

Wow 131

Chapter 131: Crazy

"Tonight's seventh gladiator duel! Coming from Furious Bloodrage! Facing our newcomer—the Bull Warrior!"

"Pssh—" Hisses filled the air.

As the host introduced him, the newcomer, who even seemed a bit fumbling as he stepped into the arena from the iron cage, looked so frail and weak.

He wasn't particularly muscular, nor was his entrance flamboyant.

Clothed in a somewhat faded light blue denim jacket and jeans, the most ridiculous part was the dirt-yellow burlap sack over his head, with only three holes cut out for sight, making his tentative glances around all the more timid.

"Where did this kid come from!"

"Is he weaned yet? Come here to mama and suckle!"

"Take off the sack! Coward!"

Despite the jeers, the audience was still eagerly anticipating the spectacle to come.

Everyone knew the organizer's routine—

As the host of the fight, considering to stir up every spectator's emotions, they naturally had to control the comparative strength between the combatants.

A one-sided crush was no fun, so "Furious Bloodrage," though it sounded intimidating, was actually just a crazy kid who had only fought twice and won one by the skin of his teeth.

Neither side was high-caliber, even if it was a mere squabble between two noobs, they were evenly matched combatants.

This kind of duel was destined to have no holding back, the lowest level of pure physical struggle that could also satisfy primal impulses for violence.

Moreover, the organizers were afraid that both fighters would be cowardly, so they purposely arranged for one of them to be a madman...

Even if the newcomer turned coward on the spot, the crowd could still feast their eyes before the staff maintaining Order rushed in to save a life.

Broken limbs wouldn't lead to death, yet still quenched the audience's thirst for violence.

"Bang!"

The iron door locked behind him, and Kuang Xin instinctively flinched.

The clamorous noise was too loud, making his brain somewhat unclear.

Just like when he climbed over the school fence to use the internet and then had to make a self-criticism in front of the whole school under the national flag, his head buzzed.

But strangely... his body didn't reject the situation.

He was heating up.

Trembling.

And... excited.

A stage for unfettered violence, an unguarded spilling of desire.

His vision started to focus; thoughts became clearer.

Adrenaline pumped rapidly, narrowing his vision but sharpening his focus, his limbs engorged, reacting faster.

His opponent, with bloodshot eyes, was grinning ferociously across from him, Kuang Xin worked his wrists, rolling his fists.

Technique? None.

Planning? None.

Stats? Seems not quite enough.

What he had was merely primal instinct!

"Roar!"

The moment the bell rang, both sides, like the wildest of beasts, lunged at their opponent.

[Close combat attack hits the target, Combat Mastery experience +2, Brute Body (locked) unlock progress 86%.]

[Current Combat Mastery experience 15/100...]

[You dealt 1 point of blunt damage to the target!]

[You take 1 point of blunt damage from the target's attack.]

He swayed, timing his steps with his strikes.

The hot breath he exhaled cycled inside the sack, causing him to feel a bit stuffy, but this couldn't affect Kuang Xin's combat state.

His eyes were fixed on the opponent's punching movements, every attack requiring full body coordination.

Each casual movement could give away intent.

He didn't know which movements indicated which muscle activations, he simply relied on instinct to guess the opponent's attack intentions.

It didn't matter if he guessed wrong—it was just a game!

What was there to fear?

[Close combat attack hits the target, Combat Mastery experience +17, Brute Body (locked) unlock progress 87%.]

[Current Combat Mastery experience 32/100...]

[1 point of strike damage dealt to the target!]

[You've taken an attack, suffering 1 point of strike damage.]

Another punch lands on my nose... my vision is turning a bit dark.

But I've also landed a punch on his belly, he's definitely not having a good time either!

Madman? What the hell are you crazy for? What gives you the right to be crazy?

I don't feel a thing! Your punches are like a massage to me.

Hit me more! More!

Trading blow for blow, I want to see who gives in first, you or me!

This is a damn game! Do you think I'm scared of you?!

"Hahahaha!" Amidst the fight, Kuang Xin couldn't help but burst into a mad laughter.

Fight! Come on!

You call yourself a madman? Then what am I?!

All the cool moves I dreamt of using can now be tried out.

No acquaintances around, I can unleash violence to vent freely.

Teeth, fists, thighs... all can be used as weapons for attack.

So what if it's wrong, or if my technique isn't scientific?

Can your body handle my fists?!

Me, scared of you?! Ha!

"Hahahaha!" Knocked back by a kick, Kuang Xin, like an ape, pounds his chest, "Come on! Come on!"

A wild fighting spirit spills out in all directions, with a combat style more savage than wild beasts making opponents tremble in fear.

"Madman! Madman!" The frenzied gaze locks onto a weird boxer wearing a head cover not far away.

Pretending to be weak through madness.

But this boxer has madness etched into his marrow.

"Madman! I don't want to fight him!"

"You! Where are you going?"

Clenching his teeth, Kuang Xin leaps into the air, delivering a Superman punch straight to the opponent's chest...

Don't run!

...

[Close combat hit landed, close combat mastery experience +14, Savage Physique (Unlocked) unlocking progress 88%.]

[Current close combat mastery experience 46/100...]

[3 points of strike damage inflicted upon the target! Target has fallen into a "Stunned" state.]

"Congratulations on witnessing the most thrilling duel tonight! Our winner is, the Bull—Warrior!"

"Wuhu!"

"Well fought!"

"Another round! One more time!"

...

The frenetic Bull Warrior sets off a wild wave of violence, Hans, with betting slips in hand, quickly finds the organizer.

"I won, I won! By the odds of 1.1 to 1, you owe me 1260 coins!"

"Don't need you to teach me, old coot!" the man holding a low-quality cigarette contemptuously glances at Hans and casually shoves the principal and earnings on a tray through the window.

Mixed in denominations, the bill-like paper money and crystal-like coins are stacked chaotically, enough to widen the eyes of Hans who'd hardly ever seen so much money all at once.

Looking over his shoulder with the guilt of a thief, he saw the foolish lad still surrounded by enthusiastic spectators, too busy to come and claim the wealth that should belong to him.

[Run!]

Stuffing the money into his bosom hastily, Hans turned and ran.

Familiar combat instincts covered his body like second nature, and Hans felt his steps lighten considerably as he ran.

Indeed, he was the one to take after all!

As for the simpleton's possible hostility after realizing he's been duped... Stupid kid, I'll just deceive him again next time I see him.

Faced with profits within reach, anyone would go mad!

Chapter 132: This bullet is reserved for you!

"Where are you going?"

Kuang Xin panted heavily, having chased out of the arena.

Seeing Hans's sleazy figure fleeing through the chaotic crowd, he knew this old geezer was definitely screwing him over again.

A wise man never falls into the same hole twice, and he certainly wouldn't let this old man take any advantage of him ever again.

Hearing the furious shouting not far behind, Hans's steps faltered, and he stopped.

He had seen how that foolish lad had performed earlier in the arena; there was a hint of madness inherent in him, and that wasn't someone to irk seriously.

Besides, the most important point was he hadn't intended to bring a hand gun to the arena today... or even if he had, now it was questionable whether he would dare to use it.

Compared to the foolish lad he first met that day, today's looked exceptionally frightening; the bruises on his face weren't signs of dishevelment but badges of honor for a warrior.

"I... I'm going back to sleep," Hans's voice was weak.

"Sleep?" Kuang Xin advanced step by step, eyeing Hans from top to bottom, and finally rested his gaze on the latter's hand concealed at his chest, "Where's my money!"

He didn't particularly care about the property in the game, but at least he couldn't let someone who disgusted him take advantage of it.

"It's here... right here..." Cautiously pulling out five banknotes from his bosom, Hans trembled as he handed them to Kuang Xin, "I was just thinking of keeping it safe for you temporarily..."

Kuang Xin had no interest in the old man's bullshit; he had made up his mind not to trust this old guy again. His voice rose sarcastically, "Didn't I win?"

He knew his own odds; one to one point one.

He should have at least 1050 Heishui coins by now.

With missing teeth, Hans flashed an embarrassed smile, "At least I acted as your guarantor to let you enter the contest; let me have a share..."

Kuang Xin clenched his fist, still unsatisfied, "Honestly, I didn't get enough of a fight just now."

"All yours! All yours!" Hans bristled instantly, eagerly pulling out the money he had just obtained from his bosom—eleven banknotes, 160 crystal coins...

"Here it is! But..." holding onto one hundred Heishui coins strung together with string, Hans showed a pleading look on his face, "This is my own capital..."

Kuang Xin glanced at them.

They felt oddly familiar... even though Heishui coins should all look the same.

But he felt that these were probably the same hundred he had been cheated out of by the old man.

"..."

[If it weren't for his referral, I wouldn't have met the big shot, nor Dai and Yanzi... It's hard to say what turns my fate would have taken.]

Seeing the contemplative look on Kuang Xin's face, Hans pulled on a strand of Heishui coins he had already pushed into Kuang Xin's hand, "There are one hundred and ten more that I've won with my capital..."

"Bullshit!" Kuang Xin suddenly drew back his hand, "What's all this about your or my capital, everything I won is mine!"

Poking the man in the face with his finger, "Stop f***ing scamming people, you hear? I'm letting you off this time."

Turning away triumphantly, Kuang Xin felt jubilant inside.

Robbing an NPC! How much worse could I get?

Although the amount looted wasn't much, just 110 coins, it was an epic step forward!

I'm so cool tonight!

...

Clenching the remaining 100 Heishui coins in his hand, Hans experienced the roller coaster of life...

Not reconciled!

Not reconciled!

Power... money... slipped away again!

Huh? There seemed to be an indecisive figure hesitating in the shadows over there.

What was he up to?

Hans narrowed his eyes and approached proactively...

"Join a competition? Do you know you need a guarantor to enter?"

A young man exuding metal punk vibes deliberately stood on tiptoes, his expression somewhat disdainful, "You think I don't know that?"

"You know? If you know, then it's easy. Come with me."

The young man, grasped by Hans's bony palm, became flustered, "What are you doing? Where are you taking me?"

"Taking you where?" Hans turned to look at him, his face ghostly under the hazy moonlight, "To compete in the match, of course!"

"I'm not going to compete! I was just hesitating! I didn't say I wanted to enter..."

[Target automatically rejected your commission request...]

[The other party does not possess the qualifications to accept a commission...]

A faint voice played from the void.

Without hearing any strange noise, or getting a reply from Hans, whose eyes were trembling with restlessness, he grew more irritated, "You won't agree? Why won't you agree? What right do you have not to agree!"

His voice grew heavier with each word.

Beneath his frail and aged body, there seemed to be bulging muscles growing rapidly, aged veins grotesquely prominent, dark aura ceaselessly emanating from Hans's body.

"You! How could you! Not agree to my terms!"

"I agree! I did agree!" The young boy desperately backed away, trying to break free from the opponent's grip, as strong as reinforced iron, shouting as if on the verge of collapse during the struggle.

"No! You didn't agree!"

Power! No power! Without power!

That intoxicating sense of power is absent!

Liars! All liars!

"Bang!"

[Successfully hit the target with a stealth attack. Light firearm proficiency experience +1.]

[Hit the target's vital spot, inflicting 24 points of piercing damage! Plus the "Heavy Bleeding" status.]

[The "Bleeding" effect from your attack inflicts 10 points of ongoing damage to the target.]

The flare of the gun blossomed in the night.

The fireworks of the burning ammunition dispersed from the muzzle, and behind the hazy dust, Kuang Xin's face loomed in and out of view.

The moon's radiance could not penetrate the heavy clouds. His face, half-hidden in darkness, half-bathed in light, watched as Hans, still struggling on the ground, had returned, and Kuang Xin's eyes displayed indiscernible thoughts.

"This bullet, I saved it for you until now."

Drip, drop, drip, drop...

"Murder! Murder!" The boy was already on the edge of mental collapse, and the sudden gunfire pierced through his last line of defense, causing him to run away frantically into the distance.

Black blood trickled down his clothes onto the ground as Hans blankly lowered his head, his body weakly slumping forward to kneel and fall.

"Crash..."

The rope snapped; the blackwater coins he had been carrying in his arms rolled and scattered everywhere.

One... two... three...

"I... I..." His vision grew darker in waves. Hans tried to reach out with his blood-coated hands, attempting to gather all the scattered blackwater coins back into his arms.

They were his! All his!

One... two... three...

Huh?

Why are they gone?

Grabbing a handful, his palm sinks in.

That was his principal, his own property, his own 100 blackwater coins.

How... are they gone?

As he opened his palm, the silver-black particles, like the ashes of a firework burned out, were blown away by the wind and quietly dispersed.

Dissolving into the air, leaving no trace behind.

"Liars... all liars..." Blood foamed at Hans' mouth as he lay on the ground, looking up at the direction where the particles disappeared, his eyes empty.

[Your attack's "Bleeding" effect has caused 6 points of continuous lethal damage to the target.]

[The target's breathing has ceased; vital signs lost.]

Tucking away his pistol, Kuang Xin turned and left, without any lingering sentiment.

[You have completely killed the target. Combat ended, earning 180 battle experience points.]

...

"Finally killed him," Gong Yan said with a complex tone.

"That was tough on the gorilla...."

Gong Yan and Dai Lian, who were there to back up Kuang Xin, hid in the shadow of a rock, watching the gun murder that occurred in this wasteland. Dai Lian had a hint of satisfaction in his eyes, "Gorilla is fine in every other way, just too rule-bound."

Being bold, one would discover a different side of the game, and also discover another self...

As a player, Kuang Xin indeed had a certain mindset to break preconceptions, but stealing an axe might have been the most brazen act he had done.

Facing this game that felt as real as time travel, they could clearly sense that Kuang Xin was reluctant to let loose and act recklessly.

Having known him for only several days, they had all heard the story of Kuang Xin being conned by an NPC at first.

Even when confronted with an NPC who had betrayed him time and time again, unless it truly touched his last bottom line, he found it hard to go for the kill.

If it had been Dai Lian himself, the night he found out he was deceived, either Hans' corpse would hang in the streets, or he'd just restart with a new account.

But to Kuang Xin, humanoid NPCs and those wolves, rats, they held a different place in his heart.

"But also not bad, right?" Gong Yan's lips curled into a faint smile, "This dummy is quite reassuring to watch in action."

Although he always gets tricked, nobody can feel at ease...

"Let's go, let's go." Dai suddenly got up, "Let's head back first, don't let him find out we were spying on him, he definitely thinks he's just been exceptionally cool..."

Gong Yan covered her mouth to stifle a laugh, "Okay~"

Chapter 133: Final

Actions determine habits, and the biological clock that became habit firmly controlled time, waking the dreaming person at the precise moment.

"Hiss~"

My head hurts.

How much did I drink last night?

Everything still feels dizzy in front of me.

My self-restraint, capable of suppressing hormonal effects, can't control the erosion of alcohol on my body.

Luckily, my physical fitness is genuinely robust, and after shaking my head, the world in front of me started to sharpen.

It seems... no one else has woken up yet.

Hearing the rustling noise close at hand, You, who had been deep in sleep, lifted his head in a daze and opened his eyes. Propping himself up, he sat up half way, his shoulder-length hair falling naturally around him. While rubbing his eyes with his small palms, he asked in a soft, groggy voice, "What are you getting up for?"

As Bai E was putting on his clothes, he paused slightly, "Don't we have morning training?"

"Oh~ We said we could start later today, nobody has gotten up yet."

"Later..."

Alright then.

Bai E stopped what he was doing.

Starting later is good, my condition is indeed a bit off right now, might as well lie down for a bit~

Bai E, who had climbed back into bed, lay there with his eyes open, lying just to relax, as sleep was now out of reach.

Right, last night, amidst the haze, it seemed like I heard quite a few feedbacks from player missions.

Let's check the panel—

[Name]: Bai E

[Race]: Human

[Template]: Genetic Modification Prototype

[Hit Points]: 120/120

[Identity]: Leader (Li Ming)

[Physique]: 14.4/15

[Insight]: 11.7/15

[Reflex]: 12.2/15

[Mystic]: 8.2/∞

[Genetic Optimization Degree] (Current tendency: Orc): 0.1/100

[Skills]: Gun Fighting Skill, Lucky Shot (Current charge: 168/100)

Stealth (63/100)

Craftsmanship (3/300) (Level 1)

[Traits]: Thought Dullness, Battlefield Instinct, Well-Trained, Bloodthirsty Instinct (Dormant), Hive Mind (Dormant)

[Expertise]: Fast Recovery (Locked) unlocking progress 30%, Self-Restraint, Overlimit Drive

[Mastery] (Potential Points *9): Light Firearms Specialization (389/2000) (Level 4)

Heavy Weapon Specialization (246/300) (Level 1)

Ranged Weapon Specialization (153/1000) (Level 3)

Military Firearm Specialization (2/100)

Hand-to-Hand Combat Specialization (92/100)

Light Weapon Specialization (14/100)

[Spiritual Energy]: Unmastered

[Knowledge] (Tech Points *8): Firearms Maintenance (89/300) (Level 1)

Lumberjack (17/300) (Level 1)

Thievery (2/100)

Trapping (31/100)

First Aid (Bandaging) (Level 2) (Max level)

Anatomy (30/100)

Conventional Vehicle Driving (0/300) (Level 1)

Computer Hardware Maintenance (17/300) (Level 1)

Advanced Physical Training 3.0 (Max level)

[Technology]: Management+1, Sociology+3, Psychology+1

[General Experience]: 1485

[Combat Experience]:

[Research Experience]: 1000

[Mutation Risk]: Low

[Faction]: Li Ming (Prestige Level 1)

...

It's getting more and more luxurious.

Whether abilities like "Computer Hardware Maintenance" that Wen Jie reported are actually usable or not, merely possessing them is enough to make one feel blissful.

I really love the feeling of hoarding all sorts of resources and not using them, like being tightly wrapped in soft cotton~

Bai E was joyfully sizing up each item, eventually fixating his gaze on the 148/100 energy charge value for quite some time.

It's full again, huh?

Should I go blow up the fence?

Or maybe blast the mess hall's porridge maker?

With my current status, destroying this little stuff shouldn't warrant a court-martial, right?

I'm so tempted...

"Assemble!"

After breakfast, Bai E rushed to the physical training grounds, despite having already obtained the specialty—Overlimit Drive.

But a specialty is just a beginning, a process, a tool to accelerate training efficiency. The real goal is still the physical attributes improved through training.

Bai E was always serious about training.

"You don't need to train today." Seeing Bai E honestly standing amongst the crowd, Chavez singled him out.

"Begin your training." After giving the command, Chavez took Bai E aside, "Your combat instructor Dan has informed me, you have a match later. You need to stay sharp."

Although the physical strength expended in training can be quickly converted back during short rest periods through the action power reserves, the soreness inflicted on the body is inevitable and would somewhat affect actual combat.

"A match?" Bai E appeared slightly stunned, though he had already realized—

The selection within the New Recruit Training Group yesterday was just an appetizer. The spots for that relic are limited, and the competitors... are likely the entire military camp.

"Got it."

"Good." Chavez nodded, "Then wait here for a while, Dan will come to get you soon."

"Okay."

As Chavez mentioned, Dan quickly arrived and took him to a strangely unfamiliar sand field.

Warriors selected from various training groups or special squads surrounded the square sand field, waiting.

Anyone sent here after passing the initial selection was seen as promising by their respective instructors, so the gap in strength among them wouldn't be too big.

And no soldier in the military camp was an exceptional being. The top level of combat strength was similar among everyone. Bai E scanned the group and realized that his comrade Dashan's strength configuration was probably the standard template for these tough men.

However, there were a few whose burst rates seemed particularly fierce...

"The match procedure is simple. In a moment, we will call out names in the order collected, pair up two by two, and the winners will fight the next round until we have a single victor," Dan quietly explained in Bai E's ear.

It's not that the military operation requires only one person, but observing who goes the distance is convenient to score each warrior.

Furthermore, while assessing combat skills, they also observed the ability to maintain performance through continuous battles—a two-for-one deal.

After all, the military operation calls for more all-around soldiers, and those who can multitask are undeniably the ideal candidates, or perhaps simply excel in one particular area too much to be ignored.

This is a matter of scoring weight, a basis for the final judgment by the officers.

Dan's gaze swept over the waiting warriors, especially lingering on a few whose reputation in the camp was fierce, while continuing to caution Bai E, "There are nine rounds total. I heard that you only start getting commendations from the fifth round onwards. Do your best and don't be pressured."

She wasn't privy to all the details, but performing well would definitely be noticed by the military. It was important to strive for what could be fought for; if it was beyond one's capabilities, there was no use in blaming heaven and earth.

She had always been open-minded.

"Mhm," Bai E nodded in acknowledgment.

He indeed wanted to perform well in the match to increase his chances of qualifying for the military operation, but if he truly lacked the strength, there didn't seem to be much he could do.

In terms of attributes, his physical condition wasn't stronger than that of the veterans present.

In terms of skill, without even a Level 1 in Gun Fighting Skill, let's not talk about how bad I am.

There was no way around this, limited by time and experience.

Now, he had only a little over a thousand general experience points left, and his combat experience was squeezed dry.

So even though he had tried hard to learn from Dan during her first instructional session and subsequently used experience points to improve himself, he was now just a Level 3 in Gun Fighting Skill without any special attribute boosts, far behind these burly men who were mostly Level 4 or 5 in Gun Fighting Skill.

His only hope seemed to lie in the specialty he had over them—Overlimit Drive.

A 50% extra power output, relying on brute force to break through... not entirely hopeless.

If he could last till the final rounds, when everyone's condition was impacted by facing equally matched opponents and they couldn't maintain their combat level, using his Overlimit Drive to "steal a win" was not impossible.

The assumption here is He could last that long.

Just hope the first two rounds are fights between weaklings... Bai E's gaze swept over the excited fighters.

Not only himself was selected from the New Recruit Training Group, but there were also a few sacrificial lambs sent by their instructors. The number was small; first come, first served...

"Almost time." Seeing the officer in charge stepping onto the high platform at the center of the sand field, Dan patted Bai E's back for the last time, "Good luck. Try to go further, but no worries if you lose. Consider it a learning experience. I'll be off now."

[Triggered Side Quest—The Final!]

Chapter 134: Duels Rose

...

[Final Match: You have entered the final round. Sprint forward as much as possible, reach the end, and you will gain extraordinary glory and rewards. Mission Requirement: Advance round by round in the combat finals. Mission Completion Reward: Basic 100 points of universal experience (an additional +100 for each round advanced).]

Bai E blinked lightly, "Yes, sir!"

The mission always had a way of upping the ante at just the right time.

I want to advance too...

"Soldier 91B13! Facing Soldier Wil Moth*Benjamin!"

"Soldier 65A20! Facing Soldier 94A17!"

The presiding officer began calling out names one by one.

With more than two hundred combatants, fights would not proceed one by one. Additionally, the hand-to-hand combat between just two fighters didn't require much space; the arena was large enough to support over one hundred pairs of fighters battling simultaneously.

Among the soldiers selected from the New Recruit Training Group, Bai E blended in and was naturally matched against an opponent of the same level.

An evenly matched duel!

Bai E felt his blood boil.

He was becoming more accustomed to, and even beginning to enjoy, all the conflicts and battles he encountered in this world.

His opponent clenched his fist, boasting with a laugh, "Remember the name I gave myself—Zhou! I will climb over your body to ascend."

"Emmmm..."

At the sound of the command gun, the officer ordered, "Begin!"

The two were only two meters apart; Bai E took the initiative to sprint.

With the step of an arrow, his Overlimit Drive burst forth at full power, his stamina burning crazily to supply him, and the combat mastery experience feedback from the player, which had reached 92 points, gave Bai E a bit of insight.

The punch, powered by a sequence of muscle movements starting from the thighs, carried almost the full force Bai E was capable of at that moment.

Let me see what you're made of!

The will to fight burned in Bai E's eyes.

"Bang!"

The dull collision of fist against muscle indicated that "Zhou" had some skill in combat, though he seemed somewhat foolhardy.

For a veteran artificial soldier birthed before Bai E, this grand selection evidently excited him. Faced with Bai E's punch, he didn't dodge or evade, choosing instead to withstand the blow head-on.

He crossed his arms to counter Bai E's punch in an attempt to block it head-on.

However... the slight sound of cracking bones went mostly unnoticed, but more apparent was Zhou being forced to hastily retreat three steps.

Combat prompts did not pop up every moment, and Bai E relentlessly pursued his advantage without regard.

Easily catching up with his steps, another punch charged with full force came from behind, smashing straight into the opponent's chest.

Zhou, wincing with agonizing pain in both arms, naturally wanted to dodge the monstrous punch coming from his adversary; however, his footing had been destabilized by the initial strike, and in his desperation, he could only try to block again with his arms.

"Bang!"

Zhou, unable to withstand the punch, was sent flying backward, soaring a good two meters through the air.

"..."

Only then did the delayed combat information emerge—

[You have used a close-range attack with a perfect exertion to knock down the target, gaining +5 combat mastery experience (+1) (this effect comes from the specialty—Overlimit Drive).]

[Current combat mastery experience 98/100...]

[You have caused 2 points of striking damage to the target! Causing the target to enter a "stunned" state.]

Bai E stared blankly at his fists, then at his opponent, who was now lying unconscious on the ground.

...

...That's it?

"95B27, victory!"

[Sub-mission—Finals, progress enhanced, current reward: Universal Experience +200.]

Among the more than a hundred matches that happened simultaneously, Bai E's battle was definitely not the most exciting, nor the most technically rich, but it was certainly the fastest.

Two punches, direct KO.

No maneuvering, all about the numbers.

"Are those all new recruits over there?" the highest-ranking officer watching the match asked his aide-de-camp.

"Yes."

"Hmm..." It's quite normal to see such a gap among new recruits, who can easily fall behind.

He didn't notice the specifics, but to resolve a battle this quickly, it must be either a huge disparity in basic attributes or a large gap in skills. He could pay more attention to that later.

Bai E, having finished the fight, stood in his spot waiting. The two punches hadn't drained much of his stamina, not even enough to trigger the automatic activation of his power reserves for recovery.

If not through deliberate training, in this world, the human body's power reserves only convert during rest in a non-intensive state, and only when it drops below a certain threshold.

Bai E was different; his Overlimit Drive managed that.

Refilled completely!

Bai E, who finished early, didn't idle but began to observe the other warriors around him.

The military didn't prohibit this; behind the seemingly rough treatment, there was always a profound intention.

Being able to finish a battle early was a skill, as was the ability to spot weaknesses in potential opponents while observing them.

Such skill was not only applicable in internal competitions but was also valuable when facing real enemies. Warriors who possessed such abilities deserved to reach the end and become the sole victor.

In Bai E's observation, many nearby warriors had excellent combat abilities, at least better than his own, which didn't seem quite right considering the loot boxes floating above their heads—

[??? (Human) (Ally) — Using "Lucky Strike" to kill may drop: Guaranteed (Fresh Meat*1800, combat experience 600 points); Possible (Proficiency: Burst)]

Nothing... hardly any difference from newly created artificial soldiers, and even less combat experience.

Is it because my own strength has increased?

As for other abilities... Bai E glanced casually, and it seemed that the lowest abilities listed in the loot options were at least level 3 proficiencies.

Does that mean level 1 and 2 proficiencies aren't even worth dropping?

That's really underestimating people!

But even those abilities deemed unworthy of dropping were demonstrated with techniques far superior to his own.

Bai E's own proficiency hadn't fully formed yet, but with an increase in combat experience, he had some insights into the essentials of fighting.

Attack, defense, movement... these are the core of combat.

Exerting force, exerting it faster; evading, using the strong points of your body against the opponent's weak points; movement, tying together the overall rhythm of offense and defense.

Pure exertion of force is just a small part of combat proficiency. Perhaps that's why when he trained purely in exertion techniques, the task only gave 20 points of combat experience.

And now, even those warriors from the New Recruit Training Group, their displayed techniques were far superior to his own.

Without missions or teachings, Bai E had to rely on his own eyes to observe and learn.

[You are using your Insight Ability to observe your opponent's weaknesses...]

Even a long duel must end at some point, and under the rule against relentless evasion, every match concluded fairly quickly.

"Next match, 95B27, versus..."

Bai E blinked, snapping out of his mental brainstorming, and looked toward his opponent—Rose.

Chapter 135: You guys better be really competing

Rose's face still wore that smile which blazed like flames, her wheat-colored skin glistening with crystalline beads of sweat through her shorts and tank top, rugged and sexy, "Long time no see."

"No idle chatter allowed!"

Both glanced at the instructor standing to the side, his demeanor cold and aloof. Under their collective gaze, the instructor kept his eyes unfazed, as if the matter was none of his concern, "Don't be so brazen."

"..."

Bai E looked at Rose, joy also flickering in his eyes upon seeing a familiar face.

Indeed, it had been a long time since they last met, putting aside last night's party. This was their first meeting since the new recruits' training trial.

Above her head... Level 3 Combat Specialization.

Her progress was fierce; she was a formidable opponent.

Rose flexed her wrists, her joy unhidden, "I've wanted to punch you for a long time!"

Bai E didn't beat around the bush, "Come on."

When facing Bai E, Rose was always the one to initiate the attack.

With a light shout, she closed in swiftly.

Bai E didn't wait passively either. If technique was lacking, then attitude had to be correct.

Throw a punch first, to test her mettle.

Rose, too, had the intention to test Bai E, incorporating some force-dissipating techniques as she countered Bai E's punch head-on.

"Tsk~"

Her military boots scuffed the ground, retreating several steps swiftly. Rose's eyes sparkled with excitement as she looked at Bai E, "So fierce."

Bai E shook his fist, feeling little feedback.

Most of the force had been deflected. No matter how strong the punch, if it didn't hit, it was useless. That was the purpose of technique.

Rose, seemingly unaffected by the punch, pounced again like a mountain cat—agile in movement, her figure swaying between attacks, sometimes east, sometimes west, with no telegraphing of her strikes.

Even with punches that had a shorter swing, she still managed to deliver an impressive force.

Bai E could only passively use his instincts to block her moves, completely on the defensive for the moment.

Before long, he had taken a few hits, but luckily the force wasn't substantial, causing only a slight soreness in the muscles of the impacted areas.

"You can't fight them like this..."

Amidst her attacks, Rose's voice slightly trembled.

Bai E kept silent, continuously observing the habits in Rose's attacks.

He wasn't just a big brute who relied on brute strength. Observing, mimicking, and learning was always the best method to improve oneself.

Got it!

Crossing his arms, Bai E captured Rose's muscular forearm with his muscles for the first time.

"V" The corner of Rose's mouth curved in a wicked smirk. With a twist of her body, her arm suddenly spun, forcing her punch through the restraint of Bai E's arms and breaking into his guard.

"Bang!"

Under the not-so-heavy sound, Bai E clutched his slightly stuffy chest and stepped back twice, his eyes filled with admiration as he looked at Rose.

So impressive... to virtually leave him powerless, even though his attributes were far better.

If Rose was already this challenging, what about those veterans with superior techniques and attributes?

Fortunately, he had encountered her first...

Bai E knew that Rose had been holding back all along. A real crippling blow wouldn't be like today's sparring, where every move was pulled. It would be far more dangerous.

She was... deliberately practicing with him.

[You observed the target's close-quarters combat routines and effectively blocked their attacks several times, gaining +5 Combat Mastery experience (+1).]

[You have acquired "Level 1 Combat Specialization," and also gained 1 Potential Point.]

[Combat Specialization (Level 1): Strike Power +2%, Evasion +1%, Blocking +1%.]

[Current Combat Mastery experience 4/300, at 300 points, you can master "Level 2 Combat Specialization."]

The moment specialization took form, a clearer understanding weaved into Bai E's mind, and his footwork, which had felt detached during battle, finally seemed willing to obey his commands.

Footwork is the bond that connects offense and defense, blending two strategies that once fought independently into one unified approach.

From 0 to 1, is always the greatest leap in progress.

Shaking off the soreness in his arms, Bai E smiled calmly at Rose, "Now, it's my turn."

Even a Level 1 specialization was a qualitative change for Bai E.

Already superior in physical attributes to Rose, combined with the burst from Overlimit Drive, a mere increase in technique could lead to a drastically different display of strength.

The collision of muscles was fiery; Rose's wheat-colored skin blushed, and she felt somewhat softened after being hit several times in the abdomen and other areas by Bai E.

Compared to other fights, the battle between the two looked milder, thoroughly embodying the spirit of sparring.

In the mutual enhancement, they determined the final victor, an unspoken understanding between Bai E and Rose.

"Huff~ Huff~"

Rose breathed heavily, her flushed face steaming from the evaporating sweat, looking hazy as if she were intoxicated. The tightly pulled wolf-tail hairstyle had come loose due to the intense activity.

Her eyes were firmly fixed on Bai E, whose two hands were pressing down on her own achingly numb wrists, and his expressionless face was close at hand.

Still... so expressionless!

Clenching her teeth, her right foot pushed off fiercely, and with a thrust of her lower body, Rose tried to launch one final counterattack.

She flipped into the air, her powerful thighs attempting to clamp around Bai E's neck and deliver a lethal scissor kick, but her severely drained strength made her movement slightly sluggish.

With just a violent throw, Rose was powerfully hurled away by Bai E.

"Ugh!" The moment she hit the ground, Rose arched her chest and let out an involuntary muffled grunt, like a struggling carp.

[You perfectly dismantled your opponent's combat routine in close-range fighting, seizing the final victory and gaining +25 Combat Mastery experience (+5).]

[Current Combat Mastery experience 34/300; at 300 points, you can master "Level 2 Combat Specialization."]

[You dealt 3 points of strike damage to the target! Causing the target to enter the "Exhaustion" and "Light Injury" state.]

The effect of Overlimit Drive claims to enhance combat or agility weapons mastery training efficiency by 20%, but its actual performance seems to do more than just provide an extra 20% experience; in actual combat, it also made it easier for Bai E to acquire basic combat experience.

The speed of improvement is much faster than before, to a certain extent compensating for Bai E's otherwise unremarkable combat talent.

The instructor, unable to bear watching and turning his face away, finally walked over quickly and announced loudly,

"95B27, wins!"

After making the announcement, he shook his head and sighed softly, "You two better actually be competing... "

[Side Quest—Finals, progress updated; current reward: +300 Universal Experience.]

Hearing the instructor's soft complaint, Bai E and Rose, lying on the ground completely exhausted and unable to move, shared a smile.

"Someone lift her off the field."

"Cheer up." Along the way of being carried, Rose gestured with her mouth.

"Goodbye." Bai E also smiled softly at her.

[Your body is eagerly pleading for quick recovery, triggering the conversion of reserve energy sources into action. (Overlimit Drive working...)]

[Physical recovery at 10%...]

[Physical recovery at 30%...]

Chapter 136: Blood God!

Bai E and Rose's battle was the one with the latest result, and warriors who struggled to defeat their opponents naturally had no room to catch their breath.

Almost the moment the victory of Bai E was announced, the lineup for the subsequent matches was arranged.

After two rounds of elimination, the new soldiers who provided easy points had mostly been swept away, and the few who remained were no longer lucky enough to encounter Bai E.

"Next match, 95B27 versus 94A17!"

The muscular man cracked his knuckles, his gaze fixed on Bai E, filled with undisguised aggression.

"I've heard of you, the new honor of our orc lineage. Don't worry, I'll go easy on you!"

He didn't look like he planned to go easy at all...

Bai E's face showed no expression; he stood seemingly relaxed, but inwardly he had tensed, ready to explode into action at any moment.

"Begin!"

At the instructor's command from the sidelines, the muscular man charged at him immediately.

Words were just a distraction; whether or not the opponent was affected, he intended to close the gap step by step by step...

[You demonstrate exceptional skill in close combat, instantly overpowering your enemy. Combat Proficiency Experience +7 (+1).] (A very small chance to awaken a special attribute.)

[Current Combat Proficiency Experience 42/300. At 300 points, you will master "Combat Specialization Layer 2."]

[You deal 7 points of striking damage to your target! Causing the target to fall into a "stunned" state.]

Bai E, having struck the opponent's jaw with a low palm push, slowly withdrew his hand as the unnamed muscular man slowly toppled backward.

"Bang!"

The body hit the ground, kicking up a cloud of dust.

Even the toughest body has its weak spots.

Bai E felt somewhat disappointed; having been tempered by Rose, he had hoped all his adversaries would bring the same pressure that could push him to improve.

But it seemed, even if the warrior was of a higher Combat Specialization level, the performance might not be as precise as Rose's.

Too crude... or rather, they didn't take themselves seriously enough.

Underestimating your opponent comes with a price.

"95B27, wins!"

[Side Mission—Finals, progress increased, current reward: Universal Experience +400.]

[Into the sixth round...]

If he encountered another pushover, the chances were good.

However... Bai E's eyes swept across the entire arena; after several rounds of elimination, there were only 32 left, including himself.

In an army camp of over ten thousand, selecting the most skilled fighters and then going through several rounds of elimination, the chances of still finding an easy opponent were probably not great...

What lay ahead was likely going to be an unspeakably difficult fight.

The only advantage he had was probably that he still maintained full stamina until now.

...

"Next match, 95B27 versus 95B09!"

"Blood God?"

"That newcomer is done for~"

"Meeting Blood God in nearly the fifth round, he's just unlucky."

"If I were him, I'd just surrender to spare myself the pain, Blood God doesn't know the meaning of holding back."

The moment the matchup appeared, there were voices that seemed not sure whether they were reveling in misfortune or quietly warning.

Bai E's opponent clearly had quite the reputation.

In fact, Bai E didn't need reminders from others; he could tell the opponent's level from the drop rates displayed above the opponent's head.

[95B09/Blood God (Human) (Ally) (Elite) — Using "Lucky Strike" to kill will drop: Guaranteed (Fresh Meat*2400, Combat Experience 2500 points); Highly Probable (Trait: Regenerative Blood, Mastery: Combat Specialization Layer +1, not exceeding layer 6, Mastery: Agile Weapon Specialization Layer +1, not exceeding layer 6, Mastery: Heavy Weapon Specialization Layer +1, not exceeding layer 6); Possible (Skill: Extreme Pain Suppression, Specialty: Frenzy's Surge.)]

...

Damn!

The panel was so luxuriously unbelievable, I wanted to smash it...

But even if it was a piece of crap, I still had to give it a try.

Bai E's body pressed down lightly, eyes gleaming with eagerness, ready to push his own limits.

The Blood God was a tall and burly Caucasian male, his muscles not bloated, but filled with an explosive power. He seemed like an oversized version of Bai E.

His fists were at least one and a half times larger than Bai E's, covered with thick calluses, and his skin was yellowish, showing his toughness.

Strong and resilient, the sheer oppression from his stature alone was enough to take anyone's breath away.

Looking at Bai E, Blood God slowly approached, no words spoken, just a slight parting of his lips, revealing an intimidating cold gleam.

Fighting should be done fiercely!

He didn't like to hold back.

...

[You were hit by the opponent's attack, you received 3 points of striking damage.]

[You were hit by the opponent's attack, you received 4 points of striking damage.]

[You were hit by the opponent's attack, you received 6 points of striking damage, you have entered "Light Injury" status, combat effectiveness drastically reduced!]

[You were hit by the opponent's attack, you received 10 points of striking damage, your current mental reflexes are sluggish, combat state significantly deteriorated, withdraw from combat immediately! Warning, withdraw from combat immediately!]

It had only been a moment since the fight began, and the warnings on the panel flashed urgently like a stream of water.

The opponent's attacks were like a fierce storm, easily breaking through all of Bai E's defenses.

Even though Bai E had been rapidly growing in all aspects since birth, in a one-on-one close-quarter bare-handed fight against such a warrior, who would be considered top-tier even in a military camp, he was still no match at all.

Struck by a punch on the side of his face, Bai E's vision went dark. The Blood God's fist felt as if it held the weight of a thousand jun, hitting his face was no better than being struck by a truck.

It was unclear if the opponent had used Gene Optimization Solution, without it... that would probably be the peak combat power under a 15-point physical limit.

The last coherent thought in Bai E's fuzzy consciousness was this.

"Bang!"

[You were hit by the opponent's attack, you received 8 points of striking damage, you have entered "Comatose" status.]

"95B09, wins!"

[Side Mission—The Final, progress settlement. Current reward: +400 general experience.]

[Side Mission—The Final, completed.]

[Mission reward: +400 general experience, issued.]

...

Some bustling noises rustled into his ears, and on his face, it felt like there was a warm tongue gently licking.

Bai E tried to open his eyes, white light gleamed through the slits, making it hard to see.

After struggling to open them wider, the creamy bright and soft light came into view, and the black shadow holding the towel paused, pulling back with some surprise, "You're awake?"

The voice was very familiar...

Bai E blinked, finally seeing everything in front of him clearly.

It was the nurse in training... Mashati, yes, that was her name.

"Hiss~"

Subconsciously trying to move his body, a pain akin to broken bones spread from all over, and glancing down, he realized he was wrapped up like a zongzi.

Memories before losing consciousness slowly came back, and the corners of Bai E's mouth turned bitter.

[The gap is really wide...]

"Has he woken up?"

Carlos's voice came from a distance, rapidly barging in.

Chapter 137: Exercise of privilege

"Awake, are you..." Carlos approached quickly with a regretful expression on his face. He waved at Mashati to leave before he whispered to Bai E with a bitter smile, "There's something I need to tell you."

From the moment Bai E saw Carlos's expression, he generally guessed the other's purpose. His face, wrapped in gauze, remained serene, "Did I fail to qualify for the military operation?"

In fact, the moment he was knocked down by the Blood God, he had already anticipated this.

Dan's rumor was that one needed to advance at least five rounds. Having fallen in the sixth, basically meant no chance.

Originally, not knowing if his performance in the heavy firepower coverage test would give him a shot, he harbored some hope, but considering Carlos's current expression... it seemed there was no hope either.

"Yes..." Carlos replied with a trace of bitterness.

During the time Bai E was unconscious, based on the data collected from all the soldiers in the camp over the past two days, the tactical analysis department had finalized the last twenty soldiers to join the secret military operation... and Bai E was not among them.

Heavy firepower coverage? Bai E's mistake rate in the latter stages rose significantly. Although he barely made it past the minimum selection criteria, there were many others far stronger. His individual scores were easily pushed back to beyond the fiftieth place.

Close-quarters combat? In real combat, weapons like daggers and combat knives would definitely be used. Due to the internal competition not allowing for bloodshed, and since proficiency in agile weapons

basically carries over from the Combat Specialization Layer, there was no qualitative difference between the two.

Hence, the results of the combat competition were the standard for assessing close-quarters combat ability.

And obviously, Bai E, who fell in the sixth round, had no significant advantage among the thirty-two men.

As for Bai E's performance in physical training, it was indeed outstanding, as he recovered his strength far faster than the other soldiers.

However, fast recovery was meant to contribute more. In terms of output, in terms of taking a beating, it wasn't his turn.

Besides, none of the selected soldiers had any glaring weaknesses in endurance or recovery. In the final selection, physical performance carried less weight. Even with high scores in that area, the advantage it gave in the overall assessment wasn't enough to offset weaknesses in other areas.

No matter how outstanding Bai E's talent was, a few days of intensive training couldn't compete with those ace veterans who were equally talented but had survived longer and had more combat experience.

Not securing a spot this time was regrettable, but not unexpected.

As for other abilities that weren't so important in the selection criteria, like driving or computer hardware knowledge...

At least half of the chosen soldiers could drive. Whether they were experts was uncertain, but at a minimum, they could manage; regarding computer hardware knowledge... besides the specially trained information engineering soldiers, other types of soldiers simply didn't have the opportunity to learn such skills. There was no need to even think about it.

Thus, the roster for the military operation was locked in.

Twenty ace soldiers, among them, no Bai E...

At this moment, Bai E, hearing the news, showed no emotion in his response. Carlos didn't know whether to comfort him or to just leave it at that. He could only follow his conscience and console, "It's not really a big deal, don't be disheartened. There will be plenty of opportunities to earn military merits in the future."

"I want to try for it..." Bai E murmured softly.

If it was merely for military merits, he wouldn't care too much.

There was plenty of time; no need to risk everything right now.

But chances to access the so-called "relics" were rare; aside from this secret military operation disclosed by Carlos, Bai E had not heard any similar information during his days in the camp.

Considering this might be his closest and only opportunity in the short term, he had to seize it firmly.

The next time... The next time he didn't know when it would be, nor what changes might occur.

But...

"Try for it?" Carlos looked puzzled.

With what could he contend?

Carlos was only there to inform Bai E of the negative result.

Even he couldn't think of a way to contend; this was a battle of tangible strength, not one that could be changed with mere words.

Despite everyone's spirited debates during meetings, when it came down to business, facts spoke louder than words.

Strength is supreme; this is the immutable truth of the military.

"Hmm..." Bai E nodded slowly, "I have a privilege."

It came from Helen.

It came from her knowledge of Advanced Physical Training Version 3.0.

Helen, who was developing this and trying to spread it among all the soldiers, had once made a promise to him after he had provided important data—

"With this... you can make almost any reasonable request of them, and I think they will agree."

The wise scholar with authority had made a promise, and now it seemed it might just come in handy.

The premise was... that the military wouldn't consider the suggestion "unreasonable".

Carlos blinked.

After Bai E's reminder, he also recalled what Academician Helen emphasized to Marshal Weslin last night in front of a room full of officers.

"..."

If it was for the sake of Academician Helen's face, it seemed... that there really was a chance?

"I'll go and ask for you," Carlos said, excited.

As he turned to leave briskly, he also greeted An Lun, the head nurse not too far away, "Nurse Chief An Lun, please use the Number 17 Rapid Growth Spray on Bed 31B, Code 95B27. He has an important mission tomorrow and needs to recover as quickly as possible."

Injuries were commonplace in this era; one might say that as long as a person didn't die on the battlefield and could be brought back to the medical room, their life could almost certainly be saved.

Losing arms or legs might be problematic, but most other injuries had fast treatments and slow treatments available; it was just a matter of cost.

An Lun, busy with tasks at hand, rolled her eyes and ignored him. Instead, Mashati, who had been waiting nearby, responded promptly, "We've already used it first thing. He probably won't even miss lunchtime."

"This kid has quite a bit of clout..." Carlos muttered under his breath and smiled in response, "That's good to hear."

Watching Carlos walk away, Bai E became somewhat anxious.

[We're departing tomorrow...]

If they were leaving tomorrow, then today's noon would be his last chance to visit the players. With his current, bandaged-up state, it would be difficult to meet them.

The players performed brilliantly last night, proving that the new mission he had released achieved the expected outcome.

If he had to set out with the army early tomorrow and couldn't catch up today, wouldn't the wasted time without issuing a mission be a significant loss?

Watching the seconds ticking by, Bai E's anxiety reached fever pitch.

In fact, ever since he woke up, he could feel itchiness all over his body.

The cells that had died in the battle were being expelled from his body, and new cells were rapidly filled in under the influence of extraordinary medicine and his innate skills.

[Your body is rapidly repairing its injuries. Current injury repair progress is at 90%, Rapid Recovery (Unlocked) progress is at 34%.]

[You are rapidly regaining health...]

[Health +1, current health 112/120.]

...

[Feedback from the completed task, your physical strength +0.1.]

[The quest you posted—"Building Materials Required" has been submitted, please go and inspect it as soon as possible.] X3

Hurry, hurry, hurry!

Getting up...

Mashati's frail hand forcefully pressed down.

"I'm fine," Bai E tried to argue.

The girl's eyes were pure and stubborn, "You're not the one who gets to decide if you're fine or not."

"..."

"Tick-tock, tick-tock~"

[Your body is rapidly repairing its injuries. Current injury repair progress is at 99%, Rapid Recovery (Unlocked) progress is at 35%.]

[You are rapidly regaining health...]

[Health +1, current health 120/120.]

"I'm fine now!" Bai E shouted the moment he could.

"Let me check..." Nurse Chief An Lun stepped over swiftly and elegantly.

Only after a thorough examination did she nod in acknowledgment, "Indeed, you are."

She couldn't stop praising, "Such an unimaginable recovery speed... Let's get these bandages off him."

"Yes."

Mashati's nimble hands searched over his body; when the timing was almost right, Bai E suddenly tore off the last of his constraints.

He jumped out of bed, put on his shoes, and ran off like a gust of wind.

Watching Bai E's retreating figure as he fled into the distance, Mashati bit her lip lightly, "So impatient..."

Chapter 138: contribution points issued

On the road leaving the camp, Bai E quickly pondered the tasks he needed to complete today.

Issuing quests was a must, and the psychological boost of +1 from yesterday allowed him to assign two days' worth of tasks to those three players.

Relics, relics, they sounded like they weren't somewhere close to the military camp.

If he really could use his privileges to set out with the team, it certainly wouldn't be a trip he could return from in one or two days; that +1 limit was at best a way to minimize losses, but he expected it still wouldn't break even.

As for the type of quests... Yesterday's tasks had a good effect, so he would keep them the same today.

Another thing was... harvesting experience.

The training session from the night before last had to be terminated because the weapons of those three players were not suitable. If he didn't take the opportunity to harvest some experience today, he would have to set out with only a little over two thousand points of general experience.

Facing the unknown journey ahead, it was always more comforting to have some extra experience to allocate at a moment's notice.

He just didn't know how well they had dug out their storage, but if it was roughly ready, he could issue them some Contribution Value to incentivize them to come and learn from him. Otherwise, it would seem like a loss of face to offer teaching them himself.

...

That familiar figure arrived as expected, and Kuang Xin, who had been waiting, looked a bit excited.

The latter half of last night's fatigue had left him somewhat frustrated, and perhaps only Bai E could help him with this issue.

Of course, it was also possible that he couldn't help.

The issue was, attributes...

Ever since his physical attribute reached 13 points, the efficiency of increasing it through daily activities—even physical labor like carrying heavy loads—was incomparable to when he had first started.

Way too slow.

This seemed to be a challenge faced by everyone in this world; otherwise, the ordinary people on Black Street should all be at the peak, the limits of human capabilities.

As far as he could tell from his gaming experience over the past several days, no one could provide an answer; the only solution was to engage in life-and-death combat—just like those grunts in the military camp.

Many of the big-headed soldiers in the camp were seen as War Gods by the common people on Black Street precisely because they often went on missions and had abundant combat experience.

Of course, it was rumored that the big-headed soldiers in the camp had their unique methods of Body Refinement. Scientific training methods developed by the Scientific Research Institute guided their progress every day, and this rumor was an important reason why Kuang Xin placed his hopes on Bai E.

"My lord..."

Upon Bai E's arrival, all three players' eyes lit up with joy.

Last night's quest had brought everyone substantial gains, with rich rewards and content that far outstripped what they had accessed before.

The feedback on personal strength and the exploration of game content significantly surpassed what other struggling players had achieved, showing they had indeed latched onto an unimaginably strong leg.

Bai E smiled warmly, taking the initiative to walk towards the entrance of the underground cave, "How's the digging going?"

He was quite concerned about this—if the digging wasn't extensive enough, he wouldn't find an opportunity to issue Contribution Value. After all, if he distributed too much now, he would only have to distribute more later on, and he couldn't afford the corresponding value in exchange. There had to be some threshold.

And looking for other reasons to teach would easily diminish his value, which was quite a headache.

"Wow~"

Standing at the entrance and glancing down, he could hardly see the full extent without leaning in. Climbing down, he could estimate that there was already an area of several dozen square meters.

With the addition of the mole-like creatures, the players' progress in building their storage had indeed skyrocketed; their prowess as digging specialists was well-deserved.

Descending into the cave himself, he was surprised to find the layout inside was clear-cut, with support pillars neatly arranged, and even a few small camouflaged compartments dug out, big enough for one person to hide.

Was it... Because they feared that if someone discovered this place, they needed to provide the mole creatures with hiding spots so as not to reveal their connection with Kuang Xin and the others? Quite cautious indeed.

"You've done a great job, your efficiency exceeded my expectations," Bai E nodded with satisfaction.

Thus, the distribution of Contribution Value naturally followed.

[Side Quest—Warehouse Construction (Construction Commission), progress increased.]

[Quest Reward (Phase): Contribution Value (Li Ming) +40, distributed.] X3

Bai E carefully awarded the rewards based on the Contribution Values needed to exchange items.

Aside from the most expensive "Expert Guidance" within the remote weapon guidance in the basic exchange items, which required 50 points, everything else was exchangeable.

"Expert Guidance" could teach two special attributes at the same time, but Bai E estimated that, given the short time around noon and the players' experience reserves, it probably wouldn't be enough to enable them to learn two special attributes directly.

Learning either scattering or arc strike, just one of them, was his greatest expectation for them.

Everything was designed with a purpose!

After all, the exchange items were all from his own stash, and he had to think about the future. If he didn't have enough exchange items to provide for them later, his position as the organization leader might very well be threatened on the spot.

The three players who received the reward notification were ecstatic.

Finally, they had some Contribution Value. Gaining the organization's trust really wasn't easy...

"I want to exchange!" Kuang Xin was the first to exclaim.

"Hmm?" Bai E looked toward him with a smile.

Spend, please spend, throw all your experience at me.

"My lord, I would like to learn a method that can quickly enhance my physical attributes."

"..." Bai E subconsciously wanted to agree, then he realized that such an option wasn't on the exchange list.

Are you playing with me?

"That belongs to high-level knowledge, and your current Contribution Value is not enough. Although such knowledge should be shared unconditionally within the organization, we must establish rules based on contributions and recognitions," Bai E explained.

The information would definitely be given, even specifically for harvesting from them, but the rules set by Bai E himself couldn't be broken.

[There actually is such knowledge!]

Kuang Xin was just excitedly inquiring casually.

Hearing confirmation from the lord himself, he was immediately delighted.

In the game, it's not the difficulty of the content that players fear, but the lack of prospects for improvement. As long as there's a clear path ahead, nothing is a problem.

Just grind it! How hard can it be?

As for what the lord said about Contribution Value, to even feel ashamed about it?

Isn't that the way it's supposed to be? What in the game doesn't require grinding? The fact that the game doesn't have a pay-to-win shop is already hard to understand. If there weren't thresholds to obtain all the good stuff, players might even suspect that this game is here for charity.

"Then, my lord... could you reveal when it will be possible to exchange?" Ever since he avenged his enemy last night, Kuang Xin felt like he had a broader perspective on life and asked whatever came to his mind.

"Hmm..." Bai E thought for a moment and then made a decision, "After you've experienced your first session of instruction."

"Oh~"

Got it! It's about unlocking the next tier in the Faction Shop!

Exchange, exchange!

"My lord, I want to exchange right now! I want to learn!"

Chapter 139: Dedicates to Practice

Bai E looked at him encouragingly, "What would you like to learn?"

"Ranged Weapon Specialization!"

Dai Lian refused to be outdone, "I want to learn that too."

A teachable lad!

Bai E shook the bow, and the compound bow instantly unfolded, "Do you want to learn arc shooting or scatter shooting?"

"Arc shooting!"

"Scatter shooting!"

Two answers blurted out simultaneously.

Bai E looked at them expressionlessly, without saying a word.

It was clearly impossible to teach both at the same time, and he didn't have time to teach them separately during his lunch break.

Realizing their opinions were not unified, the two exchanged glances, with Dai Lian being the first to challenge, "Scatter shooting is more practical!"

Even if he was going for coolness and flair, Dai Lian still preferred practicality.

He already had a pistol for arc shooting, and in sewer environments not suited for gunfire, its combat use would be limited; hunting rats hardly required arc shooting, so learning scatter shooting would clearly speed up his efficiency when clearing out the rat packs at night.

"Arc shooting is cooler!" Arrows flew slower than bullets and were larger in size, making their arcs more exaggerated and more observable, meaning a greater visual impact.

"Scatter shooting is also cool!" Dai Lian appealed to emotions and enlightened with reason.

"It seems so..."

The opinions aligned, "Then let's go with scatter shooting."

"..."

Bai E raised an eyebrow slightly and walked to the side.

When he learned scatter shooting, it had cost him a total of 900 combat experience points, and he wondered how much he could get back from these two players.

Teaching archery was quite simple: all one needed was a target and a bow with arrows.

They had cut plenty of lumber earlier, just erecting two pieces at random could serve as a target.

Drawing the bow and releasing arrows, two arrows shot simultaneously.

The arrowheads shone with cold light, glistening under the sunlight.

[Do you decide to teach your target the combat skill?]

[Confirmed!]

...

["Teaching" concluded, through the feedback of "teaching," you have obtained a total of 660 combat experience points, and 870 general experience points.]

Only 1530 combined?

Bai E put away his bow and arrows, frowning to himself.

He had spent 900 combat experience points, but teaching two people at the same time hadn't resulted in a double return.

Glancing at Dai Lian, who was already beaming with joy, Bai E roughly guessed the reason.

This young man's innate talent was most likely related to shooting, making him learn similar shooting skills much more effectively and using less experience to achieve the same result.

Indeed... innate talents, even when unlocked, continuously exert their influence in various fields.

That's each person's unique gift.

But it was still ok, surely he hadn't lost out; he spent 900 and got back 1530, with free tuition and bonuses to boot, it was a win.

As Dai Lian and Kuang Xin finished learning, Gong Yan approached with a smile on her lips, her eyes on Bai E filled with undisguised admiration, "Sir, I want to learn advanced bandaging techniques... but it seems we don't have the conditions right now?"

Every learning process requires a foundation to build upon, and without the conditions, one obviously can't teach out of thin air, can they?

"Pfft!"

The sound of a knife entering flesh came from not far away, and Kuang Xin declared boldly, "Does this provide the conditions needed?"

"..."

"????"

"!!!!"

All three present turned their gazes towards Kuang Xin, their eyes filled with astonishment.

What a man!

So fierce!

Bai E grumbled in his heart, "Do players these days all take such wild approaches?"

They don't feel anything when they play this game, do they?

"But..."

"Pfft!"

A sharp object broke through the resistance of flesh and skin, plunging into his body amidst an extreme tingling sensation of pleasure.

Taken off guard, Dai Lian looked down at the dagger stuck in his chest, grasped by a hand covered in fresh blood.

His eyes, full of confusion, turned to the owner of the dagger, "It's one thing to stab yourself, but why stab me?"

"?" Kuang Xin replied with an almost obvious question, "For one to teach and another to learn, don't you need two people?"

"..."

That made sense.

As Dai Lian watched his bright red blood spurting out along with the dagger's blood groove, he felt dizzy, his limbs grew cold, and he collapsed backward uncontrollably, "Save, save, save me..."

Bai E, quick on his feet, dashed forward to catch his falling body.

At the same time, he looked towards Gong Yan, who was also a bit dumbfounded, "Hurry."

An opportunity not to be missed.

[Do you decide to teach the target survival skills?]

[Confirm!]

Lying on the ground, Kuang Xin curiously glanced sideways at Dai Lian, whose face was turning somewhat pale, "Dai, are you faint at the sight of blood?"

He didn't seem to have this issue when he was coolly slaying monsters, did he? He fought brutally.

Dai Lian's vision darkened, and upon hearing Kuang Xin's question, he couldn't help but roll his eyes, "I faint at the sight of my own blood!"

Bleeding in the game definitely wouldn't truly affect his gaming status, but the sight of vivid red liquid gushing from his own body made him feel as if his life was draining away with it. His willpower even determined his in-game physical state, leaving the game character's face deathly pale.

Thankfully, the grown-up's hand seemed to have some strange magic power, stopping the feeling of life ebbing away as he explained things.

Wuu wuu~ The grown-up was just awesome.

[You have spent 10 generic experience points learning, converting to 5 "First Aid (Bandaging)" experience points.]

[Current First Aid (Bandaging) experience: 80/300, unlock advanced bandaging knowledge "Level 2 First Aid (Bandaging)" at 300 points.]

"Alright..."

"It's done?"

After finishing the bandaging, Gong Yan felt a sense of loss.

Is that it?

But I still haven't learned everything, have I?

Bai E glanced at her expression, and from the feedback of experience points, he knew she hadn't learned everything.

Therefore, he gravely explained the reason, "There aren't enough cases to practice on, not enough opportunities for you to try; it's not your fault..."

Though knowledge could be taught directly, just like how he learned bandaging from Nurse An Lun, simply teaching knowledge didn't seem to reap experience points. It had to be hands-on teaching to bring sufficient feedback for himself.

Imparting knowledge wasn't the goal, reaping experience points was.

Players had plenty of experience points, he wasn't about to feel sorry for them.

Gong Yan said "Oh" softly, her face showing a bit of disappointment.

She knew the grown-up was busy and that she probably wouldn't be able to finish learning now.

"Clack~"

The flint ignited the fat, and Kuang Xin's left hand blazed fiercely.

"..."

"???"

"!!!"

Seeing Kuang Xin this time even knew to inquire with his gaze, Dai Lian covered his eyes with his left hand and resignedly stretched out his right, gritting his teeth, "Come on!"

Like hands numbed by freezing in the frigid winter suddenly brought to the warmth of a stove, the slightly painful and fiery sensation stimulated Dai Lian's nerves.

With his high perception attributes, his body was very sensitive, so he had a deeper understanding of the game's pain feedback, which was radically different from the real world.

Hiss, hiss, hiss~

Ah, delightful~

Chapter 140: Privilege Takes Effect

["Teaching" concluded. Through the feedback from the "teaching," you have obtained a total of 600 universal experience points.]

Mission accomplished.

Bai E wrapped the bandages around Dai Lian, seated nearby, with a sense of relief. This was a great warrior who had sacrificed himself for the truth, suffering knife wounds, gunshot wounds, blunt trauma, burns... almost exhausted all his life points, hanging by a thread.

Gamers are gamers, their ferocity goes without saying.

"All done," Bai E said as he patted his hands and stood up, "Today's teaching is limited to this, as I don't have much time. In fact, I came today to bid you farewell once again."

"Farewell?"

The word left the three gamers momentarily stunned.

Bai E chuckled softly, "What? As a soldier, I must frequently carry out military missions."

Bai E was only making preparations in advance, not just for now but possibly for many more missions in the future.

He hadn't dismissed the idea of leaving the military camp, but now was certainly not the time.

In close combat, he couldn't even beat an ordinary soldier in the camp, let alone those who had used Gene Optimization Solution or those who possessed the innate ability of Spiritual Energy.

The selection for this secret military operation made Bai E realize his own weaknesses. No matter how rapidly he grew, there was a considerable gap between him and the veterans in the camp, to say nothing of the vast world beyond.

Moreover, the military camp was not a dangerous place for him currently. His superiors took good care of him, his comrades were kind and close, even the Scientific Research Institute wouldn't casually slice him up for samples. He hadn't found a better environment for growth yet, one so good he wouldn't want to leave even if prompted.

"Sir, how many days will you be away this time?"

"Hmm," Bai E's eyes slightly out of focus, as if contemplating the specific arrangements, "It's uncertain. This operation is covert; I shouldn't be revealing it to you, so the specifics are even harder to pin down, and it's uncertain whether I'll go at all. I'm just giving you a heads-up. If I do go, I'll leave tomorrow, and it's very likely that you won't see me at noon."

"Oh~"

All three showed clear reluctance.

Putting aside the affection that had developed over a short association, a day without him was a day without missions.

Bai E's generosity made other NPCs pale in comparison; a few more days away could well leave them at a total loss.

Bai E laughed heartily, "While I'm gone, you could interact more with the other residents here. Everyone's very nice... Of course, you should always be cautious; there are always some bad people who hide their true faces."

It was like the earnest teaching of a wise elder, imparting life experiences with great care on the eve of departure.

This attitude of treating them as one of his own moved the three gamers. The game was too real, and emotions like being moved or recognized came on even stronger.

"Of course, I'd like you to continue with the task I've troubled you with before. As long as those risks are not eliminated, I will always feel uneasy."

[Quest description auto-generating...]

[...]

[Release this quest?]

Release.

The mission remained the same as before; the only difference was that one mission became two, and the rewards for the circuit task continued to accumulate.

The quest description was clearly displayed.

Two mission quotas!

The bond increased! Indeed, consistently developing a relationship with an NPC did have unexpected benefits.

Dai Lian, who was initially worried about a loss in mission rewards, felt a surge of excitement—some had been recouped.

"I have been delayed here long enough; I need to head back. Tomorrow at this time, you might not see me, and I won't be able to bid you farewell. Goodbye... I hope when I return, I'll see a better version of you all."

Bai E waved his hand with ease and turned away with a carefree air.

Every day, they discovered a new aspect of him...

Once sure Bai E had departed, Dai Lian began to ponder while stroking his chin, "The boss seems to know we're not locals, doesn't he?"

The way he had just told them to get to know the locals clearly held an implication; he considered the locals and the three of them as separate groups.

Was he suspicious of their player identities, or did he think they were outsiders, migrants perhaps?

Kuang Xin felt it was only natural, "Makes sense... The boss is so powerful, he must have his own intelligence network. We appeared out of nowhere, and even though it's difficult to investigate identities in this era, at minimum he knows we're definitely not locals."

"Right..." Dai Lian nodded in agreement, what did it matter if suspicions were raised?

In fact, he was just curious to see what kind of actions an NPC would take in such a realistic game if they truly knew they were "players." But as far as he knew, not many players revealed their identities to NPCs, most revealed in this deceit, and even players pretending to be NPCs to deceive other players were not uncommon.

Werewolf Among the Stars...

Never mind whether NPCs could differentiate between players and non-players, even the players themselves might not always recognize whether someone they met was a friend or a foe.

There might be some who divulged their identities for fun, but at least he currently did not know what became of them... perhaps they had already restarted.

"Then... let's continue digging our pit."

Kuang Xin cheerfully showed off his bandages, saying, "Wrapped up like a mummy, I can't move at all."

Dai Lian was exasperated, "Are you out of your mind?"

Kuang Xin's tone was carefree, "Isn't it all for Yanzi? There are no resurrection opportunities in the early stages of this game, no life-saving means to turn to in a critical moment. If we lose now, won't all our hard work go to waste?"

"..." Dai Lian hesitated, realizing the gorilla had a point.

What was more important... was that he had made the decision to cut himself as soon as he'd realized this.

Even in a game, that took an enormous amount of courage.

Was this determination... really a breakthrough after taking down his enemy last night?

Kuang Xin rambled on with his thoughts, "The boss's time is limited, and we can't always wait until later, right? If there aren't conditions, we'll create them. Since it doesn't hurt and we won't die, why not let Yanzi practice on us?"

"Got it, got it," Dai Lian conceded reluctantly, "Smart move this time."

Kuang Xin's expression fell, "Even when you're complimenting me, I feel like you're insulting me."

"No, I'm really complimenting you."

Gong Yan watched the two bicker with a grin and stayed silent.

...

When Bai E returned to the military camp, he immediately bumped into Carlos waiting right at the entrance.

"What have you been up to again?" Carlos asked offhandedly, but he clearly wasn't concerned with the answer and excitedly shared the good news with Bai E, "Passed! We set off early tomorrow morning, the commanding officer responsible for this military operation will give you basic training for the upcoming mission—make sure you don't miss it!"