

## Wow 21

### Chapter 21: Plague Rat

Upon seeing that it was a female player who approached, Kuang Xin instantly changed his slacker attitude, adopting as suave a side-lying pose as possible, his expression carefree.

"Tired, just resting a bit."

The girl sized up Kuang Xin's face, now slender enough that his cheekbones cast shadows, and his panda-like dark circles, her face sporting a mischievous smile.

"Is that so... Guess you don't need any help then?"

Kuang Xin flicked his hair, trying to show off his +10 charm, "Of course not."

"Alright then..."

As she spoke, the girl slowly backed away, giving Kuang Xin a cheerful wave before she was obscured by the bushes, "Goodbye, Mr. Grudge."

She's really leaving?

Watching the yellow-green bushes that trembled for a moment before falling still, Kuang Xin felt like slapping himself twice.

Why the hell was he trying to act cool?

"Oh, right!"

The bushes shook, and out popped a fresh, youthful face.

Barely visible beneath the foliage, the girl grinned at Kuang Xin, "I've got something here I'd hate to waste, so I'll give it to you."

As she spoke, she tossed over a package wrapped in tattered cloth.

The item had heft, bouncing twice on the ground before landing half a meter in front of Kuang Xin.

Struggling to reach out and grab it, he unwrapped it to find a piece of irregularly shaped, earthy-yellow blocky material, covered in wax paper.

"Powdered Lump Group (Level 1 Food) (300 grams): A simple food made from some plant starch, a bit toothsome, best consumed dissolved in water. As for the taste... don't be demanding. Eating it can restore 4 points to your 'Action Power Reserve' and 45% to 90% satiety."

"This..."

Kuang Xin was startled and looked up.

The girl, with an earthy-yellow canvas bag slung across her shoulder and dressed in hip-hop-style wasteland attire, was smiling like an angel as she waved goodbye, "See you later, dummy!"

Kuang Xin wanted to chase after her, but he didn't have the energy, frantically biting into the powdered lump group.

He couldn't bite through it...

It was as hard as a rock.

Recalling the hint in the item description—water? Where could he get water?

He barely had any saliva left.

Kuang Xin could only moisten the edges of the powdered lump group with his damp mouth, incubating it for a while until a small corner softened slightly under the effect of the vapors.

He broke off a piece with his teeth and continued to let it soak in his saliva.

Silently struggling with the rock-like food, Kuang Xin's eyes grew somewhat damp...

It was damn disgusting.

Disgusting in more ways than one.

Regaining some strength, Kuang Xin sprang to his feet, grabbed his axe, and headed straight in the direction where the girl had disappeared.

"You are using the cave ability to track the target's trail..."

Following the faint traces on the ground, Kuang Xin wasn't sure he was going in the right direction until he saw the figure bending over, searching for something on the ground, and he finally relaxed.

"Thanks for the food."

"Don't mention it."

The girl didn't turn her head, seemingly having heard Kuang Xin's approach long ago, and was still earnestly searching among a cluster of plants.

"What are you looking for?"

Kuang Xin leaned in closer, the plants growing in the dark, moist soil before him appearing grey-green and dull.

Untended wild plants stretched out haphazardly.

"Some herbs..."

The girl seemed to be comparing against a panel of illustrations while trying to sift through the plants to find the ones she needed.

As she searched, the girl chattered on, "I've taken on a task, there's a girl who's sick, need to find some herbs to make a decoction. By the way, the thing you just ate is the mother's way of thanking me."

"Is it hard to find? What's the reward like?"

Kuang Xin also pretended to look, "What does it look like? I'll help you."

"No need for your help... You can't see the guide anyway."

The girl shook her head indifferently, "As for the reward, it's worth 25 points in pharmaceuticals experience."

"That's pretty low..."

Kuang Xin's face lit up immediately, "I have some tasks you can take on that offer far better rewards than yours."

The way a seasoned player repays a kindness... is to share gaming resources.

"Hmm?" The girl was quite interested, "What is it? Chopping trees?"

Having just seen several freshly chopped stumps beside the big grump, it was hard not to guess.

"Yeah... The reward is great, you get a tech point and 25 bullets!"

The girl was taken aback, "Tech points? What are those?"

"Something for upgrading technology, I guess..."

Kuang Xin was also unsure, "Sounds like a tough resource to get, saving it can't hurt."

"Indeed..."

The girl nodded thoughtfully, considering; she hadn't heard of such a reward in any of the tasks she had taken, "Is it very hard to complete?"

"It's alright..." Kuang Xin thought back on his overnight endeavor, "Just a bit tiring."

"Where can I take on this task?"

""It was given by a soldier at the military camp."

"Military camp?"

The girl was slightly startled, "I heard that people who wander around there for no reason all died."

Could that be true?

Kuang Xin took a moment to recall; those soldiers did start off a bit aggressive, but they never intended to kill...

Although he was puzzled inside, his face showed confidence, "I have a special access, which I wouldn't tell just anyone."

"I see..."

The girl turned her head to quietly stare at Kuang Xin. Her face was not the height of beauty, but her eyes seemed to capture souls.

"So... I'm not just anyone, right?"

Kuang Xin dared not meet her gaze and turned his face away with a twang, "Well... you did save my life..."

"Did I?"

Seeing Kuang Xin's shy demeanor, the girl's mouth curled up into a mischievous smile, her fingertips absentmindedly twirling a dry grass stem.

"Ah~"

"What's wrong?"

"A thorn..."

The girl covered her fingertip, curling up and blowing on it gently.

"Are you okay?"

"I'm fine... it doesn't hurt."

The voices of the young man and woman echoed through the empty valley, while their silhouettes reflected light that was captured within the limited circular horizon, creating a strange halo effect at the edges.

The grass and stems swayed slightly in their field of vision...

Blood! Genes!

"Hiss!"

A grey shadow suddenly burst out from the tall grass!

Caught up in emotions and his vision in disarray, Kuang Xin instinctively lifted his axe and charged forward.

[Using the heavy weapon to attack hit the target, Heavy Weapon Specialization experience +7, Barbaric Physique (unlocked) unlock progress 11%.]

[Current Heavy Weapon Specialization experience 72/100, can master "Level 1 Heavy Weapon Specialization" at 100 points.]

[Hit the target's vital spot, causing 10 points of critical damage!]

[Plague Rat (Mutant): Health 13/23; Defensive Power 5; Action Power 52%; Attack Power (type: piercing) 3~5; Traits: Tiny Size, Utter Madness...]

[Tiny Size: When facing heavy weapon, ranged weapon, light firearm attack, dodge +15%, damage received from "blunt damage" is halved.]

[Utter Madness: Parasitized by the alien fungus, it has completely lost its sanity, extremely bloodthirsty, and never retreats! Attack power +50%.]

"Ah!"

The girl, belatedly realizing the danger, let out a cry and instinctively reached for her gun.

Kuang Xin stopped her, stepping on the black little thing on the ground that seemed to have lost some of its vision.

With a swing of his hand, the axe came down, and with one blow the deed was done!

[Using the heavy weapon to attack hit the target, Heavy Weapon Specialization experience +1, Barbaric Physique (unlocked) unlock progress 11%.]

[Current Heavy Weapon Specialization experience 73/100...]

[Hit the target's vital spot, causing 13 points of fatal damage!]

[The target has ceased breathing and lost all basic vital signs.]

"What is this?"

"A rat... a mutant one."

Kuang Xin said nonchalantly, holding the axe.

Inside, he roared triumphantly—wasn't Xin amazing?

"You reacted so quickly just now..."

The girl's tone was full of admiration and sincerity.

Kuang Xin waved it off, "Just luck."

Indeed, it was luck; the axe blade hit the target amid his panic.

It wasn't so much his skill as it was the rat running straight into it.

Nevertheless, it felt like his aim was true, and he received a substantial boost in weapon mastery experience.

Awesome!

As he waved, the scratches on the back of Kuang Xin's hand were also displayed clearly in front of the girl.

"Ah~ you're hurt."

"It's nothing..."

"Huff~~~ Does it hurt? Let me bandage it for you..."

Feeling the girl blowing gently on the back of his hand, Kuang Xin's spirit soared, "No... it doesn't hurt."

...

[You have performed a bandaging, accelerating the healing of the wound, bandaging experience +4.]

[Current bandaging experience 12/100, can master "Level 1 Bandaging Technique" at 100 points.]

"It's a bit shoddy, but it'll do for now~"