

Endless 591

Chapter 591: For All Humanity_2

"Bloody hell."

Nesanel sighed, covering his face, striving to contain his laughter.

Love and peace.

This phrase often emerges from children's lips, yet now coming from Bologue, it possessed an unimaginable contrast—so intense was the disparity that it left Nesanel somewhat dazed.

Only now did Nesanel truly perceive Bologue's peculiarity; beneath those terrifying, exalted, and even ordinary halos lay such an unreserved individual.

"But only forty years separate the Scorched Earth Fury and the Dawn War."

Bologue pointed out some issues; according to the century-long war calculations, the interval between soul sacrifices this time had notably shortened.

Nesanel said, "We aren't entirely clear on the specifics, but from the intelligence we've obtained from the Devil we captured, we speculate that due to the failure of the Dawn War, we disrupted their soul-harvesting pace, consequently affecting them.

Souls are crucial to them... They're anxious, so only forty years later, they initiated another war, which due to King Solomon's power, was forced to halt and even prolongs to the present."

Bologue tried to place himself in the Devils' perspective, "It seems these Devils also have their own metrics, eager to harvest enough souls within the deadline."

For what exactly could it be?

Souls for the Devils, what are they really? A source of power or some indispensable nourishment?

In the dark world, Bologue's mood was somewhat subtle; knowing these secretive pasts and humanity's hindrance to the Devils' actions flashed images of Serey in his mind continually.

Serey Villeries.

Regarding this carefree Night Race Lord, Bologue understood more about him, yet the more he learned, the more he felt a difficult-to-describe... sense of unfamiliarity.

As an Undead, under the long life, everyone has a very complicated history, but Bologue never thought Serey's could be this complicated, even if made into a movie, it would have to be a trilogy to barely tell the story.

Bologue decided the next time he sees Serey, he must thoroughly interrogate him, even if he remains silent, he must find a way to extract some clues.

Bologue contemplated this issue, "Following Serey's betrayal, the Devils should start being cautious."

"Indeed, halting the conflict this time became much harder; fortunately, we're not the same as we were a hundred years ago."

Bologue understood where Nesanel's reliance lay—in the rapidly progressing Alchemy Matrix Technology of recent years, making it no longer a problem to counter those Chosen Ones carrying chips.

Pieces on the chessboard gradually developed their own will, no longer belonging to any side, fiercely burning until it broke through the board, shattering the chains of fate.

Nesanel added, "Truthfully, there's an even worse possibility."

"What?"

"Have you noticed? The rise in Ether density."

Nesanel's words struck Bologue's heart like thunder; since Aimou mentioned Teda's research, Bologue had been mindful of this Ether density increase. He now realized he wasn't alone, Nesanel had also observed this.

Bologue said, "If you know your staff well enough, you'd know Teda once mentioned this."

"That's right; I also learned of this phenomenon from Teda's research."

Bologue paused, questioning, "Then why did you..."

"If this phenomenon is real, then its impact range is enormous; the Decision Room chose to handle it quietly, but secretly, they've been dispatching the Scholars' Hall for research; if not for subsequent events, when Belli succeeded Teda to join the Scholars' Hall, he could have continued this exploration."

Nesanel explained, "But you know what happened afterward."

Bologue fell silent.

"Through the Scholars' Hall's research, it can be ascertained that as time passes, the Ether density in the whole world is continually rising, an Ether tide influencing the world every century."

Nesanel continued, "We proposed many hypotheses, such as whether the Ether tide is related to the Devils."

"And the result?"

"No result; we can't even comprehend what Devils truly are," Nesanel admitted helplessly, "like Pioneers deep in the night, who knows what we'll encounter next."

"But what we do know is with the arrival of the Ether tide, our perception of the Secret Source grows clearer, and the Alchemy Matrix Technology is progressing rapidly."

Nesanel worriedly expressed, "Technology is advancing too fast, fast enough to invoke fear."

"What are you afraid of?"

Bologue sorted his thoughts, realizing much of what Geoffrey told him during the induction training was false.

Even so, it didn't matter, given his position at the time, he only needed to know certain things; sometimes knowing too much is not beneficial.

Some can muddle through, while others must remain clear-headed.

"A hundred years ago, even if we exhausted our power, we could only topple a castle; now forget about castles, a suitable Extraordinary Disaster could destroy a nation."

Nesanel worried about the unknown future, "We possess such power; our enemies possess such power as well."

"What's worse is the Devils have begun being cautious; they've detected the progress of our Alchemy Matrix Technology under the Ether tide; once allowing Devils to harvest, humans now possess the power to resist. What do you think they'll do next?"

"A penned flock, growing sharp teeth and claws," Bologue murmured, "pluck their teeth, clip their claws."

"The Decision Room has always suspected that we might not face another conflict but an extinction, the Condensers' extinction, to demolish our Alchemy Matrix system and completely break our spine."

"Do you think the Devils can wield such power?"

Bologue felt skeptical; the Devils can't directly affect the mortal world; just dealing with those Chosen Ones should suffice.

"I've always thought so, Bologue, never underestimate human glory or human baseness."

Nesanel spoke meaningfully; his face transformed from worry to some joy.

"To negotiate among the Devils is a tough task; all along, we've been under immense pressure, but this time it's different—we have the chance to take risks, no longer alone."

Now the Order Bureau has two Chosen Ones; no matter what the Devil's plans involve, those truly making decisions are always the Chosen Ones; although others hidden in darkness, it seems they hold certain advantages now.

Nesanel gazed at Bologue, as if making an oath.

"No matter what your Devil's conspiracy is, the Order Bureau will always stand by your side just as you will always stand for love and peace."

Nesanel proactively extended his hand and said, "For love and peace."

Bologue didn't immediately respond, contemplating the intelligence gained during his conversation with Nesanel. Was this the true secret from the Order Bureau's deputy director, compared to others?

Considering what he'll face next, the mission with unclear purpose, impending intrigues, and those detestable Devils...

Bologue solemnly nodded, gripping Nesanel's hand firmly.

"For love and peace."

Bologue added, "And incidentally for movies, rock music...and all things worthwhile."

Chapter 592: Follow-Up

As the darkness dissipated and light returned to view, Bologue found himself back in the familiar Field Operations Department. The white bricks stacked around were neat and simple, a design Bologue always appreciated.

Nesanel, unexpectedly considerate, had brought Bologue to the door of Lebius's office. Pushing the door open, familiar people and things sat quietly inside, unchanged.

Lebius sat behind the desk, scrutinizing documents with a serious expression. Geoffrey was flipping through today's newspaper on the sofa next to him, while Palmer, sitting beside Geoffrey, was dozing off.

Someone gently patted Bologue, prompting him to step aside. Yuriel entered, carrying a cup of hot coffee, and handed it to Lebius.

Yuriel, the most inconspicuous member of the Special Operations Group, seemed more like the group's nanny than a field staff, quietly taking on all the troublesome follow-up work.

"Thank you."

Lebius accepted the coffee without looking up and said.

Yuriel smiled faintly, then opened the cabinet and began organizing the documents, assisting Lebius with his work.

The room was very quiet, with only the subtle sound of breathing, barely perceptible. Bologue sat down beside Palmer, making the three look slightly crowded on the sofa.

Bologue checked the time; it was still early. Aimou should still be at the Sublimation Furnace Core. When there wasn't any essential work, patrols were handled by Bologue and Palmer, while she stayed within the Sublimation Furnace, learning under Belli to manufacture various Alchemy Armaments.

With this connection, the Special Operations Group had rarely been more well-off. Even Palmer could now use Alchemy Warheads freely.

Regrettably, the Oubos in Oath City had been very quiet recently, not giving Palmer the opportunity for a heavy strike.

As Lebius would say, the aftermath of the time-axis disorder event had instigated a major purge of the Great Rift. Even after several months, the gangs and demons within still hadn't recovered and could only hide under the Tyrant's protection, not daring to take any significant actions.

Current times in the Great Rift were the most peaceful in recent years.

While the internal situation was stable, the external situation wasn't good.

Buzzing noises emanated from the walls, and after a deep rumble, capsule containers rapidly swept through the overhead pipes, finally stopping behind the desk.

Lebius retrieved a capsule from the pneumatic pipeline, opening it to reveal a document from the Decision Room.

"The battle of the Narrow Countries has ended."

After a cursory read, Lebius suddenly lifted his head, seemingly speaking to Bologue or perhaps addressing everyone in the office.

Geoffrey put down the newspaper, Yuriel stopped her work, and Bologue looked over, simultaneously elbowing Palmer awake.

With a dazed expression, Palmer didn't know what was happening, but it wasn't hard to discern the gravity from the solemn atmosphere.

Palmer wiped his drool and sat up straight.

Lebius began recounting the details of the operation, "The Tenth Group had encircled the Crimson Rot Sect in a border town named 'Iris,' launching the final battle there."

"Iris Town was the stronghold of the Crimson Rot Sect. To counter the Tenth Group's siege, they triggered the Extraordinary Disaster: Eternal Rotting Land in the town."

Bologue's expression subtly changed. Since being listed as an Unshakable, Bologue had become a reserve for responding to Extraordinary Disasters and had carefully studied all recorded disasters.

The Eternal Rotting Land, triggered by the Crimson Rot Sect, would transform vast areas into flesh constructs, mutating all life forms into flesh monsters. Meanwhile, inanimate objects would gradually acquire the traits of flesh life, becoming parts of a massive flesh construct.

"Fortunately, the Tenth Group had been preparing to completely destroy the Crimson Rot Sect on the front-lines not long ago, with the Narrow Countries providing cover for the encirclement operation.

To curb the spread of the Eternal Rotting Land, the Tenth Group, with assistance from the Observation Tower, transported hundreds of tons of Red Mercury via Curved Path Breakthrough, flooding it into the Eternal Rotting Land. The resulting fire burned for nearly a month, only extinguishing a few days ago."

Lebius turned the page, "This report was recorded only after confirming the Eternal Rotting Land was completely purified following the fire's extinguishment."

Bologue sighed in relief. Though not a member of the Tenth Group, he had some interactions with them during the time-axis disorder event, having used their Alchemy Armaments.

Hearing that an event ended and an external threat was eliminated naturally brought a sense of relief.

Geoffrey sighed, "It's finally over, huh? The Tenth Group's operation lasted over half a year, didn't it?"

Despite having the Curved Path Gate for rapid movement, the Order Bureau needed to control vast regions, let alone the Narrow Countries wedged between the Rhine Alliance and the Kagader Empire.

The Narrow Countries served as a buffer zone between the two, historically the most conflict-ridden land. Numerous secret groups thrived there, leading to the Tenth Group's formation to enhance control.

The Tenth Group, Hunters of Many Nations.

The Tenth Group's scale was larger than any other operations group, with the most members, amounting to a small-scale Extraordinary Legion wherever deployed.

But even such a Extraordinary Legion fought in the Narrow Countries against the Crimson Rot Sect for nearly half a year, illustrating the operation's challenges.

Lebius said, "Indeed, over half a year. They're currently resting and will soon return to the Order Bureau."

"I can't understand why the Crimson Rot Sect was so persistent; they'd usually retreat when under heavy attack. It's the first time they fought us to the bitter end."

Geoffrey, who had faced the Crimson Rot Sect many times, had some insight into these madmen.

Palmer said, "Who knows? We'll find out when the Tenth Group returns, right?"

While at the Crow's Nest, Palmer collaborated with the Tenth Group, providing them with operational intelligence, acquainting him with a few Tenth Group members.

"Speaking of which, how's the Third Group's operation going?" Palmer asked, "I remember they went to deal with the Joyful Garden."

The Third Group, Wall-Breaking Blade, handled various Void Realm anomalies, echoing Bologue's style—reduce all uncontrollable Void Realms to mundane ruins.

Geoffrey said, "The Joyful Garden suddenly vanished not long ago, whereabouts unknown. The Third Group is still pursuing it."

"Joyful Garden..."

Bologue muttered the familiar yet strange term under his breath.

According to official Order Bureau records, the Joyful Garden was an endlessly running train traversing nations, inside which existed an extremely peculiar Void Realm. Unlike other Void Realms, this uncanny Void Realm moved swiftly with the train.

Few returned alive after boarding the Joyful Garden, resulting in scarce information about it. What's hidden within the eerie Void Realm eludes even Lebius.

But it's certain that each appearance of the Joyful Garden heralds chaos, like a bird proclaiming disaster.

"Church should be tracking these too, right?"

Palmer recalled his old partner. After returning from the Wind Source Highlands, Palmer wanted to consult Church, to clarify his doubts.

But he couldn't find Church. According to Ivan, Church resumed work after a few days' rest, now integrated into the Seventh Group, Unseen Infiltrators, executing secret missions externally.

Church had mentioned these before, but Palmer forgot, only remembering after Ivan brought it up.

They exchanged glances. All action groups were busy, while the Special Operations Group found itself idle.

In the Audience Chamber, Bologue also asked Nesanel if there was anything he could do, but Nesanel refused, saying Bologue, being a Prayer Believer, needed the Defender's power to fully delve into the conflicts among Devils.

Having learned of the Devils' machinations and entrusted with a great mission... only to end up lying on the sofa with Palmer.

Bologue felt frustrated, but before he could vent, a piercing alarm blared.

Chapter 593: Never Ending Peace

The sleepers lined up in a row, with rails laid on top, stretching from one end of the horizon to the other; in this desolate wilderness, this was the only visible man-made object.

In the distance, the mountains were covered in white snow, and tough green grass grew on the plains. The man stopped; he had been walking along the tracks for a long time, as if searching for something.

In this monotonous world, a splash of bright color caught the man's attention. He bent down, observing the small flower growing beneath the sleepers.

In this cruel and extreme natural environment, few plants can survive. The small flower gave the man a great sense of surprise. Gently stroking the petals, the man's sullen mood for a while now showed rare signs of delight.

"How wonderful..."

The man sighed, appreciating the beauty amidst despair.

Gusts of cold wind brushed past, striking his body like icy needles piercing the skin. The man blew his breath, with white mist swirling around his mouth.

A faint vibration came from all around, and the tracks began to tremble slightly, causing the nearby gravel to start rolling and colliding with each other.

The man slowly straightened up, gazing toward the end of the tracks. Erupting steam, like a trailing flag, rose from the edge of the horizon, and then the cold, formidable locomotive gradually crept into view amidst the constant rumbling.

On a straightforward look, it was an exceedingly ordinary train. If there was anything different about it, as the train approached, the man could vaguely hear the strings and cheerful voices drifting in the air.

It was as if the train carried an orchestra that played ceaselessly, day and night. Men and women, dressed in formal wear, danced elegantly in the narrow car, embracing, kissing, laughing, and indulging in life's pleasures, spreading smiles.

Just thinking about it, the man could feel those colorful emotions, as intense as fire.

Such wonderful things were, for the man, a lethal poison.

To maintain inner peace, for many years, the man had been resisting anything that might stir his emotions.

Whether it was rage-inducing hatred or joy at the world's beauty, he no longer wanted to experience them. If possible, the man wished to lose all emotions to attain absolute tranquility.

Regrettably, the man couldn't do it. No matter how much he changed, he couldn't distort his essence, the essence of once being human. For this, his heart had a flaw, one that constantly triggered his emotions.

To control his emotions, the man chose to escape the world, hiding in that dim bar, severing all ties with the world, completely isolating himself from mundane life.

This was somewhat like Palmer, but the man was evidently more extreme. As long as there was nothing he cared about, he wouldn't be disturbed by anything.

But there were always things he couldn't sever himself from, so the man left that haven where he had succumbed for so long and came here.

The conductor seemed to notice the man's presence. The rumbling train slowly came to a stop not far in front of him, and the strings and cheerful voices grew clearer. The man could even hear those faint moans.

In a daze, a familiar, repulsive laugh echoed in his ear.

That woman.

Sai Zong took a deep breath, trying to calm his emotions, attempting not to be disturbed by the other party.

"Your taste in clothes is still terrible."

The woman's voice sounded directly from his mind, and looking around, there was only Sai Zong alone.

He remained silent, tearing apart the ridiculous dog costume he wore, leaving only a pitch-black outfit, the darkness profound, as if Sai Zong was a silhouette of black appearing out of nowhere.

Sai Zong gave one last glance at the small flower, then proceeded along the train. The door opened on cue, revealing an unknown, murky darkness beyond.

In the darkness, those joyful, cheerful sounds became clearer, as if passing through this darkness, Sai Zong could join that never-ending banquet.

Sai Zong didn't like the banquets hosted by the woman. Rather than a banquet, he preferred to describe it as a sacrifice.

Using his intense emotions as a sacrifice to earn the woman's favor.

Yes, that's the kind of woman she is.

The greedy Tyrant only cares about the value of things, even if in the eyes of others it's worthless. As long as the Tyrant deemed it valuable, the Tyrant was willing to pay the price.

The ravenous Crimson Queen, in her pursuit of satiety, would go to any lengths to devour everything that could be consumed, whether life or non-life, as long as it possessed a soul, it would become her food.

The lazy observer was the most laughable among them. Compared to him, Sai Zong, the observer was truly detached from the world. He longed for poetic Chapters, like a madman in love with stories, who would rather be eternally trapped in an infinite library.

As for this woman...

Sai Zong traversed through the darkness, not into a narrow cabin, but into a golden hall filled with the scent of alcohol and incense, where masked men and women in gowns danced gracefully on the marble floor.

A woman disengaged from the spinning dance, stepping lightly as she circled around Sai Zong, extending a pale hand to invite him.

Sai Zong didn't react, even though he was the Chosen One, he remained wary in front of this woman.

Unlike those formidable enemies, who brought physical pain at most, this woman would toy with your mind, searching for the most fragile corner within to deliver a fatal blow.

Sai Zong hated this woman, many disliked her, yet Sai Zong also liked her, as did everyone else.

"Long time no see, Sai Zong."

The woman withdrew her hand, placing them behind her back as her mask covered only the upper half of her face, the revealed lips formed an enchanting smile.

Sai Zong nodded indifferently, ignoring the woman's seductive voice.

"You hid for so many years, suddenly appearing before me, what do you want to do?"

The woman stepped back, rejoining the dance party, then another woman appeared from behind Sai Zong, placing her hands on his shoulders, leaning in to whisper softly in his ear.

Sai Zong said, "I want to know your stance."

"My stance?"

The woman giggled, "Are you preparing for a new round of conflicts?"

"You and I both know, the conflict never ended."

Sai Zong said coldly, he detested the woman's awful personality, conversing with her was always fraught with difficulty.

"Then... what does my stance have to do with you?"

The woman retorted, "The long struggle of Scorched Earth Wrath has already made you weary, hasn't it? Otherwise, you wouldn't have hidden in the Undying Club, along with the one behind you."

"You and he feel exhausted, craving inner peace, so why not withdraw from this conflict like that person?"

"Withdraw from the conflict?" Sai Zong laughed hoarsely, "Do you think we have a real possibility of quitting?"

"At least superficial withdrawal is possible, isn't it? Like that person, hiding deep within the Order Bureau, giving all his power to those Condensers."

Sharp nails pressed against Sai Zong's chest, as the woman traced circles over his front, "Speaking of which, we should thank King Solomon, he exhausted all your chips, otherwise I couldn't have gained my current advantage."

The Fall of the Holy City was the end of Scorched Earth Wrath, the climax of the Devils' conflicts, on that mad battlefield, the observers' chips were spent entirely, losing the ability to continue competing, leading Sai Zong to be heavily hit, choosing to escape for inner peace.

Due to the weakness and withdrawal of both, the woman gradually gained advantage in disputes; in previous conflicts, her power was at most contending with observers, as for Sai Zong, she was powerless to resist.

Looking into Sai Zong's eyes, the woman could sense the repressed, constantly burning anger within that seemingly calm depth.

Greedy ones are never satisfied, hungry ones never full, angry ones... never at peace.

"What is this, like a fisherman gaining from others' toil?"

The woman's laughter grew increasingly shrill but halted abruptly in the next second.

On her pale, smooth skin appeared numerous cracks, oozing blood beneath the cracked facade, instantaneously seeming like thousands of blades slicing through her body, every inch of skin, bones, flesh, nerves... all uniformly crushed and severed.

A ghastly laugh emitted from her throat before she collapsed into a sticky sludge, splattered across the floor.

Blood trickled silently over the marble floor, while Sai Zong diverted his eyes from the twisted scene, stepping aside as the blood flowed past him.

"How violent."

A voice emanated from the dancing crowd, the woman pushed aside a man, smiling as she strode towards Sai Zong.

With each step the woman took, another consciousness gradually took over the entire shell, until the eyes beneath the mask ignited with a Fire Opal-colored hue.

Chapter 594: Joyful Witch

The crushed and mushy corpse lay limp on the ground, exuding the clotted scent of blood, but people seemed oblivious to this gory scene, continuing to dance. Some stepped over the woman's corpse, their feet stained with fresh blood, leaving crimson footprints on the floor.

The orchestral music around soared with joy, the melody stirring emotions deep within everyone, like wild beasts rampaging in their hearts.

Soft light cascaded from above the golden hall, through the scattered glow, Sai Zong could see the golden dust floating in the air, and behind the dust, the faintly visible orchestras.

The figures played their instruments with abandon, immersed in their self-created illusions, nothing could stop their performance, just as nothing could stop the advance of the train.

As the tune reached a crescendo, the ball became more fervent, trombones and trumpets intertwined in harmony, piano keys interspersing their notes.

A woman stood before Sai Zong, gracefully turning around, flames ignited on her body, burning away the white gauze dress, transforming into a black hem draped over her.

Sai Zong watched her with an impassive expression; she too did not avoid his gaze, slowly taking Sai Zong's hand, inviting him to dance with her.

It was an extremely dangerous move, for if Sai Zong wished, the body before him could turn into sludge. Fortunately, Sai Zong was tired of further slaughter; the woman led Sai Zong, stepping slowly, revolving repeatedly on the hall floor.

"Is this the authority of the Eyes of Eternal Fury?" the woman murmured, "Killing, destroying, annihilation... leaving only extreme silence."

Among the many Devils, the power of the Eyes of Eternal Fury was undoubtedly the most destructive. Even though a millennium ago, the Eyes of Eternal Fury chose self-imposed exile to enjoy absolute peace, Sai Zong, as his Chosen One, possessed the same terrifying power.

Sai Zong whispered, "You can try again."

A response came in the form of silver-bell laughter. The woman shook her head, refusing Sai Zong's suggestion and sighing, "What a formidable power, it's because of such power that you, this old relic, have survived countless conflicts, isn't it?"

As the current Chosen One, the woman didn't know much about Sai Zong, most of her information came from the Devil behind her.

In this conflict that had lasted for untold ages, countless Chosen Ones have fought and slaughtered for their respective Devils, until death.

After every conflict, a true winner emerges among the Devils, and the Chosen Ones also determine a victor; some die while others survive.

In the long feud, most Chosen Ones perished in the continuous iterations, becoming part of the bones that forged the Devil's throne.

It all appeared like a constantly sifting arms race. With the rise of Ether tides, new Chosen Ones were often stronger than the previous generation, engaging in internal slaughter until the strongest prevailed.

The woman was currently the Chosen One for her Devil, and before her, countless Chosen Ones served the Devil behind her.

The woman herself couldn't count which generation of Chosen One she was, but Sai Zong before her was different.

As a Chosen One, Sai Zong was undoubtedly the most unique.

In the endless conflict, Chosen Ones perished one after another, yet Sai Zong always managed to carve out a path amidst it; he might not be a winner, but he was certainly a survivor.

Sai Zong was the first and only Chosen One of the Eyes of Eternal Fury.

The woman's smile widened, facing a being as ancient as a Devil. Beneath her seemingly contemptuous attitude lay caution and pressure.

The victor does not invoke fear; true fear stems from the indestructible survivor.

"I do envy your relationship with the Devil," the woman continued to probe Sai Zong, "The Eyes of Eternal Fury are you, yet you're not the Eyes of Eternal Fury."

"Do you still want to keep wasting words?"

Sharp pain emanated from the palm of Sai Zong's hand. The woman clearly saw her skin begin to crack, but this time it was only a warning from Sai Zong; her flesh did not disintegrate and collapse instantly.

With a playful smile, the woman released her hold, and after breaking free from Sai Zong's control, her body healed at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Sai Zong didn't like dancing, nor did he want to continue. His eyes remained cold and detached, staring directly at the woman, as if to say that if she couldn't provide Sai Zong with a satisfactory answer, he would commence a massacre here and now.

"Alright, alright."

The woman put away her smile, disliking men like Sai Zong with hearts as hard as iron.

Chosen Ones are not Devils and still retain the human essence, which means they possess an Original Sin that can be induced. Unfortunately, when facing Sai Zong, the woman's methods were ineffective.

The woman clapped her hands; with each crisp sound, the surroundings would change with the flashing light.

The golden hall, the dark dungeon, the noisy battlefield, ultimately arriving in a cozy carriage.

The twisted space returned to normal, and the two sat in seats beside large windows, taking in the outside scenery.

"What exactly do you want to do, Sai Zong?"

The woman leaned back in her chair, arms crossed, finally appearing serious for the first time.

"The Eyes of Eternal Fury grew tired of the conflict a hundred years ago, chose self-imposed exile, and entrusted almost all its power to you. And indeed, you are a loyal servant, even when the Eyes of Eternal Fury fell into deep slumber, you continued to fight in countless battles for it."

The woman squinted her eyes, like a cunning fox.

"But in this endless conflict, you've also grown weary, or else you wouldn't have spent all these years hiding inside the Undying Club, witnessing the Dawn War, the Wrath of Scorched Earth, and even the Fall of the Holy City."

Since modern times, Sai Zong has only been an observer in the conflicts among the Devils, never truly engaging in them.

"Wrath... such a perfect original sin."

The woman envied and lamented.

"You don't need to manage your power in the mortal world, nor do you need to truly participate in the conflicts. Whenever war erupts, the wrath of the dead will demand endless power from you, and you will harvest a vast number of souls."

The woman couldn't understand Sai Zong's visit. "You could clearly sit back and quietly profit from it all, so why leave the Undying Club, why come to me, and ask me about my stance?"

"What exactly do you want to do, Sai Zong?"

Before Sai Zong could answer, the woman quickly added, "Could it be, you're losing control?"

She covered her mouth in surprise. Hundreds of years ago, that mocking expression was enough to ignite Sai Zong's fury, turning this place into a burning ruin.

But now, Sai Zong just gazed out the window, indifferent to the woman's various reactions.

"Stance."

Sai Zong calmly stated it, like an approaching storm, with silence containing immense power.

The smile on the woman's face vanished. She said, "I want to win, Sai Zong, this time I must win."

"Alright, I understand."

Sai Zong nodded, stood up, and was about to leave.

"Don't you want to know, the means I have to win?"

The woman continued, disappointed by Sai Zong's overly calm reaction.

"Do you mean the matter of you splitting the Unfettered Poetry Society?" Sai Zong turned his head and asked back.

"It looks like you're not completely hiding away either," the woman said, "like an observer, lurking in the shadows spying on the world... How disgusting."

Sai Zong said, "You might as well think about how to deal with the observer's revenge."

"Revenge? We all know his character; he has watched too many conflicts, do you think he would strike back at me for revenge?"

The woman knew the observer's attitude well, just as Sai Zong struggled to suppress his fury due to his original sin, the observer also found it hard to make effective interventions in the mortal world due to his burden.

Sai Zong warned, "I don't know, but what is certain is that the observer still cares about the Unfettered Poetry Society. He has always anticipated the birth of the Endless Poems, and you have corrupted it all... The things he cares about are just these; by comparison, he doesn't even care about the outcome of the conflicts."

"Do you think the Order Bureau will act?"

"You've always been on the Order Bureau's list, every devil has."

The woman laughed, scrutinizing Sai Zong, her words attacking like daggers.

"And what about you?" the woman asked, "Claiming to crave peace, yet secretly hiding in Oubos, don't think I don't know what you're plotting."

"Are you, like the Tyrant, searching for the 'Red Dragon'?"

After saying that, the woman immediately realized something, "You found the 'Red Dragon,' which is why you chose to join the conflict?"

Sai Zong remained silent. He had been silent for so many years that he wasn't very adept at speaking.

But also, as the Chosen One of the Eyes of Eternal Fury, in past years, Sai Zong never needed to converse; all he needed to do was spread destruction.

"No... you didn't find the 'Red Dragon,'" the woman paused, then contradicted her own statement, "If you had the 'Red Dragon,' I should already be dead."

"Even without the 'Red Dragon,' I should be able to kill you," Sai Zong wasn't joking, "Want to try?"

The woman's eyes sparkled with brilliant colors, orange-red and gold, bright red mixed within, like a Fire Opal embedded in her eye sockets.

The atmosphere between them was tense, until Sai Zong noticed something unusual about the woman, he retracted his murderous intent, a hint of surprise flashing in his eyes.

"You are like me."

"You just realized?" The woman twirled the end of her hair, "But I am the reverse."

The woman's pupils ignited, another oppressive and terrifying power surged within her body, yet at the moment it was about to reach its peak, it extinguished once again.

"Are you descending into the mortal world using the body of the Chosen One, interfering with the world?" Sai Zong murmured, "You really want to win, even employing such means."

Sai Zong stared intently at the woman, realizing he had been misled, that the one conversing with him wasn't a Chosen One at all, but a Devil walking the mortal world using the body of a Chosen One.

The Joyful Witch.

Chapter 595: The Beginning of Conflict

One of the enigmatic devils, the Joyous Desire Witch, appeared suddenly before Sai Zong, relying on the form of her Chosen One.

Thinking of the flesh that had been pulverized before, this should be the Secret Energy of the Chosen One, or perhaps the power of the Joyful Garden.

After a momentary shock, Sai Zong immediately realized this was a perfect opportunity and grasped the Wrath Authority tightly.

The rising murderous aura was like countless blades scraping against each other, pressing and grinding forcefully, bursting with sparks, shattering those fragile blades, leaving only a sharpness that could sever steel.

The terrifying ferocity seemed to gain physical form, giving Sai Zong a fearsome sharpness that simply observing him would induce an illusory pain of being cut.

Sharp pain arose in the mind of the Joyous Desire Witch; she was not afraid, instead her eyes showed a crazed delight.

As a devil, no one could harm the Joyous Desire Witch; thus, pain was an unfamiliar sensation to her.

Relying on the Chosen One's body, the intense pain returned, causing a fluctuation in her numb nerves, and even bringing her joy and pleasure.

As the oldest Chosen One, judged by Sai Zong's age, he bore the most primal Alchemy Matrix.

The competition among the Chosen Ones could also be seen as determining the strongest of this era. In this brutal elimination contest, the Wrath Authority helped Sai Zong slay countless strong enemies, safeguarding the interests of the Eyes of Eternal Fury.

Increasingly powerful Alchemy Matrices appeared, and increasingly powerful Chosen Ones took part in the conflict, yet regardless of how seats were shuffled, Sai Zong always stood among them.

"Are you not afraid of me?"

The Joyous Desire Witch stared straight at Sai Zong, threateningly.

Sai Zong shook his head; he had long been in through wars even a devil could not scare him.

Devils cannot directly intervene in the world; the Joyous Desire Witch used this cheating method to descend with an avatar onto earth, and the power she could wield was limited to her physical form and the strength of her Chosen One; the devil's powers remained constrained by the rules.

Ultimately, it's just a confrontation between Chosen Ones.

If successful, Sai Zong could not only kill the Chosen One but further restrict the Joyous Desire Witch, sweeping away her power.

But before making a move, Sai Zong hesitated somewhat, as he found himself on the train named Joyful Garden, which was the territory of the Joyous Desire Witch.

Just like the wayward path is to the Tyrant, within the territory of the Joyful Garden, to act against a devil held many unknowns, even though she was subject to the rules.

The Joyous Desire Witch continued to smile, appearing as though everything was under control.

After a moment of silence, Sai Zong abandoned the attack, and the smile on the Joyous Desire Witch's face grew even broader.

"It seems you've figured it out."

Sai Zong nodded, "To solve you now would only add pressure on me."

"That's right, compared to my other brothers and sisters, my power is quite weak. Otherwise, I wouldn't attempt to fragment the Unfettered Poetry Society."

The Joyous Desire Witch complained, "Truly can't understand what the outsider did to condense such a force, nor can I comprehend his concept to allow this force to sink into the mortal realm."

"As for you, after the Eyes of Eternal Fury fell into slumber, the only power left behind in the earthly realm was the Undying Club; but does that truly count as power? Rather call it the Undead's sanatorium, which is more apropos."

"You're worried, Sai Zong, I can sense it."

This era is no longer familiar to you; with the rising ether tides, Condensers have ushered in their most powerful era. Even with the Wrath Authority you wield, there is no certainty you could defeat them."

She mocked Sai Zong wantonly, "Of course, if the Eyes of Eternal Fury awakens, none of this would be a problem. But do you truly desire your master to be controlled by unending wrath again?"

The Joyous Desire Witch precisely pinpointed Sai Zong's vulnerability, striking against it, this psychological offensive made Sai Zong uncomfortable, and it reinforced his dislike towards women.

But she was right; what Sai Zong feared facing the most was the awakening of the Eyes of Eternal Fury, and he was part of the conflict this time to find a way to solve this problem.

Sai Zong could not extinguish his fury; it's the Original Sin of the Eyes of Eternal Fury, but at least he could allow the Eyes of Eternal Fury to enjoy a longer peace.

Just as the Joyous Desire Witch said, the Eyes of Eternal Fury is Sai Zong, but Sai Zong is not the Eyes of Eternal Fury.

The Joyous Desire Witch softly said, "The decisive battle is not yet here, maintaining our balance is of utmost importance."

Sai Zong agreed with her words, for now, balancing the devils was crucial, as rising stronger only tilted the scales.

Just like past conflicts, losers rotate, but the ultimate victor is always that person.

The Joyous Desire Witch extended an invitation to Sai Zong, "Speaking of stance, you and I could form an alliance, what do you say?"

Sai Zong didn't think too much about it and simply shook his head, "No."

Collaborate with this woman? Sai Zong would rather ally with the Observer, even if he can't offer any help.

The Joyous Desire Witch is like a cunning viper, and Sai Zong doesn't like snakes.

The conversation had been enough; Sai Zong was ready to move on to his next destination. The Joyous Desire Witch watched his back, speaking again.

"The first undead member of the Undying Club in years who hasn't 'retired,' and is still employed at the Order Bureau, with ties to the Tyrant... Even the Observer has noticed him."

Sai Zong wasn't surprised the woman knew this information. Through the Zongge Orchestra, she could to some extent gather intelligence from the Observer.

The information was scant, but it was enough for her.

The Joyous Desire Witch asked, "Who is that Bologue Lazarus?"

"None of your business."

"Alright, I guessed you'd say that," she continued, "but it doesn't matter, they'll find ways to please me."

"By the way, Sai Zong, the Order Bureau has discovered the original artifact."

The Joyous Desire Witch added with a smile.

"But don't worry, I've already sent someone to handle all this, after all, neither of us wants the Order Bureau to discover..."

Before the woman could finish, Sai Zong left without a backward glance, decisively stepping off the train. He didn't want to stay in this godforsaken place for another moment.

The melodious string music covered every corner of the carriage, day and night, everyone could hear this unending tune, but within this elegant sound, Sai Zong could discern those subtle noises.

It was wailing, it was pain, it was a bloodstained curse, it was a heart-wrenching lament...

Standing in the desolate wilderness, as the train whistle blew, the train rumbled once again. Sai Zong recalled something and looked towards the tracks ahead.

The iron creation rolled over the tracks, dragging a banner of steam, the small flowers beneath the tracks were shattered into fragments, dissipating into the barrenness.

Strange power engulfed the entire train. It plunged into an invisible door, the whole engine sinking into it, vanishing into thin air, with the heavy carriages following closely.

It was impossible to estimate how long the train was; this journey continued for several minutes before it ended, as the tail also entered the invisible door, disappearing from the tracks, with this, the Joyful Garden completely left the area.

Sai Zong watched this for a long time. For some reason, he started to miss the undead of the Undying Club, and he understood, it was just an escape, whether for himself or for those undead.

He did not linger, continuing along the tracks towards the mountains.

...

With the efficiency of the Order Bureau's actions, the shrill alarm only lasted for about thirty seconds. Within five minutes after the alarm ended, Lebius and his team members reached the area where the alarm had sounded.

At this moment, the Observation Tower was crowded with people. The field staff who stayed within the Order Bureau mostly came here, in addition to some unfamiliar faces. As Lebius put it, they were from the Security Department of the Order Bureau.

Security Department? It was the first time for Bologue to know of this department's existence. What surprised him even more was that such a well-armed place needed security? Who would be foolish enough to come here?

Lebius didn't explain much; he was more concerned about what caused the alarm, and then at the Observation Tower, they saw those scarred figures.

Blood stained the ground, the injured leaned against the side in defeat, the Vortex Gate used for Curved Path Breakthroughs was covered in cracks, intense ethereal fluctuations spread wildly, it seemed a battle had just occurred here.

Bologue murmured, "What's going on?"

The crowd muttered among themselves, no one answered Bologue. Doctors attended to the injured, transporting them to the Border Sanatorium, the Alchemists of the Sublimation Furnace Core urgently maintained the Vortex Gate, several action team leaders stepped forward to inquire about the injured.

Palmer responded softly, "It seems they were attacked during Curved Path Shuttling."

During Curved Path Shuttling, once attacked, the surging ether would disrupt the path's operation, causing spatial distortion and turbulence. This is extremely dangerous, as dislocated spaces could easily crush nearby lifeforms.

One of the injured was just like that, his entire lower leg was missing, with a clean and tidy cut, hard to imagine what kind of sharp blade it would take to make such a wound, and the severed limb was absent from the scene, likely lost to the other end of the path.

The spatial disturbances not only harmed these people but even spread to the Observation Tower, causing damage to the Vortex Gate.

"Defender," Lebius whispered, "They were attacked by the Defender."

An ordinary First Stage Condenser is enough to disrupt Curved Path Shuttling, but to extend attacks to the other end of the path requires at least the etheric strength of a Negative Power User, and the adversary not only harmed the other end but even damaged the Vortex Gate.

Lebius stepped forward; he wanted to know what exactly these people encountered.

Chapter 596: Don't Stop at the Red Light

The chaos at the scene did not last long; under efficient action, the area was quickly cleared, and the staff dispersed, returning to their posts.

Bologue and Palmer were unable to accompany Lebius; in the absence of Nesanel and without instructions from the Decision Room, these group leaders represent the highest authority of the Field Operations Department and have the right to make independent decisions.

Lebius went to inquire about the injured personnel, while Bologue and Palmer stopped briefly at the Observation Tower before returning to the Special Operations Group activity room.

Leaning on the sofa, the two began discussing the recent events.

Palmer asked, "What do you think happened?"

"We encountered a sudden enemy attack when wrapping up operations and preparing to return to the Order Bureau."

Bologue said calmly, but there was hidden concern in his eyes. He wasn't sure who the injured were or what mission they were executing, but from Lebius's words, he discerned that the attacker was likely a Defender.

What kind of mission could encounter an enemy like the Defender?

"Indeed, such incidents are quite common; hence the employee handbook emphasizes that it's not safe until completely leaving the scene and returning to the Order Bureau."

Palmer paused after speaking, lowered his voice, and whispered to Bologue, "I know who they are."

Bologue looked at Palmer with confusion, only to see Palmer respond mysteriously, "They are members of the Tenth Group, the Hunter of Many Nations."

"How do you know?"

Since joining the department, Bologue had never seen members of the Tenth Group, primarily because these people operate in the Narrow Countries and, like the Fourth Group, the Abyss Watchers stationed long-term at the Desperate Outpost, they wouldn't return to the Order Bureau unless necessary.

"I once worked with the Tenth Group while stationed at Crow's Nest," Palmer said, "Remember the unlucky guy who broke his leg? His name is Marlori; he is a member of the Tenth Group."

Palmer continued, "They must have encountered an extremely urgent situation; otherwise, they wouldn't have used the Curved Path Breakthrough to return to the Order Bureau."

Alchemists refer to all means of distorting space as the Curved Path, among them the safest and most stable mode of transport is the Curved Path Gate, offering point-to-point two-way travel.

Apart from safety, the drawback of the Curved Path Gate is its fixed transportation points, which cannot be altered.

Curved Path Breakthrough involves forcibly breaking through from one point to another, highly risky but offering convenience; the Observation Tower's Vortex Gate is a large alchemy equipment specifically facilitating Curved Path Breakthrough, to urgently deploy groups to target locations when necessary.

Similarly, in emergencies, targets can communicate through complex rituals to allow the Observation Tower to determine their location and bring them back from danger. This is what the Tenth Group currently faced.

Bologue remarked, "So they returned from the Narrow Countries via Curved Path Breakthrough?"

"It seems so."

Oath City, Opus, positioned between the Kagader Empire and the Rhine Alliance, with the Narrow Countries extending on both sides, forming a wall of nations that separates the two giants.

This setup avoids direct conflict to some extent, but due to this geographical positioning, the Narrow Countries often become battlefields for multiple forces, providing an opportunity for the Devils.

Earlier, Lebius mentioned the Tenth Group's actions in the Narrow Countries had ended, but now this problem arose, inevitably causing one to consider their task after destroying the Foul Sect.

"Don't worry, don't worry; compared with our small-scale operations, the Tenth Group truly has substantial resources and, like the Sixth Group, always operates in groups."

Palmer patted Bologue's shoulder, "Only a small portion of the Tenth Group appeared in the Observation Tower; most members are likely trapped in the Narrow Countries, and the Field Operations Department should be dispatching reinforcements soon."

"You also heard Lebius mention the enemy who unexpectedly attacked them is likely a Defender."

Whenever thinking about the Defender, Bologue felt a profound sense of helplessness, for they were truly formidable adversaries.

"I heard that, but isn't the leader of the Tenth Group absent from the scene?" Palmer said, "I've seen the leader of the Tenth Group; he's like a shepherd, never straying far from his team members."

"If he didn't appear in the Observation Tower, he must have stayed on the other side in the Narrow Countries. With him, I don't think there'll be any major accidents."

Bologue asked, "You trust him that much?"

"Of course, the position of the Tenth Group leader isn't one that ordinary people can hold."

Seekers of Glory rarely appear on the battlefield, so Defenders represent the ceiling of power in the Extraordinary World. They usually hold extremely important positions, but some operational groups, due to their special responsibilities, are also led by Defenders.

For example, the Fourth Group guarding the Abandoned Land, whose leader Holt is a young Defender.

As Hunters of the Narrow Countries, the leader of the Tenth Group is also of the Defender tier.

"Instead of worrying about these things, think about what's next," Palmer's face fell, "You know, among the action groups in the Field Operations Department, only ours remains available."

...

Bologue understood Palmer's implication; perhaps when Lebius returned, he'd bring a list with the names of Bologue and Palmer, and then the two would happily embark on a business trip to the Narrow Countries.

If it were just the two of them, it would be manageable, but this incident clearly couldn't be resolved by two Prayer Believers alone. Lebius and Geoffrey would certainly accompany them, working alongside their boss, which was far from comforting.

Palmer emphasized, "Don't think about those things. Focus on the now."

"What's going on with you? Such a big change in attitude?" Bologue noticed Palmer's change, "You're usually not like this."

"It's called transformation."

Palmer pretended to be mature and composed, "You can't worry too much about future matters, worry about this and that, it's endless."

Bologue was about to sigh at Palmer's growth during this return trip when Palmer continued, "But still, we need some plans for the future, like... if this thing has nothing to do with us, shall we play board games together tonight? I've arranged it with Hart."

"No, you play by yourself."

Bologue shook his head; he shouldn't have expected anything from Palmer. Why doesn't he learn his lesson?

Palmer asked, "Then how will you go back?"

"I'll walk back by myself, it's not far, besides... I feel like taking a walk."

Bologue had a heavy weight in his heart, a weight called the Demon Dispute. As Palmer said, worrying now was pointless. Bologue tried not to think about it, but it was too significant, he needed some time to absorb and ease into it.

A walk was a good choice; Bologue liked wandering aimlessly on the streets. Opus was an interesting city, full of quirky surprises, who knows, he might encounter one tonight.

Like some lost demon?

Bologue chuckled to himself, the sudden laughter making Palmer slightly uncomfortable.

Lebius hadn't returned all day, nor had Geoffrey. Both spent their time in the Field Operations Department until closing time arrived.

It seemed this sudden incident wouldn't have a resolution today. After waiting a bit longer, Bologue and Palmer each went their separate ways off work.

Palmer drove straight to the Undying Club, Serey wasn't around, but he had tricked Bode into joining, accompanying them in board games.

Incidentally, Wei'Er joined in the board game too; based on their setting, Wei'Er was a hunter infected by a demon, still retaining sanity, but her body had transformed into a beast.

Hmm... a cat.

Wei'Er really liked this setup, she said she would lead them to beat the game.

Bologue waved to Palmer, and in the rear-view mirror, Palmer nodded back at Bologue. With that, the two separated, heading in opposite directions.

Ever since living with Palmer, the two were inseparable. Now that they parted, Bologue surprisingly felt a sense of inexplicable freedom.

Bologue enjoyed this feeling of solitude, not thinking about anything, not worrying about anything, completely emptying his brain. The sensation was wonderful.

He wandered the streets, not stopping at red lights and turning right directly. Bologue didn't know where he would end up; he liked this random sense of the unknown.

In terms of seasons, it was already spring, but due to Opus' lousy environment, the weather remained cold. People walked down the sidewalk wrapped in thick scarves, their heads bowed silently, as tiring work had drained their energy for conversation.

Bologue blended into the silent crowd, like a black lamb jumping into a flock of sheep, unfamiliar faces flickering past Bologue's eyes, and then a cold dagger silently stabbed alongside his body.

It was a perfect assassination, launched when Bologue was most relaxed, without invoking any ether, not triggering Bologue's awareness of the ether.

But the attacker overlooked one thing: just before the dagger was about to fall, a powerful hand grabbed his wrist, pressing hard, the intense pain storming through his nerves.

Before the attacker could scream, Bologue raised his arm, laying it over the man's neck, choking him. The suffocating feeling turned the man's face instantly red.

"Hey, long time no see."

Bologue greeted the man warmly, without drawing anyone's attention.

The two moved forward a few steps in this intimate manner, then Bologue dragged the man into an alley, twisted his wrist, snatched the dagger, and kicked him into the trash heap.

"Really stinky..."

Bologue pinched his nose, unsure whether commenting on the garbage everywhere or the rotting stench emanating from the man.

Chapter 597: Colleagues

Bologue had always been puzzled as to why the Devils gathered in this city. After hearing about the Devils' disputes from Nesanel, Bologue realized that they all came for the "Red Dragon".

The "Red Dragon" is like a vortex that engulfs everything in the world, bringing the Devils together here. Apart from these sources of evil, Demons, born from this, also gathered here, teased by fate.

Beneath the facade of peace is an enemy poised to strike, a killing intent that gathers like a storm.

The man smiled at Bologue, as if injected with an excessive amount of stimulant. His expression was mad and hideous, his skin began to redden, bulging blue veins appeared, and finally, his eyes turned completely black, staring at Bologue like a camera lens.

Under Bologue's gaze, the man felt an indescribable pleasure, all his desires were fulfilled at that moment, every nerve emitting jubilant cries.

Soon, this pleasure vanished. It lasted only briefly, and a great emptiness attacked the man's heart. He became flustered, needing more joy, more rewards, more, more...

The man screamed and launched an attack on Bologue. Bologue reversed his grip on the dagger, his speed faster than the man's. A sharp, cold glow traced a deadly path in the air.

The smooth wound extended across the man's arm and throat, then blood spurted out. Bologue sidestepped the spray of blood, simultaneously driving the dagger through the back of the man's neck.

The man's mad expression froze, his body collapsing into the garbage heap, the blood-stained dagger leaving his flesh.

Bologue looked solemnly at the man's corpse. This wasn't the first time he'd encountered these lunatics. Despite so much time passing, these lunatics still remembered him.

Forget it, there's no need to care so much.

Looking outside the alley, at some point, a crowd of fanatical lunatics had gleefully blocked all exits.

"It's just as well that I'm a bit idle," Bologue stretched his neck and shoulders, returning their fanatical gaze, "I'll play with you then."

Hoarse growls emitted from the crowd, the men rushing at Bologue like angry soldiers in the narrow alley, wildly waving their arms, wielding knives, spears, and sticks without pause.

The terrifying killing intent released from their completely black eyes didn't faze Bologue. He just kept a tight watch on the approaching crowd, after some thought, Bologue released the dagger, letting it fall.

Bologue seemed to have given up on resisting. Just as the first enemy closed in on him, Ether swirled and surged around Bologue. In an instant, Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid transformed into a cold Sheep Horn Hammer in his hand.

The heavy hammer fell, and the man's head burst into a cloud of blood mist instantly.

The fine blood droplets splattered onto Bologue's face, his nostrils filled with the thick scent of battle.

These lunatics were excited, and so was Bologue. Fighting strong Condensers always required too much caution. It had been a long time since Bologue had fought so recklessly.

The headless corpse stumbled forward, and Bologue snatched the long knife from its hand, hurling it forcefully ahead. The long knife arced through the air, splitting another man's skull with precision.

Bologue wasn't good at shooting, but he was surprisingly talented at throwing. Even if he couldn't see clearly at times, as long as he followed his instinct, he always hit his mark.

Two enemies approached one after the other, daggers stabbing fiercely. Bologue sidestepped and swung the hammer, shattering a man's wrist. He then stepped forward, almost embracing the man.

Another enemy tried to slash Bologue, but Bologue's body was intertwined with the first man's, leaving no space for the other's long knife to land.

The enemy didn't hesitate long, driven by the sinister power within, choosing to strike Bologue and the man together. The sharp metal tore through the man's body, yet the clear pain made the man laugh instead.

He was very close to Bologue, staring intently, drool and tears running uncontrollably. Before he could bite through Bologue's throat, Bologue shoved him away, followed by a powerful kick to the man's chest, colliding him with the long-knife-wielding enemy behind.

Shouts sounded from behind, but Bologue didn't look back. He leaped towards a side wall, using his foot to spring off it, vaulting to the other side, grabbing a fire escape mounted on the wall, escaping the chaos below.

The two groups collided to a head, all raising their heads, eyes eerily black, reflecting Bologue's silhouette in their deep mirrors.

No words were spoken, only beast-like excited breaths, stacking one on another like a rising sea of sand, attempting to grasp Bologue.

Bologue smiled, provocatively gesturing towards them.

These people were common Demons, without any ether reaction. If Bologue wished, he could completely utilize the Flame of the Cauldron, slaughtering the Demons in an instant.

But this time, Bologue played along with them with great interest, wanting to figure out what these madmen were up to. If possible, it would be best to uncover the enemy behind the scenes.

Bologue didn't mind occasionally chopping down demons to replenish his Soul Shards, but being constantly targeted by such a group of lunatics felt rather uncomfortable.

The enemies climbed up the fire escape ladder, moving closer to Bologue, their footsteps causing the rusty ladder to constantly tremble.

Bologue swung his Heavy Hammer and easily smashed enemy after enemy, their bodies thrown to the ground, shattering into pieces.

Unlike previous attacks against him, this time these madmen were noticeably more numerous. Bologue wondered if it was just an increase in numbers, or was there something more hidden, like a Condenser wielding Extraordinary Power?

Previously, while on assignment with Palmer, Bologue encountered such a scenario, using these worthless demons to test him, only launching an attack once they understood him well enough.

As Bologue thought, he smashed an enemy's skull with the hammer, then followed with a hook punch, crushing another person's nose, blood splattering on his coat, blending into the black.

The weapons used by these people were bizarre, from long knives and daggers to clubs studded with nails, and even rusty steel pipes.

Bologue was adept at using any weapon, or rather, he was skilled at turning anything into a weapon.

Blocking an enemy's arm, Bologue seized him, dragging his body as a shield in front of him, even as another person stabbed forward with a sharp dagger.

The other person didn't care about his companion's life, the dagger pierced through the enemy's abdomen and continued deeper, trying to hurt Bologue behind.

Bologue released the enemy, the sharp dagger protruding from the enemy's back, but just before it touched Bologue, he kicked the enemy away, the body pressing forward and taking a crowd down the fire escape ladder.

Blood flooded the alley lined with sewage, as Bologue, expressionless, corroded the demons, savoring the azure light rising from their corpses.

Bologue had a strange feeling in his heart, a connection between himself and the Devil, a sense known as the umbilical cord pulsating vigorously, warning Bologue.

Ascending the fire escape, onto the rooftop terrace, Bologue didn't wait long before the demons reluctantly followed, covered in blood.

Bologue wasn't just using these demons to pass the time; he was also carefully observing them.

If these demons indeed came from the Unfettered Poetry Society as Lebius mentioned, then for them, observing oneself was a process of recording.

Those pitch-black pupils were like cameras, and Bologue was the actor, being edited into some movie under their filming. So long as they saw him, they could receive endless rewards from the Devil.

Grotesque, twisted joy?

Bologue began to understand this group. If the Sect of Corrupted Apes were merely a group of evil-worshipping cultists, then these people were completely a band of mad lunatics.

The Sheep Horn Hammer in his hand twisted into a long, sharp blade. Bologue shook his clothes, flinging out blood. He wasn't keen on playing with these madmen anymore.

No matter how cruelly he killed them, they could gain sick pleasure from observing him, to satisfy their empty hearts from the Devil.

The more Bologue tangled with them, the more they benefited, even at the cost of their lives.

This felt too bizarre; Bologue didn't like it.

In the moment of passing by, the demon's body split into pieces, the brutal scene failing to halt their advance, those pitch-black eyes fixated on Bologue, advancing heedlessly without pain.

Just as Bologue was about to swing his sword again, a dark figure burst onto the terrace, razor-sharp claws easily reducing the demons to a pool of gore, huge fangs pierced through a demon's throat, blood exploding into a viscous mess as the jaws closed around the head.

A ferocious beast appeared before Bologue, momentarily leaving him unsure of the current situation. Was it a passing colleague from the Field Operations Department, seeing trouble and stepping in to assist him?

Bologue didn't let his guard down; the next second, the beast lunged at him with murderous intent released unrestrained.

It wasn't one of Bologue's colleagues.

Chapter 598: Date

Oubos.

As the core of the Devil conflict, in this city filled with monsters, Bologue wouldn't be surprised by any bizarre events, let alone since he, as a Field Staff, is already accustomed to the constant presence of crises.

Even after work, it stays the same.

The shadow came rushing with the remnants of flesh and the scent of blood, rapidly closing the distance between them. Bologue jumped back vigilantly, keeping a safe distance while observing the beast's appearance.

The beast resembled a tiger magnified several times, with hard, dense black fur covering its entire body, allowing it to perfectly hide in the darkness of night. Its limbs were strong and powerful, with sharp claws leaving scratches easily on the ground.

A tail like an iron whip was dragged behind the beast's raised spine, this part not covered by fur but by pitch-black scale armor. The end of the segmented tail bore a sharp spike, transforming into a swinging blade that randomly slashed as the beast charged forward.

As for the beast's true visage, Bologue could only barely make out the blood-filled mouth brimming with sharp teeth, with its entire head otherwise enshrouded in an impenetrable darkness.

The beast lunged at the spot where Bologue had just been standing, splitting the entire section of brickwork instantly, and dust flew everywhere.

The situation escalated, and a glow of Ether appeared in Bologue's eyes. He stepped on the edge of the rooftop, leaping onto the adjacent rooftop.

The beast did not continue attacking but instead crouched down, a deep rumbling sound rising from its throat, as if beneath its flesh-and-blood body lay the heart of an engine.

Ether surged within this savage body, after which the darkness covering the beast's head began to convulse violently.

Absolute darkness swallowed all light, and by the streetlamp's dim glow, Bologue could barely make out its flickering black silhouette, like a burning black spark.

Bologue was unsure what it actually was—it could be some alchemical creature, or possibly something even more troublesome. But none of this prevented Bologue from dismembering and slaughtering it.

Just before launching his attack, Bologue glanced at the bustling street. It was currently the late rush hour after work, and the red light blocked everyone's path. The street was extremely crowded, with constant honking from vehicles.

Bologue still recalled Geoffrey's complaints, during the time-axis disorder incident, Bologue's clash with the King's Shield Guard broke out on the street, their battle traversing several blocks. Although there weren't many casualties, quite a few people witnessed the entire fight.

The Logistics Department spent a great deal of effort to handle this incident, using some necessary measures to make the citizens forget the bizarre scenes they saw in the morning.

Now the battle broke out again in the bustling downtown, and so many civilians were nearby...

Bologue never cared much about others' opinions; he even brought this self-regard into his work, such as when encountering a Demon in a restaurant, ignoring what others thought and directly stabbing the Demon's head with a dining knife.

Anyway, afterward the Logistics Department could handle it as a murder case. They were very skilled at dealing with troubles for the Field Operations Department.

Solving these evils was the primary purpose, defending peace and life was merely incidental.

Bologue had always firmly believed that.

But after experiencing numerous disturbances, Bologue's heart of stone began to soften; he gradually started believing in some warm things like a naive child.

Such as love and peace.

"Let professionals do the professional work."

Bologue dismissed the idea of acting recklessly without consequence, considering it as a challenge match, and aimed to finish the battle in the shadows without endangering those unlucky civilians.

Thinking of this, Bologue instead felt somewhat excited; with a simple shift in mindset, things took on a completely different form.

It's not that these maniacs came for him, but rather he would use them to hone his professional skills.

The Alchemy Matrix gradually spread over his arms, and the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid forged another long sword, the two blades crossed on his chest.

Between Bologue and the beast lay the pitch-dark alley, like a boundary dividing light and shadow.

Bologue broke the standoff first; he had always been the one who preferred to take the initiative. Blue flames ignited on the rooftop. Under Bologue's deliberate control, the Flame of the Cauldron burned less fervently, and subsequently, the nearby area fell under Bologue's command.

"I'm really fed up with you lunatics."

Bologue muttered under his breath, and then densely packed spikes shot out from the walls, piercing the narrow, dark alley in an instant, causing those demons who charged forward one after another to turn into corpses.

The beast did not expect Bologue to prioritize taking out those demons. It was ready to prepare for defense, and seeing this opening in Bologue's attack, it leaped towards Bologue.

With its pitch-black fur, when the beast leapt into the air, from below, it seemed to merge with the night completely. If it weren't for Bologue's ability to sense the beast's gradually rising ether, he would also struggle to distinguish the beast from the darkness.

The sharp weapon cut through the air, issuing a piercing hum.

The beast forcefully rolled in mid-air, with every bone and inch of muscle working together. Its segmented tail bent like a fully drawn bowstring, and at the moment of release, the tail's end easily broke through the sound barrier, a blast covering the hum, delivering a fatal blow.

It was a high-speed slash almost impossible to observe with the naked eye. When it sliced through, Bologue felt nothing. Only when the shock waves it caused rippled did Bologue become aware of the attack's presence.

Before the slash was completed, relying on his combat instincts, Bologue dodged sideways. The exposed skin felt a gust as sharp as a steel needle, and immediately, a corner of the coat was sliced open, and the ground beneath displayed a deep indentation.

If the beast's tail blade had been long enough, this strike could have cleaved through an entire building.

This was not the end of the assault, but rather the beginning of a new round. A massive silhouette pounced on Bologue's body.

Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid transformed into several towering long spears beside Bologue, but this did not halt the beast's downward smash. As the long spears pierced through the beast's body, it also leveraged the impact and its mass to crush the rooftop beneath Bologue.

"I really must apologize, everyone from the Logistics Department!"

Just before falling into the room, Bologue said in his heart.

...

Dudel's life always differed from normal people, such as his radio broadcasting times being at midnight and early morning. To accommodate his work, Dudel often stayed up late, and over time, he entirely became a nocturnal creature.

The good news is Dudel does not have to meet too many living people each day, avoiding most meaningless social interactions. For a staff tormented by work, this can be considered a rare advantage.

The bad news is that living like this for too long made Dudel feel he was drifting farther from a normal life, becoming unbearably laid-back and difficult to return.

Ordinarily, this wasn't much of an issue, but when facing some extremely important matters, Dudel obviously became flustered.

For example... dating.

Elegant music filled the restaurant, with classy decorations matching the dim lighting, giving off an ambiguous and deep vibe.

As a rock-oriented radio host, Dudel felt indifferent to such a soothing environment. He preferred shouting endlessly with those garishly dressed folks in the recording studio.

Dudel took a look at his watch, his gaze wandering, sitting alone at a table in a restaurant where people came in pairs, appearing somewhat out of place.

He was very nervous, feeling a tightness in his chest. He raised his hand to loosen his collar and exhaled deeply.

When he first started working, Dudel felt he was a socialite and should dress neatly and elegantly; hence clothing became his armor.

Dudel spent a lot of money on this high-end outfit, boosting his confidence considerably. At first, he meticulously maintained this high-end gear, carefully polishing his shoes every day after work.

And now?

If not for today's date, Dudel would have nearly forgotten this outfit. The armor once bolstering his confidence now felt like a constraint, ill-fitting shoes making him miss the slippers from his radio station.

As long as I get through tonight, it'll be enough.

Dudel comforted himself. Just then, a beautiful figure flashed into his sight. He remembered the woman's preferences; she was a fan of Crown Blue Jay, whom he had recently interviewed. As long as he followed that topic, everything wouldn't be a problem.

Thumping sounds came from overhead, very close and gradually increasing.

Dudel stood up, still maintaining a greeting posture. The next second the ceiling collapsed, a dark mass punching through the layers of the ceiling, leaving an impassable pit between Dudel and the woman.

"Hi..."

Like responding a beat too slow, Dudel greeted awkwardly.

The woman on the opposite side dazed for a second, then let out a piercing scream before fleeing downstairs with the other customers.

Chapter 599: Fan Meetup

Oath City, Opus.

This is a magical, interesting city teeming with chaos, often described in travel magazines by editors as,

"If your mundane life feels dull, if you're bored with unchanging routines, if you wish to see things beyond your imagination.

Come to Oath City, Opus! This ghostly place definitely won't disappoint you."

Ghostly place.

Indeed, that's how those editors describe Opus.

This is a land of alluring charm, captivating everyone, yet when you ask them why they've come here, they can't quite say.

It might be the mixed cultures where outsiders intertwine, the City's sense of inclusivity that accommodates everything, the spectacle of the Great Rift at the center, or perhaps just the historical backdrop of the city.

Dudel, like many outsiders, came from a remote town where news was scarce, and lagged behind the times, lacking music, lacking movies.

Dudel once lived in such a world, with plans set by his family to work in a factory upon adulthood, marry at an appropriate age, have children, and have his next generation repeat this cycle.

Late at night, Dudel would ponder the meaning of such a life, but thinking further, he too couldn't understand.

One day, by an opportunity, Dudel heard a stirring melody, and from then he couldn't bear the dead silence of the small town. Dudel left his hometown and came to Opus.

Dudel liked this city, though many say Opus isn't a suitable place to live, here things change daily with new births and old eliminations.

Many people find it hard to adapt to Opus' rhythm, but those who do, find it difficult to adapt to other cities. It's just that wondrous.

This is a dazzling city, yet also a dark one, with a vast gap between wealth and poverty, rampant gangs, a shockingly high crime rate, a continuous influx of outsiders, oh, and the dark place known as the Great Rift with its occasionally erupting gray haze.

The editors were right, this really is a ghostly place.

Here you can find everything you desire, yet this city can also take away everything you yearn for.

Dudel understood all of this, but he didn't mind, and if possible, he'd like to live here permanently.

The lights flickered incessantly, the elegant melody vanished into nothingness, people screamed and fled the building, yet amidst the chaos, Dudel alone stood steadily by the gaping pit.

Raised dust dirtied Dudel's high-end attire, and amid such a scene, Dudel was slightly stunned before laughing out loud.

The date he felt pressured by was ruined like this, and Dudel suddenly felt a difficult-to-describe sense of freedom, then fear engulfed his consciousness.

Those living long in Opus have somewhat thick nerves, accustomed to various criminal conflicts, like the recent robbery that spanned several blocks, yet when such things truly happen to oneself, it tests one's mindset.

The gaping pit confined Dudel to a corner of the room, leaving him with no escape. Forcing himself to calm down, Dudel sat back in the chair and poured himself a drink from the bottle he'd paid for, thinking it would be a waste not to consume it.

The alcohol slightly numbed his tense nerves, Dudel comforted himself, thinking that once this ordeal was over, he could recount this unlucky event as a joke on the radio.

Indeed, when misfortune struck, that's how Dudel consoled himself.

"The radio will have a story tonight."

It seems that Dudel is quite the dedicated expert.

Violent vibrations emanated from beneath the pit, along with the roar of beasts, who knows what's transpiring below. Dudel's face turned pale as he struggled to think of pleasant things to relax his mind.

Suddenly, the commotion subsided, settling into complete silence.

Dudel nervously peered into the pit, then a grappling hook embedded itself into the pit's edge, the line tightened and retracted, and a man leaped out from below.

The man was shrouded in gray, his clothes riddled with large holes, looking rather battered. His gaze darted around warily, searching for something, emanating a palpable killing intent.

His eyes landed on Dudel, Dudel felt the man's gaze was as sharp as a knife, instinctively averting his eyes, escaping the man's stare.

Then, inexplicably to Dudel, the knife-like gaze suddenly softened and turned somewhat fervent.

In this absurd situation, the man held cold blades in both hands, his face lit with excitement, and said, "Dudel?"

Dudel was about to burst into tears.

In an instant, Dudel recalled his social circle, and with his nocturnal habits, outside of work he barely had any friends, so what merits could he possibly have to know such a person?

The man strode over quickly, the blades reflecting a bright glow, complementing his excited expression.

Dudel was truly about to cry, tears were already welling up in his eyes.

"This is not the right time to meet."

The man muttered softly, occasionally glancing around warily, appearing pressed for time, releasing the sword blade in his right hand, and grasping Dudel's hand firmly, shaking it vigorously.

"Great to see you, Mr. Dudel!"

Dudel found it difficult to think about the current situation.

The man happily exclaimed, "I'm your fan!"

Dudel started to struggle with understanding the word "fan."

"Ah... ah ah ah!"

Dudel had already lost his basic ability to speak, only able to emit different syllables to express his emotions.

The man's enthusiasm had not yet been fully unleashed; he mimicked Dudel's tone, imitating that classic opening line in front of him.

"Gray mist! Industry!"

The man looked at Dudel expectantly, mouthing the next words as if he wanted to shout them out together with Dudel.

"Delicious shrimp crisps!"

"Woo ah! Woo ah! Woo ah!"

Dudel burst into tears, his vision blurred by the tears, unable to understand why he was crying.

Was it the impact of fear or the excitement of interacting with a passionate fan in this scenario that moved him to tears?

Never mind, who cares about such things anyway?

At least one thing is certain: the guy in front of him really is his fan, and then in his heart, Dudel wonders what he did to deserve such a fan, wondering who usually listens to his radio shows.

The man was extremely happy; who knows why he felt so happy about such a thing.

"See you next time, Dudel!"

After a high-five, the man waved to Dudel, threw a grappling hook upwards, and vanished from sight.

He came like a hurricane and left like a hurricane, leaving only ruins behind, and Dudel's chaotic heart.

Dudel stood dumbfounded for a long time before slowly collapsing to the ground with a dazed expression.

"I love this ghostly place."

Dudel murmured.

...

Bologue once again leapt into the city's shadows, moving swiftly with the grappling hook.

He never thought he would encounter Dudel here; unfortunately, he still had things to do, otherwise Bologue would definitely have pulled Dudel aside to chat about music appreciation and the like.

Bologue was indeed Dudel's fan, in every sense, and he found it hard to resist anything related to Dudel, like the food Dudel recommended. He couldn't quite explain why.

However, personal life is personal life, and work is work; now Bologue still had urgent matters to attend to.

After crashing into a building with the beast, the beast believed it had the upper hand at close range, but Bologue quickly taught it a lesson.

In the blink of an eye, Bologue pierced his spear through the beast's body, ready to strike it down, when the beast bizarrely vanished into the shadows, retreating from the battlefield.

Bologue guessed it was some kind of teleportation technique; it likely hadn't fled far, and now Bologue could still vaguely sense the remnants of the beast's ether.

Under Bologue's speculation, the opponent should not be an alchemical creature but a Condenser; the secret energy could be from the Elevation School, transforming itself into that strange beast.

Anyway, the chaos had already erupted; Bologue decided not to hold back any longer. With the ether's blessing, he was as swift as a phantom, chasing the beast across the city rooftops.

Suddenly, an invisible threat approached from afar, without a sound, nor any ether reaction; in this night-time environment, Bologue was completely unaware of it all.

Cold metal grazed his arm, slashing away a patch of blood, and Bologue halted abruptly on a rooftop, swiftly hiding himself behind cover, but soon another bullet whizzed through the night sky.

Based on the previous bullet's hit position, this one shouldn't have been able to hit Bologue behind the cover, but the high-speed bullet somehow shifted direction, aiming right at Bologue.

Weak sparks flickered across scale armor; Bologue had already donned iron armor, seemingly indicating there was more than one attacker, all hiding beyond Bologue's sight.

"Mr. Bologue Lazarus."

A twisted whisper echoed behind Bologue, and as he turned, the black beast lunged from the shadows, seemingly able to traverse within shadows, its movements uncanny and unpredictable.

Bologue and the beast collided, grappling with each other, neither able to overpower the other momentarily; dense spikes exploded from the scale armor, repeatedly piercing the beast's body, and beneath the torn wounds, no blood spilled, but rather bursts of agitated ether.

The beast's massive maw was alarmingly close, and within the darkness on its head, a human face emerged, its dark and frenzied eyes staring at Bologue, gleefully shouting at him.

"I'm your fan!"

Chapter 600: The Fanatic Fans

"Fans?"

Even someone as calm as Bologue was shocked when he heard the enemy utter such an absurd statement.

Red Mercury flowed into the blade in his hand. Bologue drew the sword and slashed vertically, unleashing a fire that tore through the darkness.

This wasn't Bologue's first battle with such Shadow Beasts. During an earlier ambush against Man-eaters, he had encountered similar Secret Energy.

Back then, the opponent's Secret Energy was affected by light; once strong light dispelled the darkness, he lost the foundation to maintain the Shadow Beast.

Relying on past experience, the fire blazed suddenly, glaring and intense.

The fleeting light couldn't affect the beast; its fur remained so dark, seemingly swallowing all light, unable to be illuminated.

"Yes! Fans!"

A man's face appeared on the beast's head, a grotesque blend with a bizarre creature, excitedly shouting at Bologue.

"I've been so looking forward to meeting you!"

To express his uncontrollable joy, a sharp tail blade attacked from the side. Bologue raised the Round Shield single-handedly, the tail blade accelerating with a cracking sound.

The Round Shield visibly dented, and Bologue's arm went numb from the impact. His steady steps were shaken, and his footing became somewhat erratic.

Bologue took a deep breath, genuinely feeling the fervor of this fan.

"This is really troublesome!"

His previous experiences didn't match this current enemy, and Bologue had to find a new strategy.

The dented Round Shield transformed into a Long Axe, which he swung down towards the frenzied face in the darkness. Ethereal Amplification bolstered Bologue's strength, and the axe blade carved a pale Thunder, rousing searing flames.

The beast's tail blade was extremely lethal, and Bologue's offensive was equally fierce.

The fiery axe blade penetrated deep inside the beast. With this full-strength strike, the axe blade completely sank into the beast's body, leaving only the long handle exposed.

Bologue had chopped many people and felled many monsters. Like a skilled Butcher, he could decipher what he was cutting based on the resistance felt through the handle, even with his eyes closed.

This time, the sensation from the axe handle was extremely odd. Even with Bologue's extensive chopping experience, he couldn't categorize it. He furrowed his brows in confusion.

A hideous wound opened up on the beast's body. Below the wound, there was no blood, no bones, or organs — nothing but a swirl of darkness.

Bologue forcefully drew the axe blade out. The crackling flames rolled within the split wound, unable to further consume the beast's body — as if the beast's body was incombustible.

It truly was incombustible; Bologue had realized the beast's true nature. It became clear to him that mundane flames could not burn an ethereal creation.

A torrent of Ether surged inside the beast, healing the wound the axe blade had cleaved open, snuffing out the flames along with it.

No blood, no bones, no flesh.

The beast before him was neither an Alchemy Creature nor a Condenser from a transformative school; its shell was entirely constructed from Ether — a pure ethereal creation.

A monster conjured by Secret Energy.

As Bologue made this judgment, he thickened his Scale Armor, and sparks flew across the metal's surface. Shattered bullet fragments embedded into the ground, shattering the streetlamps.

Fragments of glass rained down, startling the crowd below. Fortunately, after a brief panic, the pedestrians calmed down. To them, this just seemed like a natural malfunction of the streetlights, and none of them noticed the rooftop skirmish.

The gunfire under the night sky continued. During intervals while fighting the beast, Bologue attempted to locate the shooter. However, under the cover of this dark night, he couldn't see the trajectory of the shots nor the flash of the gun muzzle. He couldn't even hear the gunfire.

Judging by the direction from which the bullets hit him, there was likely more than one shooter firing at him. They occupied multiple angles and completely surrounded Bologue.

However, there was also another possibility. Perhaps the shooter's bullets were capable of changing direction mid-flight, allowing them to bypass cover and hit him.

For ordinary people, this seems like a movie plot, utterly impossible, but in the Extraordinary World, it's just a common phenomenon. Whether it's Secret Energy or Alchemy Armament, they can easily achieve this.

Not long ago, Belli recommended a whole set of coordinated Alchemy Armaments to me. As long as you hit the enemy with a beacon, within the firearm's range, the alchemically treated bullets will automatically track the beacon, hitting the enemy.

Using these tracking firearms, even if Bologue were a shooting idiot, he could still deliver headshot after headshot. The downside is that the tracking bullets can only hit targets with beacons, targeting a single enemy, and the bullets are expensive.

The axe blade blazed with fierce fire. Bologue calmly chopped off the beast's front paw. It was clearly damage to the enemy, yet the face on the beast's head wore a joyful expression.

Bologue's feeling of annoyance grew increasingly intense.

Damn, usually he's the one enjoying the violence. Why are these people more excited than he is?

"Since you're my fans!" Bologue surged forward, the Silver Hand expanding from the scale armor, gripping the beast tightly. "Let me give you an autograph!"

Bologue leapt high, raising both axes, and struck down on the face laughing wildly.

The beast was entirely constructed of Ether. Bologue tore its body, merely destroying the Ether. As long as the hostile Condenser was present, endless Ether would reconstruct the beast's body.

That crazily laughing face was different, it had substance and could be harmed.

The heavy flames fell like meteors, the bright flame filling those pitch-black pupils, followed by rolling hot tears, shedding tears moved by the heroic posture.

"So beautiful..."

The man murmured. In the next second, the beast's body began to wriggle violently. The part bound by the Silver Hand dissolved into Ether, while the released part sank into the shadows, disappearing.

Bologue's heavy strike missed, just as before, this beast possessed the ability to traverse the shadows, and now it hid once more.

As the beast vanished, several bullets successively shot out from the night. This silent gunfire was well-suited for assassination, but against the Iron Armor-clad Bologue, it could only harass him.

Bologue ignored these bullets, letting them be deflected by the armor, while he continued searching for the beast's figure.

Suddenly, a strong Ethereal Fluctuation emerged from Bologue's side, overflowing with killing intent.

The continuous gunfire had numbed Bologue's nerves, making him pay little attention to these bullets. Now the Ether attached to the bullets exploded and spread, making each bullet increasingly lethal.

The ether's glow emerged on the bullets, their speed surged, and their kinetic energy doubled, effortlessly penetrating steel and stone.

Bologue felt like being hit by multiple iron spears, and the tiny bullets released tremendous force, pushing and striking his armor. Cracks appeared on the surface of the armor, as if alive, the Deceitful Snake Scale Liquid quickly repaired the gaps.

Multiple enemies.

Based on the unfamiliar Ether reaction on the bullets, Bologue judged that the shooter and the beast were not the same person. Both had Ether strength comparable to Prayer Believers of his own level.

This was a hunt aimed at him, seemingly planned for a long time by the other side. In this night environment, it was difficult for Bologue to track the beast's path, or even detect the presence of the shooter.

Bologue accelerated, leaping between rooftops, with wind whistling past his ears. Every time he passed a place, a series of bullet craters appeared on the ground behind him instantly.

The shooter fired continuously, the bullets chasing Bologue. He guessed that at that moment, the opponent was probably watching him in the scope with a maniacal smile.

Indeed, as Bologue thought, several blocks away on a water tower, Ferguson set up an Alchemy Firearm, following Bologue's figure through the scope.

It's normal for Bologue not to find Ferguson. With the coordination of alchemy firearms and his own Secret Energy, Ferguson's range far exceeded the limits of modern technology and surpassed Bologue's perception range.

"I see him..."

Ferguson struggled to control the joy in his heart, pulling the trigger again, the Ether fire burned in the chamber, and the bullet silently launched, hitting the silver armor several kilometers away after a short flight.

This time, the silver armor failed to block Ferguson's shot, shattering into a pile of debris the moment the bullet struck.

After the debris, Bologue's figure disappeared from the scope.