

Wow 291

Chapter 291 rout!

Facing demons also requires hand-to-hand combat.

Since the individual weapons at hand aren't deadly enough, and Spiritual Energy can easily become a power utilized by the opponent in facing this demon, it might be better to directly apply their most powerful heavy weapons.

A demon? Take this, a magazine of armor-piercing bullets first!

The entire gun, over a meter long, exudes a heavy mass as the enforcer, clutching the large firearm, turns red in the face with exertion.

Spiritual Energy isn't good for direct attacks, but it can be used to amplify one's own strength; even so, it was extremely difficult for him to operate this steel weapon, originally a fearsome instrument of war.

The twin-blade enforcer was the first to spring back, bracing the stand with his shoulder, steadying the gun barrel with both hands to ensure the trajectory wouldn't be destabilized by the recoil during firing.

Kuang Xin, who had been treated with Gong Yan's Spiritually Energy-boosted medical techniques, also rushed over, and with their combined support, the large machine gun finally seemed less unnerving.

Amid the countless eyes on the demon's "head"—some surprised, some fearful, some arrogant—a red storm of bullets rapidly expanded in their direction.

"Da-da-da-da-da-da-da!"

The roar of the machine gun echoed deafeningly in the basement, with the spent casings easily covering the feet of the enforcer who was shooting.

"Da-da-da..." The sound gradually subsided as the ammunition belt reached its end.

The intense heat traveled along the steel structure to the hands of the two men stabilizing the gun; even the fingers covered with Spiritual Energy were scorched crimson red, and holding on steadily was all a matter of willpower.

The tall and thin enforcer was aware of his own sensations, so when he looked again at the "Demon's Spawn" who was also bracing the gun, his eyes showed a hint of respect.

He acted out of accusation, out of belief.

What about him?

The fact that demons were born fearing him was not his intention, but now he could stand firmly alongside him, which proved their own will.

And it looked like... his endurance even surpassed his own?

With his face unchanging against the intense heat, he firmly braced, demonstrating a resolute will that even he found difficult to achieve.

Looking around, the other few in the corner supporting each other appeared miserable, yet they held their weapons and vigilantly watched the demon being baptized by the bullet storm, tensely waiting for the outcome.

No matter what the group of "Demon's Spawn" was like, at least those here were not enemies of humanity.

A fleeting thought regarding how to treat the Demon's Spawn passed through his mind, and the tall and lean enforcer then focused his gaze on the demon which had nearly consumed all the bullets.

"Huala-la-la~"

The embedded bullets, slightly lodged into the flesh, were easily ejected under the pressure of the muscles, trickling to the ground with a distinct metallic clinking sound of impact.

No blood... no wounds. Find adventures on empire

The demon looked down at its body as the numerous eyes spun round and round.

Some relieved, some cunning, some believing it should be so...

Heavy footsteps lightly treaded over bullets-covered ground, with a brutal rumbling noise erupting, "Is this the extent of the attacks you humans can muster?"

The reason it tolerated the human attack was to gauge its current strength.

Prior feedback from those Bounty Hunters endowed it with too much power; the abundance of strength left it uncertain of its own level.

It needed a definitive test to ascertain the level of its current power.

And now it seemed... invincible!

"Why aren't we running?" Kuang Xin, who stood beside the twin-blade enforcer and saw that the opponent was unharmed, looked confused and asked instinctively.

If they couldn't beat it, why not run and wait for the opportune moment to drag the boss out of combat and finish the job?

"We can't go!" the twin-blade enforcer firmly refused.

If it were just a matter of dealing with demon Believers, they would simply run if they couldn't win and come back another time.

But confronting the true form of a demon... such beings represented corruption to the mortal world.

While they remained hidden, the low whispers and gazes from the higher-dimensional spaces could still corrupt the minds of sentient beings; this temptation towards degeneration intensifies when they appear directly in the real world. Every sentient being that looks directly at a Demon God is at a much higher risk of falling into depravity than the average person.

Allowing it to move freely was no different from aiding the demon in spreading its influence!

Every demon that appeared in the world had to be executed on the spot!

"But you can leave!"

The gun-wielding enforcer looked at him with a grim gaze, already showing a readiness to fight to the death.

"Go to the military camp!"

It was the nearest urban unit with combat capabilities from here.

The city was too far away, and the minor high-dimensional spatial fluctuations here couldn't be detected by the enforcers from the Arbitration Place, and notifying them would take too much time.

Only the military camp! That was the best option to resolve the current problem!

[Trigger side mission — Seek Reinforcements.]

[Seek Reinforcements: You're engaged in battle with a legendary high-dimensional demon, but the vast mismatch in combat strength makes you realize your current abilities are insufficient to execute this dangerous extraterrestrial entity on the spot. You need reinforcements!

Mission requirement: Notify the military (faction) and lead reinforcements to arrive successfully before the two enforcers from the Arbitration Place perish 0/1. Mission completion reward: Information — "Demon's Spawn," Prestige — Arbitration Place, 200 universal experience points; Mission failure reward: Prestige with Arbitration Place reduced to "Hostile." (Countdown: ???)]

"This is our Arbitration Place insignia! Make it quick!"

The twin-blade enforcer handed Kuang Xin a small metal badge, casually abandoning the braced machine gun and once again drew his twin blades to face the opponent who had lost patience and charged at them again.

Thus, he gritted his teeth on the final word.

Fatal attraction seemed only to affect Spiritual Energy; once his twin blades lacked the attachment of Spiritual Energy, the twin-blade enforcer could instead display his agile skills.

Amidst flickering forms, there seemed to be a hint of entanglement.

"Let's go!"

Kuang Xin chopped an ax down on the hinge, and the simple mechanical device instantly lost its intended sealing function.

The gate to the ground slid open, and several players, all wounded, filed out.

"Cough cough cough!" Xu Ruoguang couldn't help but cough violently, "Too hard to fight..."

"With our current strength, we are still far from enough." Dai Lian was the one in the best condition, and at this time, his reasoning was still relatively clear, "This kind of scenario is probably just to let us go through the motions and experience what truly high-end power is like in the game."

"But these executors don't seem to be much stronger than us."

"That's why we need to find even stronger allies!"

"No more talking, let's hurry, I hope they can hold on." Gu Lan didn't know where the barracks were located, simply urging the others to lead the way.

While talking, he glanced back at the underground... the orange warm light at this moment couldn't bring the slightest warmth to anyone.

"Boom!"

Right before their eyes, the concrete ceiling was suddenly pushed open.

The cracking process occurred little by little, and the interspersed steel rebar was also squeezed and deformed by the surging force.

And all of this was done by merely a pliable body.

Twin blades fell helplessly from midair, and the fabric-like body continued to smash down towards the ceiling below.

"Bang!"

A heavy, startling sound erupted as the forcefully dropped body now resembled nothing more than a ragged sack.

"Boom!"

Another executor didn't escape either, following in his comrade's footsteps, similarly blasted from below by a massive force.

The two bodies fell to the floor of the first level, twitching slightly, their entire forms boneless and limp, with the outcome of life or death uncertain.

"Gulp." Watching the bodies whose fates were unknown at such close range, Kuang Xin visibly swallowed.

In an instant, Dai Lian grabbed his bow and arrow, his gaze sharp as he looked down, making combat assignments.

"Yanzi, go send a message; the rest of us will stay and delay!"

The mission stated that before the two executors from Arbitration Place died, they must bring someone back to witness it—not only was there a time constraint, they were also supposed to stay and fight alongside them for protection.

Due to their trust in NPCs, they lost the opportunity to cooperate in combat, but staying now might still present a slim chance.

After all, they weren't completely dead yet.

Although it was risky, it was just a game.

Seizing every opportunity in battle and missions, they could enjoy gaming and level up quickly.

"Rumble..."

The demon below began wrecking the place; two bursts had already caused mortal damage to the building's structure, and as the load-bearing walls collapsed, the reinforced concrete floors started to cave under their own weight.

"Take them and go!"

Kuang Xin acted swiftly, picking up the closest body to him.

The five of them retreated in a hurry amid a cloud of dust.

In the vast, irregularly collapsed terrain, a body like that of a Demon God slowly stepped out from the dust, one step at a time.

The fierce form appeared even more terrifying and sinister in the moonlight.

Dai Lian's gaze hardened, and he shot an arrow, striking preemptively, "Fire!"

"Bang!" Simultaneously, a familiar bullet came shooting from behind, its oddly patterned bullet-head glinting with the pale luminescence of Spiritual Energy.

"Splat!"

A slight sound of piercing flesh rose, and the demon's numerous eyes seemed a bit stunned as it looked at the spot where it had been shot.

The damage wasn't high.

But it was injured?

"Huff! Huff!"

Propping herself up with her double-barreled shotgun, Franca leaned against the edge of the building, taking deep breaths. She had nearly expended all her strength sprinting from the barracks.

The demon!

The aura of a demon!

She too had seen the trajectory of the flare in the sky, but she sensed the demon's presence slightly earlier than that.

This was thanks to the special assault abilities against demons that executors from Arbitration Place required in training, and it was also because the barracks were the closest location to the incident.

She was the first one to arrive!

"Huff~ Huff~"

After catching her breath, Franca's clear voice called out from a distance, "Hey! Arbitration Place is handling this case, unrelated people can back off now."

Chapter 292 Sword Dance!

It was someone familiar.

The young lady?

She came as well?

"But my lord..." Dai Lian pointed towards the battered bodies of the two enforcers they had set aside, "Your two colleagues are already injured."

"Colleagues?"

Franca was startled, concentrated her gaze, and only then did she discern the familiar emblem on the two unobtrusive black bundles set aside — a longsword rising with black flames.

Had two colleagues already come here?

And... to be injured to this extent?

Franca's brow furrowed in an instant, alarms ringing in her heart.

It seemed the target was trickier than she had imagined!

Indeed... How could the source of the demon aura that she could feel from such a distance in the military camp be anything but formidable?

"No matter, leave this to me, and fall back."

Like a calf unaware of fear, the young lady was completely unfazed, and judging from the feedback, her first attack had already achieved a certain effect.

Just because her colleagues couldn't handle it didn't mean she couldn't, either. Confidence was indispensable for any strong individual who wished to grow.

Connected to the demonic aura, there were still many active minds underground. Sensing the demon's aura slightly, Franca tapped her foot on the ground.

"There are still a lot of living people down there; if you have time, you can try to rescue them."

Whether or not these ordinary humans would fall into depravity after having witnessed a demon firsthand, they couldn't be neglected because of things that hadn't happened yet.

"Understood!" Dai Lian was the first to respond.

Gong Yan, looking at the young lady from the Arbitration Place, who seemed unreliable due to her youth and aggression, reminded her in a gentle but swift voice, "This demon has special abilities targeting Spiritual Energy; you must be careful."

The two enforcers from just before had clearly been at a disadvantage in this aspect, and Gong Yan had also taken the opportunity of the scuffle to secretly fire a few shots with her small pistol.

The bullets, endowed with Spiritual Energy, gave feedback that allowed her to learn some detailed information about the demon from her panel —

[??? (Demon) (Chaos): ... Traits: Adaptive Armor, Shadow Envelopment, ???]

[Shadow Envelopment: Its craving and greed for Spiritual Energy allows it to absorb all the Spiritual Energy it comes into contact with. Each time it attacks a target with Spiritual Energy or is hit by an attack with Spiritual Energy, it can extract a certain amount of Spiritual Energy for its own use.

The specific extraction efficiency is determined by the confrontation of both parties' "Spiritual Energy Condensation".]

"Be... be careful..."

The two enforcers hadn't completely expired. Hearing that another had sniffed out the demon's aura and come rushing over, their faltering spirits seemed to revive somewhat. The enforcer with the twin blades used a broken, decaying voice to weakly warn, "Be careful, don't externalize your Spiritual Energy."

They too were experienced enforcers. After one or two mishaps, they had already figured out a strategy

Keep your Spiritual Energy completely internal, used only to enhance your own physical attributes, to avoid the demon's special "authority" somewhat. Any slight externalization was an act that would strengthen the opponent.

"I know." Franca looked at the other party, fully focused.

She didn't have a player's panel and couldn't clearly articulate the opponent's every feature in text form. However, the feedback from the attacks still instinctively informed her about the rough abilities of her opponent.

... Even that of the fired bullet.

The Spiritual Energy it bore was an extension of her spirit.

You want to absorb my Spiritual Energy?

You're not worthy!

A faint glow of Spiritual Energy appeared in Franca's eyes —

Spiritual Energy in one segment, spirit crossing.

Longsword drawn, Franca's figure flashed, and she charged at her opponent like a phantom.

The demon took the new challenger seriously too.

She had already demonstrated her attitude and strength with bullets upon her arrival, and this was the first time It had been "injured" since appearing in this world.

Despite some arrogance still present in those countless eyes facing Franca's longsword, most were now filled with caution and gravity.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

The sword light was like lightning.

The blinding globe of white sword light spun, even the pale moonlight reflected off of it seemed desolate and deadly.

Moonwater Sword Dance.

This was Franca's specialty she had learned from a human master of swordsmanship.

She had also adjusted her genes early with Gene Optimization Solution and had never neglected her training in her three-dimensional basic attributes.

As a Spiritual Energy practitioner had to pay attention to even more aspects than an ordinary person. In private moments unseen by others, Franca was unimaginably strict with herself.

If it weren't for her heartfelt and steadfast cultivation, how could her Spiritual Energy ever become so perfectly unified?

Even Spiritual Energy that she externalized still belonged to her!

Sword light scattered like snowflakes falling, each flake shimmering with a lethal chill.

Yue Ying, hidden in the shadows, shifted her gaze away from two figures also concealed in a corner, silently observing everything unfolding on the battlefield before her.

She had arrived earlier, but chose not to reveal herself.

This was a matter occurring in human territory and was not of great concern to her.

Even though demons were enemies of all intelligent beings, in the end, this particular demon was merely an adversary these people were desperately confronting.

In the grand scheme of things, an ordinary demon wouldn't have much of an impact.

She certainly could have intervened with ease, but why should an elf solve a human problem?

Before demonstrating the nobility of her soul, all humans seemed no different from the primitive monkeys in the forests to her.

Except for that one special artificial warrior...

And it was within such exceptional events that those noble souls revealed why they shone so brightly.

Perhaps, if the situation truly spiraled out of control, she might consider taking action to save the day.

But not just yet...

Yue Ying remained quietly hidden, undetected by anyone.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!"

The cold light of the sword swept through the air, and the clashing sound of steel could occasionally be heard.

Among the multitude of fallen souls, one dominant will showed signs of retreat in the battle.

'Maybe we should withdraw?'

Wallis's soul was beginning to feel a hint of losing control over the current situation.

The growing commotion was drawing more and more attention.

Even though the power he had gained from those bounty hunters was considerable, and the demonic abilities from another realm were indeed formidable, drawing too much attention too soon would be fatal if it attracted the truly powerful warriors among humans.

'What are you afraid of?' the demonic whisper echoed in Wallis's soul, 'The more attention we attract, the stronger our power becomes. What is there to fear?'

'But have we not already exceeded our current limits?'

'Limits? Why do you think we have limits?'

Human greed knows no bounds!

A surge of willpower fueled a sudden intense burst of Spiritual Energy.

"Boom!"

The wild aura exploded in an instant, and the fleshly fist struck the longsword dead center.

Even though the longsword, enhanced by Spiritual Energy, was as solid as an iron barrier, the transmitted force was still like a battering ram, sending Franca flying.

The sudden outburst of Spiritual Energy stalled Franca's movements, giving her adversary the opportunity.

"Hiss!" Franca, sword in hand, skidded backwards for several yards before dissipating the force, every sensation of acid tearing at her arms and chest eroding her senses.

The body is always the foundation that supports will; the decline of physical strength and Spiritual Energy affects her resolute will to some extent.

This demon... is terrifyingly powerful.

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Its strength is unimaginable, and its defensive power makes even her effective attacks limited.

This was her first direct confrontation with a demon in its true form.

Indeed, it was the kind of monstrous creature of legends! The stories of a demon of the source being defeated single-handedly by a mere soldier seemed like fairy tales in comparison.

Franca, catching her breath, had undiminished fighting spirit in her eyes.

No matter what, she was the last line of defense here.

She must not allow the demon's range of activity to widen, that was a rule to adhere to when dealing with demons!

And those people of unknown origin were taking bodies, devoid of souls, one by one from the collapsed ruins; there was still hope of saving these people.

If she didn't quickly eliminate this demon, the souls it had held captive would likely fall into corruption even if they eventually returned to their bodies.

Any human without protection who was exposed for an extended period to higher-dimensional space or faced a demon, the concentrated embodiment of such space's power, would have those unimaginable forces permeate their very marrow and soul.

In every dream, every moment of drifting consciousness, every lapse of focus, the contamination experienced would spread from the depths of the mind like a living darkness, engulfing the entire spirit.

And each of these spirits would become a conduit for demons to invade reality.

The longer they stayed hidden, the greater the danger.

"Hum~"

The longsword resonated.

The edge became even sharper with the infusion of Spiritual Energy.

Mastery of advanced skills was not exclusive to Bai E; all natives had the potential to learn or even create such legacies.

Skill—Sword Dance!

Chapter 293 Bow Shadow on the Long Street

"She's so amazing..."

Players with their souls torn from their bodies were occasionally pulled out from the ruins with difficulty, and even they would occasionally turn to watch the duel that was unfolding.

Gu Lan, who was also a swordsman, watched the unfamiliar NPC using sword techniques and felt such envy that his eyes turned red.

Dai Lian couldn't help but sigh softly, "I didn't expect her to be so powerful."

In their previous two encounters, this young mistress from the Arbitration Place seemed loud and reckless in her actions, giving off an unreliable impression.

It was only at moments like these that one could truly witness the true strength of the young mistress.

Facing an opponent against whom her two colleagues could hardly put up a fight, she was still able to attack vigorously, which was unbelievable.

But that was all.

The drastic output of Spiritual Energy caused Franca's Spiritual Energy to be significantly weakened. Once accustomed to the presence of Spiritual Energy, the fluctuation of its intensity began to correlate with the firmness of one's will.

The lack of satisfactory results in battle and the rapid decline of her Spiritual Energy started to shake Franca's confidence.

No breach in defense!

Completely unbreachable!

The attack was effective.

The fine sword breeze left countless tiny cuts on the body that seemed to lack skin... but that was all.

Even at the moment she stopped her attack, those tiny wounds began to heal themselves as if breathing with life.

In the blink of an eye, the wounds disappeared, and the body was as good as new.

Not fast enough!

The damage inflicted exceeded a certain duration, so much so that the enemy's defense "reacted"?

Either be faster, or deal higher damage to pierce through!

From the feedback received during the attack, Franca roughly guessed the strategy needed to defeat the enemy.

She figured her two colleagues had also thought of this battle tactic, but simply... their abilities were limited.

In a pure contest of attack and defense, this demon specialized in these and also had special countermeasures against Spiritual Energy, making it an almost unsolvable predicament at the moment.

"Hahahaha!" The demon, seemingly just snapped out of a trance, stood in place and burst into loud laughter. The human voice intertwined with the demonic one, creating an eerie chorus of laughter from countless directions.

"Is this all you've got! Is this all you've got!"

Wallis' restless soul had finally succumbed completely to that arrogant ambition at this moment.

"This is the level of an Arbiter's Executor from the Arbitration Place!"

'Too pathetic! Too pathetic!'

Come on! Come on!

Let us turn this world upside down, where everything will serve me!

"Come at me!"

Wallis' mechanical right eye's phantom and the demon's fierce will both roared madly in the direction of Franca.

"Come at me!"

Consequently, even the innocent souls imprisoned within began to feel a sense of "honored involvement."

Under the expansion of the insane will, the demon's stature seemed to grow a few inches taller under the moonlight.

Franca's brow furrowed slightly, ignoring her opponent's insane growth.

'It seems that the civilians' decision wasn't wrong...'

She witnessed that, even after her command, they still sent someone running in the direction from which she had come... which was the direction of the military camp.

In the face of such a powerful demon, more reinforcements were certainly needed.

So before that, it was up to herself to buy them time!

Franca stretched out her hand, and the space in front of her became hazy. A pair of gauntlets materialized swiftly.

Spiritual Energy creation—Big Fighting Gauntlets.

Using a sword was her inherent skill, adept at attack but weak in defense.

Wanting to change tactics and engage in prolonged combat, she naturally needed a strategy more suited to defense and evasion.

As the most talented offspring in her family, she was armed to the teeth by her clan.

She might not use her equipment in normal times, but when necessary, no one could bully her. Enjoy more content from empire

Franca, with the gauntlets on, moved nimbly, and the skills of a master fighter from the gauntlets covered her instincts.

Ten minutes!

In ten minutes, no one could catch her!

She could only hope that the young girl who went to report moved quickly.

Withdrawing her gaze from the dark path behind her, Franca's face bore a warlike expression as she looked towards the demon's true form approaching with large strides.

This body, belonging to the Demon God, was grand and imposing, shaking the ground with every step, and the air grew dim, "Join me! Join me! You, too, will become my finest daughter!"

"Tui!" Franca laughed boldly, "Do you even qualify?"

One minute...

Two minutes...

Nine minutes...

Ten... minutes.

Her bright eyes grew dull, sweat drenched her tousled hair, and even her usually delicate makeup was a mess at this point.

Franca was panting heavily; even though the skill came from an external source, the physical strength needed for her movements was still her own.

She expended far more Spiritual Energy than usual to counter the opponent's bizarre attraction to Spiritual Energy, and the immense drain both physically and mentally had reduced her to an extremely poor state.

And most importantly... the time for the gauntlets was up.

External aid always has its limitations; it can only be used for burst moments, not for sustained combat.

Yue Ying's eyes flitted upwards, scanning the surroundings.

No reinforcements.

The young girl fought alone.

"It seems she's not a bad seed either."

Yue Ying murmured softly, hesitating whether to intervene.

Suddenly, her gaze shifted towards the path they had come from.

A dark figure had appeared at the end of the long street from nowhere.

Extremely distant.

And obstructed by the winding Black Street architecture.

Hidden in the dark, only Yue Ying with her exceptional vision could see through the night's darkness and notice the newcomer who had just entered her range of observation.

"Another person coming?"

Was it the reinforcements found by that human girl?

But why only one?

Yue Ying's thoughts flashed by, only to see the figure standing still in the original spot, drawing the bowstring...

...

Five minutes earlier.

"Gong Yan?"

As Bai E hurriedly sprinted, he saw the figure rushing toward him slow down, and he asked in confusion after recognizing the person.

Was she there too? Does that mean the players have returned?

With Gilder?

Upon seeing Bai E, a joyful smile blossomed on Gong Yan's face, "My lord!"

My lord actually came too!

As long as my lord is here, nothing is a problem.

Although she hadn't seen my lord take action many times, this game NPC seemed to exude endless reliability and mystique.

It felt like as long as he was around, no hardship or danger could threaten anyone.

This substantial feeling of security was something she had never experienced before from anyone... even in reality.

Bai E controlled his breathing to prevent his voice from trembling after the intense run, and calmly asked, "What happened over there?"

"Demons," Gong Yan replied succinctly and quickly presented the facts, "We encountered a demon. The Arbitration Place's enforcer is currently helping us buy time... Oh, and that lady from the Arbitration Place we met before, she's here too."

Because of the ratfolk issue, if it got exposed, who knows what might happen between my lord and the Arbitration Place. Gong Yan, remembering this, did not panic due to the sudden event and cautiously reminded.

Bai E nodded.

She's in the army too, yet she reacted faster than myself?

"What are you planning to do?"

"An enforcer told us to go seek help from the barracks."

Bai E's brows furrowed slightly.

That serious?

An Arbitration Place enforcer who specializes in hunting demons can't resolve the situation and needs urgent reinforcement?

Just how strong is the opponent...

The weight in Bai E's heart grew heavy. He thought of letting Gong Yan continue seeking help while he would go first to check the situation, "Then you..."

Before he could speak out, he heard Gong Yan wiping the sweat from her forehead, murmuring to herself as if relieved...

"Now that my lord is here, they should be out of danger..."

"..."

That much trust in me, huh...

It seems that my previous performance in front of them was quite satisfactory?

But what should I do to make you continue to look for reinforcements?

"..."

After a slight silence, Bai E quickly stepped forward, asking as he walked, "What was the situation when you left?"

Gong Yan, following behind, jogged as she replied, "Two enforcers are seriously injured, the four of them are basically no match and can't help, and it's only that lady who is buying us time alone. Oh right... that demon has imprisoned many souls of the Black Street residents inside itself.

There are many bodies of residents who have lost their souls buried beneath the ruins, and Kuang Xin and the others are rescuing them."

"What's distinct about the opponent?"

"High defensive power, vast strength, quick in straight-line acceleration, and... it has a special ability to absorb Spiritual Energy."

A bruiser immune to magic?

Bai E rapidly sketched an image of the opponent in his mind.

Gong Yan provided the insights they gained through their attacks, carefully offering information to my lord, "Based on the feedback from those two enforcers and our attacks, we believe that we need a high-energy, instantaneous impact to break through the opponent's defensive power. But as for the actual method to injure the opponent... we still aren't clear."

So far, all their attacks couldn't break the defense, and no one knew whether breaking it would indeed allow them to kill the demon.

"Got it."

Clearly, the players didn't know of Gilder's existence. There was no mention of Gilder or the ratfolk from the beginning to the end of the conversation.

As Bai E briskly walked, his gaze swept through the cluttered corners of the buildings, for the signaling Gilder must be nearby.

"My lord~ My lord~"

Suddenly, a call came out from a concealed corner.

The ratfolk's stealth abilities made them truly hard to notice unless they made a sound themselves.

'Someone else?' Gong Yan, following behind Bai E, was slightly stunned.

Could it be that my lord had already arranged for people in advance?

Indeed! I hadn't even reached the barracks, yet my lord had already rushed over.

My lord's network of informants indeed seemed to be everywhere...

Bai E quickly walked towards the corner, "The clothes, give them to me."

In this situation, taking action was essential.

Only, that young lady was also there, and currently, I was even training under her command, so a face-to-face encounter might result in some unpredictable circumstances. It was necessary to disguise myself appropriately.

Moreover, there was no need for me to show my face in this battle.

According to Gong Yan, this opponent had high offense, high defense, and magic resistance; lethal force was the only way to achieve a breakthrough.

Currently, archery was my strongest offensive method; there was no need to get up close and personal for a brawl.

It would be both dangerous and ungraceful.

With players present, nothing could be done that would risk lives and lose face.

Luckily, I now possess a full ten points of Spiritual Energy, plus a full reserve of action power and the ability to restore that reserve once with No. 3 supplement. I have explosive power in spades.

Not to mention, I still have one "Lucky Strike" opportunity that should be enough to break through the defense.

After changing clothes, Bai E stepped lightly to the middle of the long street, standing tall and straight, facing towards that darkness...

He drew his longbow...

Chapter 294 I have an arrow

Gilder and the Ratfolk were not very close to the site of the battle, but certainly not too far away either.

The sound of the wind carried the noise of the battle from afar, relatively clear in the quiet night.

Bai E listened quietly with his ear tilted.

Sparks from damaged circuits ignited a flame...

Heavy footsteps trembled upon the earth...

Rolling irregular rocks slid down from the top of the ruins...

Under the collision of flesh, bones imagined dislocating and cracking...

The silhouette of time and space seemed like a silent movie happening before his eyes, suddenly shrinking from a far-off street directly into Bai E's gaze.

Now was the moment!

Bai E suddenly let go, and the arrow shot forth like a fish darting through water.

With Spiritual Energy enhancing his strength, his physical abilities exhibited an additional 12% effectiveness, while the extra stamina consumed by Overlimit Drive manifested as 150% effectiveness integrated into this single arrow.

What was more important, was the "Instant Kill Hundred Heads", a skill he had strenuously trained to perfect.

The complete combustion of 10 points of Spiritual Energy allowed this arrow to display unprecedented power.

Previously, due either to the limitations of Spiritual Energy or the reserves of mobility, Bai E had never displayed the maximum output of his strength; only after a significant increase in Spiritual Energy was he able to unleash his strongest attack during this night's long-distance sniping.

The arrow crossed hundreds of meters instantaneously, with countless shadowy afterimages that resembled the arrow's soul trailing its tail feathers, following the same trajectory. The lightning-fast shot was even too swift for Yue Ying's eyes to track its motion, barely discerning a complex, variable S-curve as the arrow flew.

"Pfft!"

The arrow pierced through the air and penetrated its target.

An almost unbreakable Demon God body now bore a hole clear through from front to back.

Through it, one could see the firelight that had been hidden behind this Demon God's form...

Franca, who had just been sent flying by a punch, was gritting her teeth, preparing for the next onslaught, when she noticed the gigantic figure standing motionless in its spot, inert.

The hole in its chest was conspicuously obvious.

It... was injured?

Where did the attack come from?

What had wounded it?

Completely focused on the battle, Franca had almost no awareness; only the four players, who were moving corpses upward from underground, shared a brightened expression, all turning to look behind Franca.

System notification, was the mission accomplished?

Had reinforcements arrived from the camp?

Was Yanzi so fast?

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Yet... why was there no sound?

Shouldn't an army camp's deployment come with tanks and artillery pouring out?

Why was the darkness so silent?

Gu Lan was somewhat puzzled, catching a glimpse of a confident look on his teammates' faces from the corner of his eye.

Kuang Xin murmured softly, "It's the boss!"

"It's the boss!"

The hole in the Demon's body was undoubtedly the masterpiece of an arrow.

An arrow, the army camp...

One arrow to vanquish a demon!

Who else could it be but our own boss?

"Our boss is here," Dai Lian said with a long sigh, his whole body relaxing.

The body he was carrying suddenly dropped to the ground, and Dai Lian himself sat down abruptly, as if all his strength had been drained from him at that moment.

Never adept at physical activities, Dai Lian had nearly used up all his strength, just like the brutish Kuang Xin hauling one soulless body after another out of the rubble pile, and now that they had someone to rely on, his vitality seemed to ebb away like the tide.

"The boss?" Gu Lan's eyes were full of confusion.

Xu Ruoguang also cast a curious glance.

"Yeah... the boss," Dai Lian said with a sigh.

With the boss's arrival, they had someone to rely on.

Although reluctant to admit it, in the presence of their own boss, Dai Lian knew there was nothing for them to worry about.

This game's NPC character always seemed to give people endless confidence and strength.

"It's our leader, you guys should be able to see him soon," Kuang Xin said, taking a seat, bursting into laughter at the distant demon, "Wait to die, you stupid fool!"

"Impossible!"

"Impossible!"

The demon looked down, its countless eyes trying to make sense of the hole in its chest.

How could it possibly be wounded?

"How could I be injured?"

"Impossible!"

"Impossible!"

"Come on, hit me again!"

Among the numerous pupils, one pair seemed particularly ferocious.

A strand of conflicted thought within Wallis's soul resonated again within the demon's amalgamation.

'Shouldn't we be leaving?'

'We can't defeat him! We can't defeat him!'

'If he can injure us, he can kill us, let's leave! Let's leave!'

[Leave? Why should we leave?]

[What a great opportunity this is! If we absorb him, our power will grow even stronger!]

[Have you forgotten? We... have no limits!]

[And don't you forget, we... still have a hostage!]

Driven by the demon, faces emerged from the surface of its body, those twisted visages protruding and emitting indescribable cries of agony and pleading for help—

"Save us! Save us!"

"I feel like I'm dissolving... I feel like I'm fusing with him... I don't want to! I don't want to become a monster!"

"Kill me! Kill me! Just end my misery!"

"Such warmth... Such a warm embrace... like a mother's arms... like the amniotic fluid of a womb..."

...

The chaos of those voices tangled together, the sinister spectacle enough to plunge any onlooker into severe spiritual turmoil.

Franca instantly turned around, looking back into the darkness.

The darkness was silent.

No one knew where the arrow had come from.

Nor did anyone know where the attacker was.

The overlapping shadows of the buildings obstructed her view, those pitch-black structures sat in the darkness, watching without a sound...

"If it's possible... I hope you can save them! They're innocent!" The lady in distress placed all her hopes on this new mysterious expert.

She hoped he could save everything, although it seemed difficult.

The demon might get killed, but before its death, it had the power to take all the souls inside it to its grave as well.

"Come out!"

The demon's voice was loud and brazen, filled with a final hysteria.

"Come out!"

Countless voices followed the thunderous sound, resonating in frenzy and cowardice.

There was silence in the darkness.

The mysterious master who had come from nowhere seemed to be caught in a moral dilemma.

Yue Ying's gaze stretched far into the standing silence of the shadow, curiosity evident in her eyes.

This was also the ethical choice she would face if she took action.

She was confident she could easily kill the demon, but she wasn't certain that she could save the souls imprisoned by it at the same time.

Saving people would be akin to killing people.

This potential conflict was the core reason she was reluctant to act.

On their human territory, as an elven character, making such a controversial move was always inopportune.

...

"..." Bai E did not respond.

With a single arrow, the information on the panel now displayed the demon's basic data—

[??? (Demon) (Chaos): Health 141/200; Defense Power 99; Activity 100%; Traits: Adaptive Armor, Shadow Wrapping, Soul Black Hole...]

Its defense power was high, and with cheat-like abilities such as Adaptive Armor, no wonder the attacks of these people couldn't break through.

Any attack that wasn't completely beyond the opponent's defense power couldn't deal effective damage.

And you should know, aside from personal ability, the most powerful weapon Bai E could access... the explosive power of a combat blade machine gun also peaked at only 15 points.

Faced with 99 defense power, it would hardly leave a mark.

However, facing the maximal burst that could instantly kill a hundred, even this level of defense was as feeble as paper.

A nine-times attack was far more devastating than three triple-strength attacks or nine single-strength attacks.

Besides, burning Spiritual Energy clung to the arrow, and even if used in a special way, the power of Spiritual Energy remained an extension of one's will, providing Bai E with more feedback.

For instance—

Greed.

The essence of this demon was greed.

At the moment the arrow pierced its body, the core of the demon was perceived by the Spiritual Energy.

Greed?

What is greed?

Bai E's eyes slightly drooped, his inherent understanding of the maxims of Spiritual Energy allowed him to comprehend all the unspeakable strange sensations he felt at that moment.

He also felt what was... "greed"!

Greed is betrayal.

Betrayal of one's judgment, betrayal of one's will.

Knowing it's not for you, yet still wanting to take it.

Knowing it's beyond your own limit, yet still pursuing it.

Knowing the situation is going out of control, yet still harboring unjust dreams.

The Lord of Fear trapped by fear.

The Demon of Greed done in by greed.

The demon controlled the core emotions, but was also trapped by those same emotions.

Bai E pinched the arrow, whispering to it softly.

The wind would not scatter his will, Spiritual Energy would connect their souls.

The expression of the maxims of Spiritual Energy didn't have to be words.

This word, this language, placed upon the arrow!

I have one arrow, would you care to listen?

"Whoosh!"

...

The arrow traced a curve.

Yue Ying's eyes narrowed slightly.

Arc shot!

Such a familiar arrow, such a familiar feeling...

She too had taught a similar bow-wielding "apprentice" among humans, but...

Their strengths couldn't possibly be related.

Being too far away, Yue Ying could only vaguely see the figure and not the appearance concealed under the clothes.

The drab brown cloak the person was wearing was full of the scent of human poverty, not at all like the neat and trim uniforms worn by elite soldiers coming from that military camp.

Yes! They should not be the same person.

This arrow...

From it, Yue Ying sensed a hint of "death"—

Meaning if she didn't dodge, shield, or protect herself, even she might suffer no small injury from being hit by this arrow.

Furthermore, with the speed of the arrow and the fact that it was launched from the shadows, it would be hard to preemptively protect against it unless one was warned by a keen sense of killing intent.

Yue Ying didn't see the result of the arrow's impact.

Considering the effects of the previous arrow, this mysterious master's attack could easily break through defenses.

But in the end, could he only choose to kill?

Chapter 295 Graceful Release

From hundreds of meters away, the arrow shot through the darkness was like wind, like lightning, instantly piercing the demon's body.

The tearing force that accompanied it easily ripped apart what seemed to be indestructible flesh, leaving a gaping, bloody hole for all to see.

The monstrous body, as large as a small hill, suddenly stiffened, with the twisted faces on it instantaneously freezing.

The scene fell silent.

The mysterious savior in the dark had used just two arrows to subdue the demon that had come from a high-dimensional space.

What they had been powerless to defend against, the master in the shadows took down as easily as if it were mere paper.

An indescribable terror rose in Franca's heart, and she instinctively turned her head to look back, but darkness obstructed her view...

There weren't many in the city with such strength, but Franca, who was proficient with the bow, really had no idea who it could be.

A flash of lightning crossed her mind, and the mysterious master who had rescued the Rat People in the sewers leaped to the forefront of her thoughts.

But it seemed... the pressure from that master then wasn't as intimidating as the one from this mysterious master now.

To subdue the demon that had left them at a loss with just two arrows was simply inconceivable.

But... had they been killed?

Franca couldn't help but worry subconsciously about the fate of the innocent civilians.

Under everyone's silent watch, the demon's body trembled slightly and started to move again.

"Come out!"

"You come out!"

"I want to see you!"

"I want to see you!"

Different voices from the same body echoed one after the other.

One like the desperate cries of a drowning person before their demise, the other like the final killing intent of a Demon God.

A demon?

A demon?

Have I become a demon?

The flesh that was torn away by the arrow also took with it Wallis's wild and ambitious desire, which hadn't been all that great to begin with.

His soul "awoke" amid the turbulence, and was terrified by what had already happened and what was happening now.

I have become the embodiment of a demon?

Has my body been controlled by the endless desire of a demon?

Yes! It's all the demon's fault!

...I wanted to be greedy, but I didn't want to be this greedy.

I wanted to grow and expand, but I never wanted to be an enemy to all of humanity.

I did want power, but I didn't want to achieve it in the form of a demon...

So, you said you would give me salvation, give me a final resting place.

Then come out!

Let me see you with my own eyes!

'I want to see you.'

'...And then devour you!'

The silent darkness remained wordless, as Franca stared intently into the shadows.

Would he come out?

The sound of clear footsteps echoed from the end of the long street.

"Tap~ Tap~"

The sound of metal shoe soles tapping on stone slabs as a figure slowly emerged from the darkness.

The fervent flames surrounding him fell on his body but could not penetrate his earth-brown disguise, nor could they reveal his face hidden in the shadows.

Franca instinctively stepped aside to make way, while the somewhat lucid Arbitration Place officers and players scattered quietly around, watching as the flames crackled fiercely.

The night was welcoming its king...

Standing about ten meters from the demon, Bai E stopped, lifting his head slightly to look at the monster whose appearance was beyond words.

A demon?

This is a demon?

Of course, it was a demon, as the loot subtitle clearly displayed its origin—

[Wallis/??? (Human/???) (Chaotic/Chaos) (Normal/Elite)—Kill with "Lucky Strike" for a guaranteed drop: (Bio-Component (Inferior) x 200, Battle Experience 8000 points); possible (Skills: Soul Black Hole, Spiritual Energy (Greed): 50)]

"I have arrived," he said softly.

The steady voice echoed quietly over the long street, instilling boundless confidence.

Compared to the demon's mountainous body, Bai E's figure appeared frail and thin in the flickering light from the flames in the distance.

Standing before the demon, he seemed like a solitary boat before a tsunami, ready to capsize at any moment.

Yet, the reality was quite the contrary.

The demon's numerous eyes swept over the pitch-black bow in his hand, filled with fear.

...

That voice is so familiar!

The moment Franca heard it, the sealed memories surged from the depths of her consciousness.

Where had she heard it before?

Darkness... dampness... rats... the underground sewers...

The night he rescued the Rat People!

It really was him!

Back then, did he simply spare their lives?

No wonder... no wonder he spoke with such arrogance then.

Nothing... nothing could challenge him!

Clutching her injured arm, Franca's eyes burned with passion as she looked at his silhouette.

"Exorcism Essential Oil," Franca suddenly saw him stretching out his palm toward her from afar.

"..."

Exorcism Essential Oil?

Oh right, normal powers may hurt a demon that has come to our world, but to thoroughly annihilate a demon, the help of Exorcism Essential Oil is essential. This stuff is basically only stably produced by the Arbitration Place; outsiders almost have no way to obtain it.

Just now I thought this mysterious expert would directly make a deadly move, but he even forgot the constraints of the essential oil.

"Oh oh~" Franca hurriedly took out half a bottle of essential oil from her bosom. On her way here, she'd already used quite a bit to enchant her weapons and only half was left.

Bai E caught the flying glass bottle steadily, casually tossed a bullet into it, and the surface of the bullet that was soaked in essential oil immediately became covered with a faint spiritual glow.

Bai E's movements were precise and executed with utmost seriousness.

The demon, who had made up its mind to kill Bai E as soon as he appeared, found it difficult to control the current body.

A summoning demon always faces interference from the original owner's will; under normal circumstances, almost all believers who summon their "master" submit to the "master's" will in every way.

However, at this moment...

The will of the demon and the human were endlessly struggling for control over the same body.

The huge figure, as large as a hill, trembled slightly, and the regretful yet cowardly voice of Wallis rang out, "You said you could save me!"

Faced with the power that could truly "kill" him, he was afraid.

Fear overtook greed; facing a power he could not contest, Wallis recoiled.

However, he could sense that a part of his soul had already "permanently" connected with the core of the demon.

The demon he summoned wasn't one of those high-ranking original demons; these demons can be truly killed.

After their death, they cannot return to the high-dimensional space to wait for a chance of revival. Perhaps "greed" will give birth to new demons, but it won't be the one at hand.

There may be thousands upon thousands of demons with "greed" at their core; the one he summoned was not particularly special among them.

But what of it?

When It's spirit returns to oblivion, where will he go?

Having been swept by the core of "greed," even if this demon perishes, a part of his soul will dissipate along with the "emotions" and return to the high-dimensional space, becoming a chaotic orb there that lacks any capacity for action, has only perception, and endures endless suffering and torment.

The moment he was linked to the "core" of the demon, Wallis thoroughly understood this knowledge related to the demon.

He refused to be dragged down by the fate of the demon, much less become a chaotic orb in that strange so-called high-dimensional space, devoid of any capacity for action or self-awareness, where only perception exists to endure eternal torment!

Bai E looked steadily at the other party, his eyes, the only part of him visible, devoid of any emotion.

"I never said I would save you, but only to give you a release."

People must be responsible for their own actions.

Having chosen greed, having complied with his inner desires, he must also bear the dreadful consequences of when desires overflow.

"I will send you off... to die as a human. That is all."

The spirit dissolves, free from eternal torment.

'Do you still wish to turn back?'

'You can't turn back now!'

'Devour him! After we eat him, we can become stronger!'

The voice of the demon, trapped within, roared in madness.

Fear firmly suppressed greed, and human rationality regained control over this body resembling a Demon God.

Countless eyes were fixed on those merciless pupils, as the body of the demon slowly kneeled, completely submissive...

With difficulty, Wallis controlled the body, his abject and cowardly voice trembling to its limit, "Please, kill me."

"Click!"

The bullet, soaked in Exorcism Essential Oil, was chambered as Bai E stepped forward gently.

"Goodbye..." he said.

[Activated "Lucky Strike".]

"I don't want to die... I don't want to die..." Wallis's voice came out as a soft murmur from beneath the demon's body.

"Bang!"

The gunshot rang out, and smoke drifted away.

[Loot acquired: Bio-Component (Inferior) *200, Combat Experience 8000 points, Skills: Soul Black Hole, Spiritual Energy (Greed): 50].]

[Would you like to absorb the core "Greed" of Spiritual Energy to make it your own power?]

[Warning: The current Spiritual Energy to be absorbed is far greater than the character's own level of Spiritual Energy, absorption will alter the character's Spiritual Energy effects. The new attribute "Greed" will bring a brand new special impact to your Spiritual Energy; the direction of influence is unknown.]

[Skill—Soul Black Hole: Your will is strong enough to bear all ethereal souls, all empty Spiritual Bodies will have a place in your 'domain' temporarily. From now on, you can briefly store or slowly absorb rootless souls. If you wish, you can even dissipate their self-will...]

Soul Black Hole.

That was one of the abilities concerning demon powers he had obtained from the feedback of the attack just now.

For them, it might be a basic instinct, but for the current Bai E, it was the core ability for Wallis's redemption and for digesting foreign attributes of Spiritual Energy.

The antidote always coexists with the poison.

Bai E extended his hand, his palm like a black hole.

Those invisible dissipating strands of "emotional core", carrying its newly captured prey, about to return to that strange, unpredictable higher-dimensional space, were suddenly gathered together by a vast suction force.

The remnant souls that had not yet dissipated lost their complex reactions to changes in the outside world, retaining only a hint of instinctual spiritual awareness.

'The sun... the warm sun...'

The voice fell silent...

Free from the constraints of imprisonment, the body not far away called out as countless points of light burst from the fallen demon's body on the ground, tracing curves through the air and ultimately returning to itself.

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Many of the lights even burrowed into the fallen debris... hence a moan arose from below.

There were still people underground.

Those whose consciousness had returned to their bodies were gradually waking up.

They couldn't fully grasp what had happened during the soul plunder, but there were bits of chaotic, distorted memories.

Although they woke up dazed, some were hesitant to look at the figures standing on the scene.

The first two enforcers to arrive got up quietly with the support of Gong Yan and Dai Lian, and while Bai E was carrying the whole scene, Gong Yan wasn't idle.

As the team's medic, she was very clear about her role, and even though simple treatment couldn't restore the enforcers to their peak, it allowed them to move a little.

Both of them scanned the waking figures with a heavy look in their eyes.

Too much time had passed...

Although saved, the risk of corruption was high for these people in the future.

So...

"What should be done with them?"

Franca's gaze left the silent figure and turned to the two seniors, asking proactively, "Should we clean up?"

Chapter 296 Franca's Proposal

The words were ice-cold, yet this was the most rational choice.

Rather than allow these people to turn into followers of chaos due to the corruption of high-dimensional space in the future, it was better to clean up now and remove future troubles.

The two executioners with more seniority furrowed their brows tightly, their eyes sweeping over the civilians who were gradually regaining their consciousness, with a hint of reluctance in their gaze.

Although the likelihood of corruption was high in the future, at this moment, they clearly had not truly reached that point.

To cleanse them now...

Some civilians with sharp ears who were nearby heard Franca's words and the ones who had just stood up immediately knelt down again, pleading for mercy repeatedly.

"No... please!"

"Don't kill us! My lord!"

"It was Wallis who threatened us! We're not on the same path as him!"

The voices were in disarray; every person was arguing from their perspective, trying to secure a chance to live.

Bai E stood to the side, silent.

Even considering slipping away.

The demon was dealt with, the benefits reaped; the rest... probably had nothing to do with him, right?

But his curiosity about the emergence and cause of the demon, as well as how the Arbitration Place conducted its business, made Bai E want to stay and see how they would handle the situation.

The multitude of pleading voices echoed in his ears, representing the tiny will of each ordinary person who had suffered, striving to live.

The two slightly more experienced executioners, even after having executed countless demon Believers, still softened and hesitated whenever they faced moments of mortal pleading.

To kill, was for the greater good.

Otherwise, in such a lawless settlement outside of the city, if these corrupted humans secretly organized together, who knows if they might cause a bigger mess than today, and that would be a major problem.

But at least at this moment, right now, these people were only innocent victims.

They were not the so-called "purists" of the institution, not yet crazy enough to mercilessly kill without discrimination any who had slightest contact with anything related to "demons."

"..." The two old partners exchanged glances, speechless.

It was hard for them to make this decision.

Franca didn't press them further, merely looking at the demon's corpse with a hint of wariness.

"Additionally, what's the situation with this demon?"

A regular-level demon had exhibited such formidable strength.

Franca was naturally quite clear about the definitions of strength for summoned demons; theoretically, a large group of Believers must have summoned it, otherwise it wouldn't be so difficult to handle.

But there wasn't one.

Although Franca arrived late, observing the battlefield was a basic skill that every master who faced combat needed to possess.

She hadn't found any traces of large-scale sacrifices at the scene, which indicated that the group of Believers who summoned this demon might not be as large as she had imagined.

This was abnormal.

All abnormal situations were valuable for analysis and documentation.

"It's a demon offspring," the dual-blade executioner said with a complex look as he glanced towards Kuang Xin, Xu Ruoguang, and others who were still conducting rescue operations not far away following the sound of wailing underground.

In fact, one was right beside him—Gong Yan, who had helped him up.

Hearing this term, not for the first time that night, Gong Yan's eyes flickered, bracing herself internally.

Demon offspring, was it referring to them?

Was it specifically about her team, or... the entire community of players?

From the moment Gong Yan discovered that this game was as real as a true existing world, they had already been quite curious in their private chats about how the original inhabitants viewed them, these players who had suddenly appeared.

After all, the behaviors of the players were very discordant with the background style of this world.

Now... perhaps they finally had an answer.

Bai E stood still and also quietly pricked up his ears.

Players? Demon offspring? What was this another world insider's information he didn't understand?

"Demon offspring?" Franca watched Kuang Xin's back as he tried to move a huge rock, her beautiful eyes slightly narrowing, "They are the demon offspring?"

She had already recalled meeting three of the people... she had seen them, and had even given them a bottle of Exorcism Essential Oil.

And now... these demon offspring clearly knew the mysterious master who had appeared abruptly; otherwise, they wouldn't have looked so relieved at the first shot, even before she was aware of it.

Perhaps this mysterious master was the same 'lord' they had mentioned before?

Yes... everything matched up.

Franca's eyes once again swept over the kneeling pleading civilians and returned to the present.

The dual-blade executioner was looking at Gong Yan beside him, making good on his promise, "I said that I would explain everything to you in detail after it was all over... You are the demon offspring."

"... All the people you come into contact with have a high probability of becoming demon Believers, not all, but compared to normal circumstances, the probability is at least ten times higher."

"... Meanwhile, those humans who turn into demon Believers after coming into contact with you, their strength surge is unimaginable compared to their original level, far exceeding any demonic favor acquired by Believers in the past, which is quite abnormal. The demon we just confronted was clear evidence.

According to records in our Arbitration Place, a demon summoned by a single person should never have such strength."

"... I don't know if this situation is your intention, or an unfortunate event that simply happened to you without your knowledge. But I must fulfill my responsibility—bring you back to the institution."

Indeed, the institution didn't have a blanket death sentence for demon offspring.

Without a clear understanding of the cause, such a drastic measure was too extreme.

They needed extensive research...

To be taken away, and labeled with an ominous title, this very likely meant the loss of freedom.

Gong Yan visibly took a subconscious step back.

Dai Lian, who was supporting another executioner, also stepped back, his eyes even more overtly filled with a cautious hue.

"Hey, hey, hey! We just fought together, we don't need to fight another battle, do we?" Franca raised her eyebrows, glancing to the side, "This gentleman, they are your people, right? How should we deal with this, want to give us some advice?"

Franca deliberately led the conversation towards this mysterious person.

The other party was powerful, and perhaps had discovered characteristics of the demon's children earlier than they had, otherwise, why would he coincidentally choose such a group of demon's children as his subordinates?

It's just that the other party's allegiance was unclear.

At this moment, he could kill demons and had previously saved a demon believer right before their eyes...

Plus, the ideas about his goodness, even innocence, they heard from his subordinates...

Such a strange stance.

Compared to the demons they had dealt with and the wondrous demon's children, Franca was more curious about the mysterious organization leader with whom she had crossed paths several times.

Bai E stayed motionless, listening from start to finish to the words the enforcer revealed to the players.

The children of demons?

All the NPCs that came into contact with players would turn into powerful demon believers...

Is it because... of the feedback mechanism that reflects player's strength?

But why was he unaffected?

Plus, the demon centered around "greed" they had just dealt with...

A myriad of connections flooded his mind, and Bai E had a vague guess, but he dared not confirm it.

"I support their own choices," Bai E replied softly.

"You have already made an enemy of us at the Arbitration Place once," Franca said, with a flickering gaze that was elusive.

The two barely-standing enforcers were desperately signaling to the young, reckless lady—

Have you lost your mind?

The enforcers were just more focused when hunting demons and dealing with demon-related affairs... or one could say paranoid.

But that didn't mean they were fools.

The expert before them had just easily slain the high-dimensional demon that all three of them had been helpless against; how could these three defeated and wounded officers provoke him?

If they angered him, their ashes could be scattered by him.

And even the institution wouldn't seek revenge against him because of this.

That's the rule.

The reason why they at the Arbitration Place had such immense privileges in handling demon-related affairs was that they had virtually no rights elsewhere; when a human hadn't breached any demonic taboos, the enforcers had no reason to attack a powerful human.

Franca, reckless, merely curved her lips into a strange smile.

Bai E did not look at her directly but his tone became dangerous as well, "What's on your mind?"

From their few encounters, he knew that Franca wasn't the paranoid type; she must have an ulterior motive.

"How about this..." Franca's gaze swept over the scene, the civilians were still kneeling on the ground, incessantly kowtowing.

Everyone had heard about the Arbitration Place's actions; they were utterly merciless when it came to eradicating anything related to demons.

They could even hunt down to the ends of the earth.

Offending the Battle Gang, one could always survive by moving elsewhere.

Being targeted by the Arbitration Place... there was probably no safe place left on the planet.

Perhaps burying oneself in a grave might be somewhat more peaceful.

Fear came from deep within; by this point, many had already broken their foreheads from kowtowing.

"Them..." Franca's finger shifted focus, landing on the players, "And them... How about you help us manage them?"

All the words spoken were intended for Bai E.

Whether they were civilians or the children of demons...

Franca had sparked this entire conflict with the aim of binding all these issues to the mysterious expert.

If he truly was as glorious and upright as his subordinates claimed, if he truly had the determination to implement those bright ideals... then let it begin.

From this moment on!

Step out! Step into the sunlight!

No more sneaking around!

Through this corner of the world, let the masses recognize your existence. Enjoy new chapters from empire

Let me see... just what kind of person you really are!

Franca's eyes burned intensely, fixating on the figure beneath the dark brown robe.

"What do you say? The demon's children are dangerous, these people are destined to decay. Without a strong figure to oversee them, you know... we won't feel at ease, and we don't have enough manpower..."

The answer was obvious, and Franca paused for a moment before continuing, "So from this day on, this territory... shall be governed by you, or your subordinates. The demon's children... the civilians who have witnessed demons, we'll no longer interfere, we just need your assurance! They... will all be safe."

With that, Franca turned her gaze to her two colleagues, "Seniors, this approach is acceptable to you, right?"

"Agreed!"

"Agreed!"

They couldn't agree more.

As long as they didn't start fighting right then and there, everything was not a problem.

The issue of the demon's children could be discussed later; the civilians who had personally experienced the demon calamities didn't necessarily need to be executed on the spot.

And Franca's proposal actually hit right at what they desired; having the mysterious expert in front of them oversee this district was incredibly reassuring. Even if another demon calamity occurred, it would be just a matter of two arrows—very comforting indeed.

Franca's lips curled slightly and she looked back at Bai E, "So... your answer?"

[Hint: The rise of a faction's reputation also requires support from a physical territory. You're standing at the edge of a decision with enormous influence. Faced with the opposite party's proposal, you decide...]

Chapter 297 Level 2 Prestige

The power prestige had been stuck below level 2, so the core issue lay here.

Even if one annihilated numerous Black Street powers, without a tangible "territory" of one's own, they would always seem ethereal in the eyes of others.

However, acceptance meant taking responsibility for this entire unattended block.

Various small chaotic forces had been rampant on this land before; if one were to take control...

How to establish rules? What kind of order should be set up? What means are needed to stabilize one's management?

The most important thing was, from the moment of taking over, it meant being responsible for them... responsible to the Arbitration Place.

From then on, any incident involving demons that occurred on this land must be dealt with immediately by oneself and any spread caused by them must be prevented.

Everything was a problem.

Yet, if one did not take over... when would the power prestige rise to level 2?

Opportunities like today were rare; to declare one's presence to the world with a real domain, without an opportune moment, it would be difficult to boost one's prestige level.

Bai E did not have many chances to experiment, the opportunity at hand was probably the only one in the near future.

Only by raising the power prestige to level 2, could his main mission be completed.

Not to mention the numerous rewards, Bai E was also quite curious about the next phase of the main mission.

"..."

The silent Bai E became the savior in the eyes of the Black Street civilians.

The elders of the Arbitration Place had already said, no matter what, it was only with this Lord taking over that they would have a way to live.

If this Lord did not manage it, then the elders of the Arbitration Place would directly strike hard, with no escape.

"Lord! Save us please!"

"Lord! You will be our master from now on, we are willing to listen to whatever you say, our lives are yours, Lord!"

"Lord..."

Franca folded her arms, just staring at Bai E's figure.

From his past actions, it was clear he preferred not to be ostentatious, but with so many lives in front of him, would you save them?

As for what those people said...

Just listen.

Now, for the sake of survival, they would say or do anything.

But in the long days to come, loyalty can't feed you.

And to expect these lawless people to obey one person's command... is not very realistic.

Perhaps there are some who truly mean to follow, but they are after all in the minority.

If the other party is not a fool, they should be quite clear on this.

So, they are but a bunch of pure burdens.

Managing them would almost only involve giving without receiving.

It tests both philosophy and methods; Franca was very much looking forward to this mysterious organization leader's choice.

The earth-brown robe fluttered lightly, and Bai E's voice rose softly.

The volume was not loud, but the world had to listen.

"I agree,"

he said.

There might be many difficulties, perhaps even more responsibilities to bear.

But since coming to this world, there were certain responsibilities one ultimately had to fulfill.

Life itself was meaningless; it was only one's personal ideals that added a sheen of glory to one's life.

Someday one would always need to expand, and though the "territory" before him came somewhat unexpectedly and abruptly, it... could serve as a first step.

One needed to learn to coexist with this world, and also to learn to cultivate a core management team.

The future... was still far off.

"Their lives, I'll take them on," Bai E looked towards Franca, only a pair of eyes visible outside.

He knew she wasn't the type to kill for the sake of it; even if he refused, she might not lay a hand on these people, but it didn't matter.

Fate had already pushed him to this juncture, so he might as well stride forward.

"From now on, we will share honor and disgrace, and be bound by the same fate. Their mistakes are my mistakes. Their responsibilities are my responsibilities. From now on, this place, Black Street, belongs to 'Dawn.'"

"Dawn?" Franca murmured softly.

She had never heard of it.

But finally... she knew "their" name.

Bai E then turned to look at the civilians of Black Street prostrating before him, their eyes—whether filled with relief or adulation—fixed on him, the joy of having narrowly escaped death filling each of their hearts. The previous chaos of their pleas had quieted down, and now they just stared at Bai E... at the future ruler who would decide their fate.

At least at this moment, their gratitude and adoration couldn't be more genuine.

["Lucky Hit" charge +50.]

Bai E spoke slowly, his gaze methodically sweeping over each submissive head.

They were sprawled on the ground; the gray-black earth spread beneath their feet, in the distance, sporadic flames crackled as they burned, players were still trying their best to rescue civilians from the ruins, and a pale backglow of dawn floated in the sky.

The world was quietly listening to the first words he was about to say.

A steady voice began to sound.

"My demands of you are just three."

"Order, order... and still order!"

"From this day forward, in Black Street, no groups or organizations of more than three with no blood relation shall exist."

"From this day forward, I require every one of you to work every day."

"From this day forward, all resources of Black Street will be allocated according to need."

"You will engage in foreign trade."

"You will engage in animal husbandry and agriculture." Stay updated with empire

"You will reclaim the land."

"I want all of you to have aspirations in life from now on!"

"I want all of you to be happy, joyful, and free from now on!"

"I don't have much time, some things I'll say only once."

"Ji Lande!" Bai E suddenly called out loudly.

"Here!" Gilder instantly emerged from the shadows behind, jogging forward to stand half a step behind Bai E.

Since the soldiers accompanying him had seen him and knew his real name, Bai E had asked him to disguise himself when operating in Black Street.

"Perhaps I won't always be present before your eyes, and he... he is my plenipotentiary. All affairs of Black Street will be overseen by him; if you have any difficulties, you can report them to him. He will resolve what he can, and what he cannot, report to me."

"You only need to remember one thing!"

"A crown may elevate the one who wears it above the rest, lofty and above, as a symbol of status."

"But the true meaning of a crown is this: when disaster descends from the sky, I will shield you from everything; I will stand here, forever letting you see only the golden hope."

[Due to your outstanding performance, the faction you've established—Dawn—has officially come into public view, and Black Street has become your territory. The faction's (Dawn's) prestige level has risen to level 2.]

[Main Quest—Iron Curtain, completed.]

[Quest Rewards: 3000 general experience points, potential points *3, skill points *3 (cannot be raised above level 6), have been distributed.]

[Main Quest—Iron Curtain, concluded.]

[Iron Curtain (Epilogue): Through wide-ranging exploration of this world, you have broken through the confusion of your birth period, torn apart the world's iron curtain that shrouded you, and gradually begun to make your voice heard in the world.

During this process of gaining experience, you have witnessed the unrivaled power of an individual and explored ancient ruins that the world had forgotten. Your exemplary performance has established the groundwork for an emerging force.

Through this long process, you have gradually solidified your pursuit of what your heart yearns for, and in the coming journey, you will need to decide in which direction to develop further.]

The pale blue text interwove line by line before his eyes, and the three-option multiple-choice question finally appeared before him—

Ruler√x

Ranger√x

Warlordv×

Unlike Iron Curtain, this next, yet-to-be-begun main quest will be a true choice.

Bai E turned and left, melting into the darkness.

Chapter 298: Three-stage mainline

Gazing into the direction of the disappearing figure, Franca's eyes shimmered with stars, unable to shift her gaze for a long time.

'So cool....'

That was the only thought in the girl's mind at the moment.

Perhaps the current choice was not part of the other party's plan, but even when faced with sudden and unexpected changes, the series of detailed arrangements and measures seemed orderly and unflustered.

And the audacity was truly unparalleled.

Those decisions, whether premeditated or made on the spur of the moment, each were surprisingly bold, and this... was exactly what was needed here.

People who had just stepped out of the shadow of demons needed not only blessings from heaven but also... change.

Change, that was what they needed most now.

Adapting to a new life would consume all their energy, only then would they have no time to recall everything they had encountered and known today.

Useful or not, but even if it reduced the slightest chance or delayed the time by just a little, it was good.

"So long, then~"

Franca looked towards the "children of the demon," "You have a very impressive leader."

She took a final glance at everything around her and, with hands clasped behind her back, turned and left.

The remaining matters had nothing to do with her, after all, she was now just an instructor in the camp, teaching the new recruits...

Having collected the corpses of the demons with a special tool, the two executors also approached the "children of the demon" and sincerely said, "We owe you a lot this time, but we might need to study your secrets later on, so we'll need your cooperation."

While speaking, the medium-statured executor smiled, "But rest assured, with such a person behind you, we wouldn't do anything excessive to you, just cooperate with the research, and there might even be a reward for you."

The Arbitration Place had no specific way of conducting affairs, only each executor had their own unique style of doing things.

They were not those obsessive "puritans," and the "children of the demon's" issue had not yet been defined.

For friends who had just fought side by side, even if these people carried the name of "children of the demon," they preferred to use a gentle policy.

"Phew~"

The long street quieted down once more; looking at the Black Street civilians lying all over as if all their strength was drained, the five players exchanged glances.

"That's the boss you talked about?"

"Yeah."

"Gulp~" Xu Ruoguang swallowed, "That's riding on some sturdy legs!"

No matter how Kuang Xin and the other two had described earlier, nothing was more convincing than the real achievements witnessed just now.

The same opponent, a monster that the game's official organizations struggled to handle, was taken down by their leader with just two swift arrows.

This overwhelming strength was a clear-cut indication of the levels.

Gu Lan couldn't snap out of it for a long time, her mind continuously echoing with that arrow shot from the darkness, along with the promises made to all the Black Street civilians.

Is this the person she was going to follow?

If previously it was for tangible benefits, then this extraordinary first encounter undoubtedly solidified her decision to follow.

Such a leader, with extraordinary charm and strength, even knowing it was a virtual character in a game, one couldn't help but yearn for them.

"But why did he leave..." Xu Ruoguang belatedly watched Bai E's departing direction, "What do we do now? Didn't he say he was going to take us in?"

"Emmm..." Kuang Xin scratched his head and explained with a goofy smile, "We usually meet at noon. Our boss is very busy, usually doesn't have time; this time he probably just spared a moment because we couldn't handle it, just to lend a hand."

Although not knowing why the boss appeared in time, Kuang Xin, who blindly worshipped his leader, had already imagined his boss's wise and mighty feats.

Xu Ruoguang nodded somewhat disheartenedly, "Alright then..."

...

Two figures returned to the camp soon after one another, leaving the gatekeeping soldiers scratching their heads in confusion.

"Did they even go to the same place?"

Leaving and returning to camp in the middle of the night, it didn't seem right if they didn't go to the same place.

But if they did go to the same place... an executor from the Arbitration Place and an ordinary soldier from the camp, what could they have been doing together?

And leaving separately... was it to deceive others?

"Tsk, tsk~"

Just about to close the gate, the soldier then saw a slender figure gracefully make her way back.

"It's Yue Ying..."

Done.

"It's quite lively tonight."

Walking into the camp and into a shadowed area, Yue Ying gently lifted her head to look towards the soldiers' dormitory in the darkness.

She had followed the whole way, and the other party had not noticed her presence.

Thus she followed them all the way into the camp, and after avoiding the executor from the Arbitration Place who came later, she finally made it back to the camp last.

So it could be confirmed that the mysterious expert was a person from the camp?

And he used arrows... even the skills were in a style he was familiar with. Find adventures at empire

Except for that power, it wasn't at all what he had taught.

Where had that warrior learned it from?

Yue Ying's eyes flickered, and then she stepped away.

Maybe she could ask tomorrow night.

And... a human top warrior with his own secret plots and ambitions was much more interesting than a simple cannon fodder.

"Tsk tsk~"

Watching the dark silhouette vanish among the shadows of the tents, the guarding soldier felt tonight had really opened his eyes.

"It's still a triangle..."

"Don't talk nonsense! Miss Yueying is my goddess!"

"A foreign goddess? You are not loyal!"

"You're full of it!"

"You are not loyal."

"You're full of it!"

...

Bai E flew back to the camp.

The items dropped from killing demons were relatively too many. The choices after completing the main quest needed quiet contemplation, and he urgently needed to return to a safe place to digest them.

The barracks dormitory was his warmest haven.

Everyone in the dormitory was resting quietly. It was now the deepest part of the night, even close to sunrise.

Everyone was sleeping peacefully, but Bai E's Spiritual Energy pulsed in spurts.

Spiritual Energy is a magical force; there are almost no precedents of plundering others' Spiritual Energy for personal use.

Spiritual Energy that lost its original master's control would dissipate into the air immediately, becoming once again a free existence in that magical high-dimensional space.

Yet the 50 points of Spiritual Energy controlled by the underlying logic of "Lucky Strike" could not dissipate. They were kept around Bai E, surging left and right trying to break free, but unable to escape the invisible bonds.

Bai E dared not open his mind to directly absorb the Spiritual Energy with alien attributes, but thankfully his newly acquired skill—Soul Black Hole—was helping him with this trouble.

This skill seemed less like a skill and more like a rule of power possessed by demons.

Bai E could actively stimulate the black hole to absorb all the rootless souls nearby.

It was like snatching food from the jaws of a demon's authority, absorbing the soul of the gang leader who had turned into a demon, and finally relegating him to nothingness.

Or it could exist passively...

Bai E could feel that the existence of this skill had permanently changed his Spiritual Body.

It was as if a vortex had emerged in his mind.

The alien Spiritual Energy was struggling as if caught in a giant grindstone.

The special attribute of "Greed" was gradually crushed by the "Black Hole," leaving behind only the purest essence of Spiritual Energy itself.

[Your "Skill—Soul Black Hole" has digested a strand of alien Spiritual Energy and converted it into your power, increasing your Spiritual Energy limit by +1.]

[...Spiritual Energy limit +1.]

+1

+1

+1

From the end of the battle to his return, this "+1" had jumped many times. His Spiritual Energy limit had reached an impressive 27 points and was still increasing rapidly.

The newly added Spiritual Energy was even more abundant than what Bai E originally possessed, giving him a sudden sense of swelling that put more pressure on his soul.

It was somewhat uncomfortable, but he reveled in the pain.

Spiritual Energy was indeed the tangible incarnation of extraordinary power. Its presence allowed Bai E to feel a surging sense of fullness and power throughout his body. Every bit of growth was as direct as an increase in base attributes.

Now, he felt... almost omnipotent.

The surge in power was subtly affecting him. Even if the sensation in his Spiritual Body was peculiar, it did not prevent Bai E from maintaining clear thinking.

Compared to the purely beneficial surge in Spiritual Energy, the biggest impact on him was the completion of the main quest.

After finishing the second phase of the main quest, the third phase began to emerge, calling for his active choice.

Conqueror...

Ranger...

Warlord...

Three distinct paths lay before him; Bai E could even use his consciousness to click through the light-blue subtitles in front of him, examining the future development requirements of each...

Chapter 299: Leader's Will

Overlord: The genetic optimization level must reach at least 20 points, and at least three specialized skills must reach level 9, with their skill trees fully unlocked...

Ranger: Explore at least 1 ancient ruin, 3 large ruins, 5 medium ruins, 10 small ruins...

Warlord: Control at least 51% of the actual power within the current dominant force (current: Blackwater City, the subject can be changed).

After delving into the specific requirements of the three options, these clear objectives lay before him, yet Bai E felt hesitant and lost.

Overlord?

The Gene Optimization Solution must reach 20 points... It took getting a Gene Optimization Solution for himself to increase it to 3.3 points, and it's said that the effects of the Optimization fluid will only get worse with subsequent use. How many doses of the fluid would he need to reach 20 points? Aside from that, unlocking the remaining specialized levels and skill trees seemed to be relatively less difficult.

As for being a Ranger...

The abandoned town he had explored last time qualified as a small ruin, which seemed rather easy to explore, and even after fighting through a bunch of giant spider guardians, it wasn't particularly challenging, making the task seem not too demanding.

But that was just a small ruin.

What about the medium ones? The large ones? The ancient ones?

The internet servers he had evaluated before were only considered large ruins, and to find two more of the same scale and even larger ancient ruins... He had no clue where to start.

As for being a Warlord...

The powers within the city were complex and entwined, making the grasp of at least 50% of Blackwater City's real power... as difficult as reaching for the heavens.

"Huh~"

Bai E took a deep breath, feeling lost for the first time in his heart.

The tasks of these three paths, each one's completion... seemed to be no easy feat.

Of course, no one was forcing Bai E to complete them.

The missions were there, to do or not to do, what would it change?

But...

Were these missions really just missions?

Bai E recalled the past...

All the side missions seemed to pop up abruptly without introduction, yet they also appeared to align with his own desires.

All those side missions seemed to manifest only when he "wanted to," and when others wanted to witness, they would appear.

As for the two phases of the main mission, they seemed to guide him to understand this world.

Bug Race, orcs, demons...

Electronic demons, hearts of ghosts and tricks...

What did he really want to do in this world, and what did he need to do?

Could it be that as the most unique being in this world, a mission naturally rested on his shoulders upon his arrival?

After seeing all the elements of this world, did he have a clear goal or plan for the future?

Yes? No?

It doesn't matter.

The world will force you to make a choice.

Continue reading at [empire](#)

Right now, before the world presents its malice clearly, a wake-up call from the task system arrives first.

Bai E's gaze inadvertently drifted across the pale blue subtitles in front of him. When his eyes focused on one, those words seemed to magnify slightly, affirming his selection—

Overlord...

Ranger...

Warlord...

The three do not conflict with each other, nor are they mutually exclusive.

Just like the second phase of the main mission, one must make some achievements on all three paths to complete the ultimate task.

It is the same at this moment.

While developing personal military power, he could also explore the unknown, the ruins.

And while exploring the ruins, he could also develop his own influence on the other side, gradually eroding the city and bringing it completely under his control.

The three not only do not conflict but complement each other.

He just needed to determine a primary mission objective.

Or rather, to determine where his heart lies.

In the past, some minor detours were automatically chosen by the system sensing his heart's desires and appeared in the form of missions.

Now... the choice at this major crossroad was solemnly handed over to him.

Bai E's gaze became distant as a series of images he had seen since "waking up" began to flash through his mind—

The initial selection and division of every artificial warrior at birth...

The first meeting with teammates, the encounter, the caution...

The collective training at the training ground, sweating like rain...

The subconscious quick reaction when bugs invaded the military camp...

The collective fall on the battlefield facing the Bug Race dominators...

The activated mainframe pressed the core of the electronic demon into the human body for the last time...

The numb "wild dogs" numbed life with deadly fights...

People hidden underground longing for a peaceful life...

The frenzied bloodlust for battle in the orcs holding machetes...

The endless ambition that spawned demons dragging the world into the abyss...

Every promise he made to different targets, he remembered them all deeply in his mind.

Those memories in his mind were eternally fixed at the most profound moments, playing through his mind like slides at a consistent pace.

This world... was terribly messed up.

Crisis existed in every day, every moment, every city, every wilderness... every time one fell asleep in peace, every time one engaged in battle...

External enemies, internal troubles.

Those stretching out the slaughter knife to him were not only the Bug Race and orcs, even the companions he lived with day and night... were potential dangers.

The power of an individual was ultimately limited; even someone as strong as Yue Ying couldn't eliminate a bug nest alone on the frontlines.

Exploring ruins required a strong team for protection; any danger could occur in the wilderness.

Population, manpower, allies, teammates...

To carry out his will, to save the world from suffering, to fulfill the promises he had made to various individuals along the way...

First, he needed an invincible team!

I want to be a warlord!

Bai E's gaze drifted towards the sky outside.

The full view of the tent, supported by iron frames and gradually enlarged, became clearly visible, rows of tents resting quietly in the dark, irregular walls marking the military camp, black-gray steel walls

standing tall upon the earth, the grayish-brown plains like diseased psoriasis, the thick black clouds ultimately blocking the view, a gray-blue planet finally became a "pearl" against the pitch-black backdrop.

The world of Galaxy Online was not limited to this one tiny planet.

The stars of the universe awaited his harvest.

Myriad races wove exciting, magnificent epics among the grandiose stars.

Bai E didn't know who the sacred entity that released "Galaxy Online" in the original world was, but the information he posted on the official website would not be without aim.

This world was very, very vast...

The present was just the beginning; the road ahead was still long.

The military camp?

Blackwater City?

Too small... all too small...

I don't know why I was pulled into this world that's half game-like, but since I'm here... wouldn't it be too boring if the canvas of the starry sky lacked my signature stroke?

I want to be a warlord.

Bai E's consciousness forcefully clicked on that "v", and thus, a brand-new future unfolded—

[You have now gained a clear understanding of your pursuit for the future, main quest—Absolute Dominion, activated.]

[Absolute Dominion: You have decided your future development path. Blackwater City, as the starting point where you have spent the most time managing, is undoubtedly your best choice to rise from. (Current selected target: Blackwater City, target can be changed, but it must be an entity of equivalent influence.) Quest requirements: Control at least 51% of the real power in all domains within "Blackwater City". Quest rewards: 100,000 general experience points, Starship blueprint *1 (details can be customized).]

"Huff~"

The subtitle finally settled before his eyes, confirming the direction of his future development, and Bai E relaxed, letting out a deep breath.

The most difficult moment was always the time to make a decision.

The rest... we'll see how it goes.

Not knowing how long the inner struggle lasted, a streak of dawn's light gradually spread across the sky.

The golden sunrise shot out like golden arrows, awakening the sleeping land.

Daylight had come...

Bai E sat on the edge of the bed, shouting to his four teammates with a smile, "Daybreak has come, time to get up."

Chapter 300: Sortie Mission

"Yawn~"

Hamilton stretched widely, yawning and sitting up from his bed. He was surprised to see that it was Bai E who had woken everyone up. "Bai?"

Bai E's mouth held a smile. "Hmm?"

"..." Hamilton scratched the back of his head, feeling uneasy all over from the smile on Bai E's lips.

Strange...

It was like he was a different person.

Had Bai E ever been this expressive before?

Yue Ying awoke calmly and started to change his clothes as he spoke.

"I was just about to greet you. The time has been set. We're going on a mission tomorrow morning. Prepare anything you need in advance."

Because of the progress of training and individual development, Bai E didn't train with the rest of the team, but since the higher-ups had said the special squad's composition would remain unchanged, they would still go on missions together.

"Got it, no problem," Bai E agreed readily.

He remembered the mission to track Sandworms that Tiger had mentioned before; it had stayed on his mind.

Tomorrow? That seemed just right.

Bai E had always been concerned about those Sandworms of the Bug Race that could burrow underground, the ones they encountered on the way to the Internet server ruins.

Actually, it wasn't just the Sandworms. The behavior of the "Overlord" on the battlefield had also been strange.

No matter how reasonable the explanations were, Bai E, who had directly experienced it all, did not think the bugs' actions were due to a lack of ability, but rather... it seemed as if they were deliberately letting humanity off easy.

If those Sandworms truly appeared on the front lines, their ability to suddenly burst from the ground would be a devastating strike against the human military forces, which were still primarily composed of army units.

Even if it were a suicidal attack, the chaos it would bring to the human formations would be enough to swallow them whole, a clear advantage for the Bug Race.

What made them choose not to fully devour humanity?

Were they afraid of pushing humans into desperation and triggering some powerful countermeasure?

Or were they concerned about Blackwater City itself or the empire that existed more in name than in reality?

It wasn't clear.

Once he set his sights on higher ambitions, concerns that had been deliberately ignored before, or considered irrelevant for the time being, all came flooding back.

The answers wouldn't just jump out at him; he had to actively seek them out.

Despite the dangers, Bai E was actually looking forward to the mission to track the Sandworms.

"Then, we're off," Tiger tilted his head and walked briskly out of the tent.

The solid gains from rigorous training were real. Even if they couldn't see incremental data increases, the boost in "confidence" in their own bodies after training was the tangible change they could feel.

They had a mission tomorrow, and this time, they definitely couldn't hold back the newest member of their team again!

...

The morning's training session was as usual in the Mecha simulation capsule.

The moment he saw Rose, Bai E asked with a light laugh, "Where did you go yesterday afternoon?"

People who underwent Psychic Pressure Resistance Training normally passed out for the entire afternoon until the evening, especially since it was Rose's first time. Her performance should not have been great.

But when Bai E woke up, he didn't find her among those who had fainted.

"Me?" Rose's voice was lively and cheerful. "The instructor took me to do some research and said I'm what... a Nullifier?"

"A Nullifier?"

"Ah~" Rose nodded. "It's someone who's completely unaffected by Spiritual Energy. That stuff... doesn't work on me."

She spread her hands, affirming, "So, it wasn't your problem yesterday. I just can't sense that stuff."

[You have obtained the extraordinary information: Nullifier.]

"Oh~" Bai E nodded and suddenly realized something. "Wait a minute! Then, that time we went to the Bug Race battlefield..."

Rose looked at Bai E helplessly, "Before that evening, I got stabbed through by a mantis bug. When you guys were on the battlefield, I was laid up in the hospital."

Human medical technology was indeed impressive, but her injuries that day were also very serious. It wasn't possible for her to fully recover overnight.

"Oh, I see..."

Bai E understood.

That explained it. No bug then.

The instructor Rose mentioned must have been Franca from the Arbitration Place.

"The Arbitration Place sent someone? Did they say what use a Nullifier has?"

"Well... they said it's about being able to hunt demons while being unaffected by Spiritual Energy but only in the real world, unable to enter higher-dimensional spaces. So the training methods of the Arbitration Place don't suit me. They just let me continue studying in the military camp~" Rose shrugged nonchalantly, "Nothing special really, just that with the support of the Arbitration Place the military agreed to invest more resources in me. If nothing goes wrong... in a couple of days, I'll also be injected with the Gene Optimization Solution."

"..."

"..."

Looking at the smug look in Rose's eyes, Bai E felt somewhat astonished.

All the life-and-death struggles he'd gone through for the credit to get one Gene Optimization Solution, and Rose just skipped straight to the end?

There wasn't really any jealousy, just... the world is too damn wonderful!

Rose sidled up to him, affectionately wrapped her arms around Bai E's neck, and made faces, "So, anything I need to pay attention to with the Optimization fluid injection?"

"Those staff members from the Scientific Research Institute who handle the injections are more professional than I am."

"But I just want to hear it from you, is that not okay?"

"..."

Never noticed that a burly one like you had learned to play this game too?

Bai E disdainfully pushed her arms away, "Today I'm on Mech Pilot duty, so you'd better run fast."

Gun, so hot!

Just want to operate!

Rose gave him an exasperated glance, "Okay! Got it!"

Whenever Bai E was the Mech Pilot, she felt like her hands and feet, her entire body, seemed to have minds of their own...

Prompting her to follow the advance, completely inverting the natural order, as if to shatter the basic mecha operating principle which dictates that Mech Pilots must follow the lead Mech Pilot's decisions.

It made one doubt whether he could manage this large mecha that theoretically required two people all by himself.

...

"How's the training ground?" At some point, a burly figure arrived beside the Mech Pilot training instructor who was monitoring everyone's training status.

The familiar voice made Brandon tense up, "Sir!"

"Hmm~" Hamilton stood with his hands clasped behind his back, his gaze wandering, trying to find the two artificial human warriors he had struggled to obtain from others, "How are they doing in training?"

Speaking of the two newly-added artificial human warriors, Brandon couldn't help grinning, "They're very impressive."

Pursing his lips and noticing that Hamilton had a pleased expression as well, Brandon cautiously voiced his own opinion, "Sir... how about we try bringing in some more artificial humans?"

With both of their performances being so good, recruiting more would make them soar, right?

What's the difference between natural and artificial? Now that Sir has already started breaking the chains, what's there for him to be wary of?

Hamilton squinted his eyes and thought the suggestion... wasn't without merit.

But he couldn't rush things. He had just pried a couple of rare treasures from the jaws of others, a War God with no equal and a Demon Killer. Now all those guys with artificial human resources were guarding against him, so for the time being, he probably couldn't steal any good seedlings.

"We'll see~" Having gotten the answer he wanted, Hamilton left contentedly, his departure brisk.

...

"Tsst~" With the sound of the air valve, the device that held the Mech Pilot in place released him onto solid ground.

Rose rubbed her sweat-drenched golden curls with a hint of dissatisfaction and looked at Bai E, "Next time just train by yourself. I feel superfluous."

Bai E just waved his hand, "How could I manage alone? I've tried, it simply doesn't work."

[Current "Expertise—Mechanical Rhythm" experience 17/1000, reach 1000 points to master "Expertise—Mechanical Rhythm (4/7 level)".]

[Expertise—Mechanical Rhythm (3/7 level):... (Current conversion rate: 40%)]

As the level of expertise improved, the experience needed to train his mecha manipulation skills became increasingly vast, and only after spending 4000 points of combat experience did Mechanical Rhythm grudgingly rise by one level.

If it hadn't been for the fresh 11,000 points of experience from last night, he really couldn't have afforded this level of expenditure.

"Let's go." Rose gestured and turned to leave. Unlike Bai E, she hadn't maxed out her other abilities yet, especially her physical fitness.

Apart from the mecha operating training, she also needed to do some conventional training, since in terms of time, she still fell under the category of "newbie."

So she probably also needed the methods of Advanced Physical Training 3.0.

For some reason, Helen hadn't yet announced it, possibly because it wasn't perfected to the degree that everyone could use it.

But as the original improver of this 3.0 training, Bai E thought he might try to use these skills to benefit those who had a closer relationship with him first.

Watching her departing figure, Bai E called out from behind: "Later..."

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Late won't work... later it'll be noon, and he needed to meet Franca to plan out their next tasks.

"Tonight..."

Tonight won't work either... he had to go learn from Yue Ying.

"Tomorrow..." Tomorrow morning he was out on a mission.

"Next time I'm free, I'll look for you, got something for you."

"..." Rose paused, turned her head slightly, "People normally invite others for a drink."

"...Let's have that drink the time after next."

"..."