high walls. The sword and shields collided, sparking fire.

"Mortal materials cannot block me..."

Bologue spoke, though his words were meaningless.

The Flame of the Cauldron spread and consumed the heavy giant shield; it was not an Alchemy Armament, merely a massive thing constructed of mortal substances.

The giant shield shattered in an instant, adhering to Bologue's command, causing itself to continue disintegrating. The twisted and winding metal then coated Bologue, forging a new scale armor.

Zefirin roared and charged toward Bologue, when suddenly, wind guns zipped through the air, though they didn't hit Zefirin, they did hinder her advancement. As she dodged the falling rain of swords, the armored monster had ripped through the obstructing elite Bloodthirsters.

In the wounds gouged out like a giant axe swung down, Bologue saw the hiding Derby underneath, the two locked eyes with each other, Derby snapped his fingers, Blood Boiling exploded.

In a flash, Bologue along with the dying elite Bloodthirsters transformed into burning torches, the flames reaching their zenith under the empowerment of the Negative Power User's Ether.

The iron was burning, burning bright red.

Amidst the crackling fires, a scorched iron hand broke through the flames and clutched Derby's throat.

Derby stared into that dazzling glare, the high temperature warping the air and interfering with the path of light. The blazing red iron armor under chaotic vision was grotesquely menacing, terrifying.

Chapter 568: Blood of the Regent King

A section of the jagged Armor showed a silver-white hue, some parts were burnt black, while others featured spots similar to baked blue. At the metal's edges, the metal glowed red-hot, emitting waves of heat.

Derby watched the monster that emerged from the flames, fiercely swung the Short Dagger in his hand. The dagger, infused with specialized Soul-Breaking Poison, collided with the red-hot Iron Armor, easily shattering the metal and leaving a deep scar on Bologue's already bloodied arm.

Breaking free from the bindings, a cloak swirled around Derby's body, merging into the night, while Bologue unleashed a Great Sword that grew longer and longer, slicing through the darkness in front of him. From the blurred shadows emerged a streak of scorching blood, spilling onto the ruins.

Derby's figure materialized out of thin air, and he fell to the ground in a sorry state, his lowered eyes filled with resentment and venom. Bologue's sword had struck his leg.

Predicting Derby's actions wasn't difficult for Bologue, yet after delivering that sword strike, he didn't continue to pursue but stood still, gasping for breath.

No matter how fierce Bologue's offensive was, how much advantage he had in the battle, it still couldn't change the Tier disparity.

Derby's previous offensive left Bologue severely injured. He was only able to endure until now thanks to Aimou's Ether replenishment and the continuous self-healing of the Time Reversing Axis.

The Armor was unbearably hot, and Bologue's body surface was completely burnt, not to mention Derby's Short Dagger had also hit him.

The Soul-Breaking Poison invaded his body through the wound, the intensified pain gnawing at Bologue's nerves. Anyone else might have fainted from the pain, but Bologue found it just right; he was very good at enduring pain.

Bologue considered this a talent of his; if he wanted, he could ignore the sensation of pain, like a precise machine filtering out useless information.

The Wind-Eroded Birds' offensive weakened, and they returned to their instincts, scattering attacks everywhere.

Commanding such a large group of Domination Objects required intense mental concentration. Bologue's offensive made it difficult for Derby to continue immersing himself in command, forcing him to give vague orders to these alchemical creatures to keep suppressing the enemy.

The Wind Gun roared continuously, high-pressure airflow propelled fatal Blades, tearing blood lines in the night sky like Armor-piercing Bullets, causing the Wind-Eroded Birds to explode, fire extending and spreading under the darkness.

More Wind Guns burst towards the advancing Zefirin, interfering with her actions. But Zefirin, relying on her agile strides, still managed to fight her way to Bologue's side.

The Soul Breaker flickered with the glow of Ether. Few knew Zefirin was not adept at using the Chain Saw Scythe, boxing was her most familiar combat method.

A heavy punch landed, the scorpion tail containing potent poison shot out, the Soul-Breaking Poison rapidly spread and dispersed. The toxic mist touched the Armor, sizzling sounds emerged, corroding the metal and the Ether beneath.

Joy flashed in Zefirin's heart; she accomplished it, just like before, the punch pierced through all defenses, delivering the venom into Bologue's body. Even if Bologue was an Undead, during his resurrection period, Zefirin could achieve so much.

Bologue turned his head, a corner of the menacing faceplate was shattered, revealing a bloodied face and a pair of cold and ruthless cyan eyes.

Under the Blood Boiling combustion, the air became scorching and unbearable, yet in this high-temperature environment, Zefirin felt a winter chill.

Bologue said nothing, but Zefirin read words in his gaze.

"I've been waiting for you."

Ethereal Amplification filled Bologue's body, instantly, the red-hot Armor shattered into a wild dance of snakes, shedding the constraints of armor, Bologue's movements were as fast as lightning.

This was a trap; Bologue did not intend to pursue, he was waiting for Zefirin.

Under Bologue's strangulation, the intense heat scorched Derby's throat, blood blisters appeared in the respiratory tract, engorged with blood, blocking Derby's throat.

Derby fell into suffocation, awkwardly reaching his hand into his throat, tearing open the blood blisters, spitting out large splashes of fresh blood.

The blood mixed with luminescent liquid, this was part of Derby's etherealized blood, as it left the body, the etherealized blood began to dissipate and vanish.

Derby struggled for air, raising his head to see Zefirin and Bologue's counterattack.

This was a trap, Derby realized it was too late to stop this.

Bologue and Zefirin were both Prayer Believers, supported by Aimou, Bologue's speed was much faster than Zefirin.

Evading the swing of the Soul Breaker, Bologue landed a more powerful punch on Zefirin's abdomen, the blow completely caved in, almost breaking her internal organs.

The scattered burning snakes crawled over Zefirin's body. Her Soul-Breaking Poison was deadly, but the time needed to erode the target to complete poisoning wasn't brief.

The snakes prioritized binding Zefirin's joints, rendering her immobile, then coiling around her body circle by circle; as they bound, the serpents solidified into hard entities, Zefirin failed to even make a sound before she was covered layer by layer with metal.

Like a metal sculpture cast, Zefirin's punching motion was forever frozen in this scene.

Bologue raised the extended Blade, swiftly severing Zefirin's hands, the lethal Soul Breaker fell to the ground, then the Blade chopped without hesitation, dissecting the sculpture into pieces, later reassembled, forming a somber and oppressive Iron Coffin standing on the earth.

Sealed coffin.

Scorching Scale burned, and a raging fire appeared on the Iron Coffin. Bologue turned his back to the fire, his twisted shadow casting down, covering Derby.

With the ascension of his Tier, Bologue noticed many things he had not paid attention to before. Tier doesn't decide everything, just like Derby before his eyes.

Derby, although a Negative Power User, had become so pathetic under his frenzied assault.

This doesn't mean Derby is weak; rather, Derby is ill-suited for this battlefield. Derby should be a commander hidden deep within layers of defense, surrounded by many Condensers, commanding the vast army of alchemic creatures, not here, dueling to the death with him.

Bologue asked, "Your offensive looks fierce, but isn't it true that you are nearing the end of your rope?"

The remaining power of the Night Race is not strong. Otherwise, they wouldn't have sent Derby deep into enemy lines. There are few High Tier Condensers able to act within the remaining Night Race, prompting this situation.

Derby did not answer. He leaned against the wall, struggling to stand. The blade of Bologue's sword struck him, laden with silver, the wound was extremely deep. Even with his body etherealized, self-healing was difficult.

Fortunately, Zefirin bought Derby enough time. He moved his body slightly; except for the unbearable pain, everything else was fine.

Just...

Derby gazed at the grand burning ruins. They were so beautiful. Only a handful of Elite Bloodthirsters remained. Clearly, they could not resist Bologue.

The scattered Bloodthirsters and Wind-Eroded Birds on the battlefield suffered heavy losses under the Clarks' counterattack. After brief panic, the Clarks had gathered their strength and launched a counteroffensive.

The battle had pushed outward from the Fortress of the Morning Wind, raging on the turbulent coast.

Strangely, the fighting here went unnoticed by any but Bologue and Derby, locked in combat. The Wind-Eroded Birds Derby summoned continued to circle overhead.

The unease in Derby's heart grew increasingly intense, not just from Bologue's threat but from the feeling that this operation was doomed from the start.

From his chest pocket, he took out a small container, clear and glassy with a flowing, bright red liquid inside, condensed like ruby.

This was the Blood of the Regent King.

Since the Dawn War and the Night King vanished from history, besides the Night King's direct bloodline, it was the purest Blood of the Night Race.

The hope for the Night Race's revival.

Bologue stepped down from the ruins. Like Derby, Bologue sensed the abnormality of this event. He felt everything before him was a meticulously crafted trap, yet he didn't understand whether the trap was meant for him or the Night Race.

"No matter what... no matter what..."

Derby murmured softly, making a certain decision.

The entrance to the Wind Cellar was buried in the ruins. Maybe even the Curved Path Gate collapsed with it. Derby's actions had failed, yet he still felt unwilling.

Gripping the Blood of the Regent King tightly, just as Derby was about to act, an aged voice spoke.

"Give it... to me..."

The voice was so ancient and weak, like a dead being dug up from a grave, relying on the last breath in its throat to whisper the final words.

At the moment the voice sounded, a massive silence descended on the battlefield. Derby's pupils shrank to a point, his sclera filled with blood, and Bologue also ceased action, his breathing becoming exceptionally heavy, nearly to the point of holding his breath.

A gentle breeze stirred, sweeping away dust and flames. Extraordinary pressure rose from beneath the ruins, and then as if divine, it pushed aside all obstacles.

This broke from convention and became the biggest surprise of the battle.

"No... it can't be."

Palmer couldn't believe the scenes unfolding before his eyes. The hunched and frail figure, leaning on the Golden Scepter, staggered towards Derby.

His pace was unhurried, leisurely, yet every strike of the scepter against the ground caused a Vibration in one's mind.

The old man was dressed in a scarlet robe, wearing a golden mask. His eyes were fixed only on Derby, or rather on the Blood of the Regent King in Derby's hand.

With his arrival, the moment for this chaotic battle to reach its conclusion had come.

Witnessing this scene, Bologue felt a slight sadness. He didn't wish to criticize anything, merely sighed softly.

"Few can refuse the temptation of the Undead."

Chapter 569: The Defector

The tumultuous battlefield fell into an eerie silence with the appearance of the Elder. Derby's eyes sparkled with hope, Palmer and Vasilina's gaze appeared somewhat blank, as if unable to believe the scene before them.

Bologue faced this situation with a deep sigh, remembering the words Fuen once said to him, which were originally told to Fuen by Serey.

The shell is eternal, but the inner soul is decayed beyond repair.

Bologue believed that the Elder before him was once a loyal human ally, brave in battle, fighting on the front lines against death, scorning all acts of cowardice.

Unfortunately, humans are fickle. As the years pass, while the Elder's shell does not die, his heart and soul continuously wither and decay.

The Elder no longer has the same nobility as when he was young nor the firm belief in the so-called iron laws. With the approach of the Death God, his once great courage has been worn away, leaving only the survival instinct born from life, that desire to resist death.

To survive, the Elder is willing to pay any price, even to live like a worm, offering up his own soul, becoming the very form he once despised most, and he responds gladly.

"So... it's like this."

No one explained the events of this night, but the appearance of the Elder itself was an answer, a disappointing and sad answer.

Palmer repeatedly took deep breaths, trying to control his emotions. Despite Palmer's carefree nature, deep down, he is still proud of the honor of the Clarks family.

Betrayal is always more hateful than a strong enemy.

"Don't hold back, Bologue," Palmer tightened his grip on the Silver Sword, eyes filled with raging fire, "He left the Wind Cellar, broke the oath, he is no longer one of the Clarks."

Palmer was decisive and resolute, refusing to listen to the Elder's explanation.

Derby revealed a fanatical smile, "We still won."

The Elder understood Derby's meaning, he raised his dry hand, lifting a heavy tome, the ancient cover inscribed with "Dawn Oath".

"The other Elders are resting, during this period, I am on night watch..."

The Elder's voice was hoarse and dull, he loathed his current voice, whenever he closed his eyes, he could still recall his youthful self and that imposing tone, rather than now, where speaking a few more words felt like he would cough to death.

Many high-tier Condensers of the Clarks family would eventually sleep within the Wind Cellar, relying on the high concentration of Ether environment, along with their own Etherealization, as Elders and witnesses of history, avoiding the scythe of the Death God.

The Elders aren't always awake; only during major decision events are they collectively awakened. In usual circumstances, during each period, only one Elder remains awake, serving as the spokesperson to communicate with the outside world.

No one expected the Clarks family's defeat would come from its indestructible interior. The Elder moved with ease; he did not attract anyone's attention, took out "Dawn Oath" from the dust-covered bookshelf, then boldly walked out of the Wind Cellar.

Everything was so simple, hardly considered a conspiracy or trick.

"When did it start? Why?"

At this moment, Vasilina stepped out, questioning the Elder. She grew up in the Wind Source Highlands, aside from the different surname, she felt she was completely part of the Clarks family.

She couldn't understand the developments of this event, Vasilina never imagined the holy Elder would be the first to corrupt.

The Elder did not respond; he has lived through long years, many things he no longer cared about, whether his own honor or the ideas he pursued.

But Vasilina's words could not help but trigger the Elder's memories, buried deep within his memory, changing his life one night.

It was the beginning of the Dawn War, before Serey's betrayal had started, the Night Race and secret societies were constantly disputing in the shadows.

The Elder was then only a Negative Power User; after a chaotic night of battle, he sustained serious injuries, falling on the cusp of dawn.

He had been defeated, there's no explanation for it, that night he faced an unstoppable enemy.

Golden light spilled at the horizon's end, facing that pure light, the Night Race followed the night and departed, the Elder lay on the ground, hearing the approaching sound of hooves, and the low hum of armor clashing due to movement.

The Elder saw that proud figure, clad in all black armor, face hidden behind a cold iron face, he lowered his head, gazing at him.

The Elder felt he was about to die, as a Negative Power User he wouldn't let himself survive.

Indeed, the proud figure lifted the equally black blade, the cold sword tip hovered over the Elder's head.

The Elder knew what he was about to face; he was terrified, but for the sake of honor in his heart, he still mustered the courage to face the sword tip, refusing to let himself close his eyes.

Vaguely, the Elder heard bursts of laughter, the proud figure stood over him.

"Aren't you afraid of death?"

"I'm not afraid."

The Elder answered firmly, and as he spoke these words, he bade farewell to life with an unparalleled serenity in his heart.

The proud man was silent for a moment before speaking again, "No, you fear death, I can see it in your eyes."

"No..."

"No need to rush to explain," the proud man said, "I am too familiar with that look in your eyes. You use so-called honor as an excuse, forcing yourself to accept death... You are not brave; it is merely an escape."

The Elder glared angrily at the proud man and cursed, "If you intend to humiliate me..."

"I don't mean to humiliate you, just stating a fact."

The proud man interrupted the Elder again, then slowly raised the pitch-black blade.

"Care for a wager?"

"Bet... on what?"

"Bet on whether you fear death."

The Elder did not understand the words of the proud man at that time; he only saw a drop of fresh blood dripping from the sword's tip.

The Elder forced his eyes open, determined to face death. That drop of blood fell into his eye, staining his vision red, seeping into his soul, leaving a seed of corruption.

Looking back now, the Elder always felt that the proud man foresaw the end of this war, and thus made such a choice.

In the end, the proud man simply left, leaving the Elder to his fate on the battlefield. Later, the Elder learned that that night he had encountered a hunting party of the Night King's guard.

The Night King himself was patrolling his territory.

"Time mercilessly crushes all illusory things and cruelly tears open many lies."

The Elder whispered as he broke free from his memories.

At this moment, he not only felt that the Night King had already seen the end of the Dawn War but also foresaw his own end a hundred years later.

So the Night King made such a wager with him, the Elder smiled self-deprecatingly. At this point, he had no choice but to acknowledge the greatness of the Night King; he was willing to lose this bet.

"Why? Why..."

The Elder gradually stood upright, his spine drawing tall and straight, towering and steadfast.

"I also want to ask why. Why, when we possess such immense power, must we hide in the shadows and hand over this world to those laughable mortals?"

Under the golden mask, the Elder's eyes were bloodshot, like those of the Night Race.

"Why, when we bear the honor, can we not enjoy immortality? Why must we linger in those dark corners, suffering eternal loneliness for this ridiculous ideal?"

The Elder's voice was twisted and hoarse, accompanied by a mad narrative, and his own ether intensity was gradually rising, in an instant reaching the Tier of the Negative Power User, yet this was not his limit.

"I've had enough of these damn days."

The Elder despised his duties, despised his former self who laughably regarded honor and duty as everything.

"No matter what you say, you have broken the oath, haven't you?"

Palmer growled, the Elder's betrayal far more infuriating than the attacks by the Night Race. Raising his hand, he released the Wind Gun, the fast-moving airflow rushing towards the Elder, and at the moment it was about to touch the Elder, the airflow dispersed into a gentle breeze.

The Elder was well acquainted with Palmer's Secret Energy, for it was the same Secret Energy he bore.

"An oath, is it?"

The Elder raised his withered palm, and faint chains appeared, binding his body.

From the moment the Elder stepped into the Wind Cellar, donned the Red Robe, and wore the Golden Mask, he, like the other Elders, signed an oath to dedicate the rest of his life to the Clarks.

Fortunately, this oath was not as strict as the 'Dawn Oath'; for the Clarks, it was more like a sacred ritual.

"Such things as oaths... are no longer important."

The Elder spoke as he shattered the chains, enduring the backlash of the oath, with blood seeping from the corner of his mouth while his power soared to the highest point, regaining that formidable strength of yesteryears and feeling the true freedom.

A sudden breeze arose, coming forth from the centennial past, traversing the annals of history, charging boldly into the night, unstoppable.

Chapter 570: The Denied Specialness

On the brink of death, the Elder still harbored fantasies. He swore to disdain death, to hide within the Wind Cellar, to survive in the shadows where the sun never shone, only for the chance to reignite.

Thus, the Elder spent a long time in the Wind Cellar. Sometimes he fell into a deep sleep, and sometimes he awoke, guarding the unchanging Wind Cellar.

The Wind Cellar accumulated unimaginable wealth, forbidden knowledge, power coveted by countless people... All these were within arm's reach for the Elder; he was perhaps the most powerful person in this world. Yet, the Elder was not happy. On the contrary, time was eroding his will.

The Elder had danced with death for too long, so long that he who once had the courage to disdain death began to turn cowardly and fearful.

One night, the Elder awoke in terror from a nightmare. He looked at his pathetic body. To outsiders, he had achieved a high degree of Etherealization, with most of his organs and flesh transformed into pure Ether, thus transcending the mortal flesh.

Only the Elder himself understood that beneath the highly etherealized shell, he had not felt hunger, thirst, or any series of physiological reactions for many years. He knew no fatigue, nor pain, and even sleep was no longer a necessity for him. Each time he had to force himself into deep slumber.

The Elder was supposed to disdain these worries and troubles, yet his heart could not be at peace. He missed the taste of fine wine, longed for physical pleasures, envied those who roamed freely in the boundless wilderness.

Why, having gained power and strength, did he have to live like a prisoner?

"I've had enough of these days."

A fierce wind gathered around the Elder, high concentrations of Ether merged into the wind, like thousands of sharp knives dancing with it, instantly cutting dense sword marks into the ground around.

The Elder looked madly at the Blood of the Regent King in Derby's hand. As long as he performed the Blood Donation, he would be transformed into a member of the Night Race, escaping the Scythe of death.

At that time, he would no longer need a high concentration of ether environment to extend his life; he could act according to his heart's desires, disregarding any rules.

"I must leave here, drink, revel, and enjoy all the beauty."

Amidst the terrifying gale, the Elder's staggering steps gradually became steady and firm, his unimaginable will supporting this aged body.

The Elder wanted to see the changes of the era, those towering buildings and sharp spires, the mesmerizing and captivating beauties...

Dense Wind Guns attacked again, Palmer angrily wielding his power, but the roaring hurricane still did not affect the Elder. With a gentle lift of his hand, a powerful wind pressure descended out of thin air, pressing Palmer firmly onto the ground.

Palmer struggled to lift his torso, the pressure increased, and his body uncontrollably fell to the ground, his eyes bloodshot, even the ground beneath showed cracks under the heavy pressure.

"How ruthless. He's your new star in the Clarks family, isn't he?"

Derby mocked, from the information he had learned, Palmer was of great significance to the Clarks.

"Him? Palmer isn't special."

The Elder revealed the cruel secret, "Palmer isn't important, it's the era that matters."

Palmer strived to lift his head, but the wind pressure pinned him onto the ground, under the intense oppression, he found it hard to breathe.

"The Clarks' Alchemy Matrix, accumulated over a century, has bloomed in this era with the most glorious brilliance... Palmer just happened to be born in this era, burdened with such power."

The Elder slowly pressed down his palm, half of Palmer's body sank into the ground.

"It's not Palmer who is special, it's the era."

Words pierced Palmer's heart, shattering all the cautious pride he had hidden away.

"There has never been any 'heroes,' just the era's power converging, manifesting someone as the will of this power.

Palmer is merely a vessel for power, a vessel that can be replaced at any time."

The Elder unleashed all his strength, the wind pressure was about to crush Palmer, when a sharp Iron Spear pierced through, only to be blocked by an invisible wind wall at the moment it approached the Elder, bending and shattering.

Bologue held his spear-throwing stance, and the same heavy wind pressure descended, causing Bologue to immediately fall to one knee, crushing the stone beneath him.

The vast disparity in power was vividly displayed at this moment. Bologue couldn't move, not even lift his head to face the Elder.

The armor meant to protect Bologue had become his cage. The steel began to deform and collapse, clinging tightly to Bologue's body, restricting his limbs.

Bologue attempted to command the metal, barely opening a gap at the back of the armor. However, before his body could slip out, the burning Flame of the Cauldron extinguished completely. Sharp pain surged from within, and the Alchemy Matrix on his surface flashed with arcs and sparks.

The Elder's Ether filled this area. Under Ethereum Mutual Exclusion, Bologue couldn't command any matter, and his own Rectangular Soul Critical was repeatedly under attack.

Coughing up a large swath of blood, Bologue stubbornly lifted his head, even as his eyes were stained completely red.

"You... won't last much longer."

The hoarse voice squeezed out from Bologue's throat. He could sense the anomaly within the Elder, that maddening, treacherous intent.

A hundred years ago, during the Dawn War, the Elder did not receive the Blood of the Night King. That single drop of blood turned into a wicked seed, buried deep within the Elder's heart, only to be exploited a century later by the mysterious Regent King.

The Blood of the Night Race is extremely mysterious. It not only encompasses a Blood Contract with the Devil but also grants many peculiar powers as the Night Race evolves.

Bologue sensed the Ether's intensity around him and could confirm that the Elder's Tier was that of a Defender. This reminded Bologue of the Third Seat in the disordered timeline.

At that time, the real body of the Third Seat didn't descend onto the battlefield. He relied only on a puppet and a Secret Sword that slashed through everything.

In the absence of the Seeker of Glory, a Defender was the epitome of power in the Extraordinary World. Even a Defender's puppet wielding pure Ether had incomparably terrifying combat strength.

Under the siege by Lebius, Geoffrey, and others, plus the Immortal Heart releasing the authority of "Gluttony," Bologue managed to deal with the Silver Knight in the chaos.

Now, the enemy was no longer a cold puppet but a genuine Defender. He called upon Ether, indulgently wielding his Secret Energy, and a terrifying scene was brewing in the shadows, ready to unleash a world-destroying storm.

Regrettably, even though the Elder was terrifying, this was not the Defender's full form.

The Elder was old. As a Defender, his lifespan was nearing its end. He had survived until now entirely due to his Etherealization and the shelter of the Wind Cellar.

Now, the Elder was like fireworks in the night sky: brilliantly radiant yet incomparably brief. Even if the Elder could move mountains and fill seas, his body couldn't hold out. Given enough time, his deteriorating physique would drag the Elder down, ushering in the arrival of the Death God.

"Defenders... are nothing!"

Bologue forced himself to stand. He could hear the low hum of his bones fracturing and sense the raging surge of his blood.

His heart was like an overheated engine, fully unleashing Ether to resist the Elder's pressure.

Bologue's chances were slim, but there was still a chance. He didn't need to confront a Defender head-on, much like in Palmer's favored board game, "Journey in the Dead of Night." Despite the hunters gathering in groups, it was still hard to win against terrifying enemies.

For game balance, the designer set many mechanisms for the final confrontation. By achieving those special mechanisms, even mortals could reverse their fate.

The Elder coughed painfully. When he first entered the Wind Cellar, like the other Elders, he had sworn an oath. Now his betrayal had triggered the oath's repercussions, further deteriorating his physical state.

The shattered chains reformed, sealing the Elder's body layer upon layer. He was about to say something to Derby, but as the Elder convulsed in pain, a brief moment of lapse occurred in his suppression of Bologue, who seized this moment and broke free from the wind pressure.

Bologue mustered all his strength and leaped forward. He had only one chance; if he failed, he would surely be crushed into pulp by the Elder.

The Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid forged a sharp Long Spear in his hand. Bologue tensed every muscle as if to crush steel.

Derby looked at Bologue mockingly. The battle seemed already decided, and all of Bologue's actions appeared so ridiculous. But soon, he couldn't laugh anymore.

The Iron Spear was not aimed at the Elder but at Derby—more precisely, at the Blood of the Regent King in Derby's hand.

Roaring, Bologue hurled the Iron Spear. The Scorching Scale ignited, transforming into a stream of fire piercing through the night.