

Wow 301

Chapter 301 Level 2 Prestige's new function

"The Lord is coming soon, right?" Xu Ruoguang rubbed his tiny hands together, full of anticipation.

After all, last night's battle had clearly demonstrated to them the distinct hierarchy among the high-end combat forces of this world.

Our Lord > High-Dimensional Demon

High-Dimensional Demon > Elite Executioner of the Arbitration Place

Elite Executioner of the Arbitration Place > Regular Executioner of the Arbitration Place

After all, the young lady who came later performed much better than the first two, which shows there is also a disparity among executioners.

And then there are players like us.

Of course, this ranking system is neither authoritative nor clear.

There might be a difference of ten thousand and eight thousand levels between our Lord and a high-dimensional demon, after all, a one-sided massacre doesn't seem just a little bit of victory.

So this time, the leg we've clung to might just be the ceiling of combat power in this game!

And such a character might... perhaps... possibly, also know some information related to the main-line mission they bear, like, knowing who the Emperor of Mankind is and where he is.

"But the Lord mentioned before that he will only take one for now, and it's okay if he doesn't choose us temporarily. At worst, we'll start as teammates and then become official later," Dai Lian preemptively inoculated the two of them. He was quite satisfied with his two teammates, who at least seemed to have a certain tactical mind, and weren't like the muscle gorilla Kuang Xin.

"Mm... No problem, we have an understanding," Xu Ruoguang said with a bright smile, the very image of a sunny young man.

Not far away, under the midday sun, a figure walked over at a steady pace.

With the boost from last night's achievements, even the three old players who thought they knew their Lord inside out couldn't help but subconsciously hold their breath.

"My Lord..."

"My Lord..."

Bai E's gaze easily swept over them, pausing noticeably on Gu Lan and Xu Ruoguang.

Last night, Bai E had spotted these two unfamiliar new players who were likely brought in as new recruits.

And even to have two at once for him to choose from...

"These two..."

"Are our companions," Dai Lian stepped forward half a step to phrase his words for the critical moment, "They aspire to the Lord's ideals, so they want to follow the Lord's guidance in our glorious pursuits."

"But I already said I only want one..."

With the limited capacity to issue missions, Bai E didn't want those at the same level to feel he was showing favoritism, so it was better to define the hierarchy right from the start.

"That's fine, Lord. They just hope to work behind you, official titles are not important," Dai Lian interjected.

"..."

So sensible...

A visible pleasure flashed in Bai E's eyes as he looked straight at Gu Lan and Xu Ruoguang, "I saw your performance last night, and you did very well."

Even though the unfolding events at the beginning were not witnessed and all he saw was two people struggling to dig trenches in the ruins... Bai E didn't let that stop him from praising them.

Indeed, the approval of the mighty always seems to stir people's hearts more easily.

Even Gu Lan, a lady who had grown up surrounded by luxury and adulation, felt her mood elevate at Bai E's praise.

This game is too realistic, and the Lord before them seemed so high and lofty, praise from someone far above one's own status was always gratifying.

"Thank you, Lord..."

"It's what we ought to do."

"What are your names?"

"Gu Lan."

"Xu Ruoguang."

"Mm," Bai E nodded, still wearing a light smile on his face, his tone calm, "They must have already mentioned to you—due to the current design development policy, our plan will not change to recruit only one core member. One of you is bound to be temporarily unable to learn the organization's core secrets."

While speaking, Bai E's gaze swept over the trio of old players, "Even they, before certain matters are made public, cannot share more core information with you."

"We are aware of it, Lord."

The game's full realism gave them the pleasure somewhat akin to role-playing make-believe. The sense of superiority over their two-dimensional characters also prevented them from feeling truly inferior.

If you really piss me off, I'll just unplug your power!

So, with complete immersion in their role-play, both showed visible anticipation, "So, Lord, if you could consider..."

"You," Bai E said, looking at Gu Lan with a slight smile, "Welcome to 'Dawn'."

In the slight daze of the two, Bai E stepped forward and patted Xu Ruoguang's shoulder with a light-hearted tone, "Don't be discouraged; she is just richer than you."

Under the puzzled gaze of the players, Bai E kept a calm expression, unflustered, "The organization is still in its development phase; a lot of times, we need everyone's effort. Your own social status and wealth can also help the organization achieve its goals more quickly. For this purpose, we sometimes have to learn to compromise."

Whether it was in terms of attire or the weaponry she was equipped with, Gu Lan was clearly not just one notch above Xu Ruoguang.

Not to mention that over the course of a night, her Spiritual Energy had reached the terrifying threshold of 60 points.

The increased power of Spiritual Energy allowed him to sense more about Spiritual Energy-related things—like the small, delicate black pistol that was faintly visible at the root of Gu Lan's thigh.

Clearly, this female player had uncovered more content in the game and had more resources.

With the conversion function of the warehouse, the players' money is the organization's money, and the organization's money is my money...

No problem there.

[The other party invites you to join the faction: Dawn (Prestige Level: 2), do you accept?]

Gu Lan decisively confirmed.

[Yes!]

[Gu Lan has joined your faction.]

Having joined Li Ming, Gu Lan, who had long anticipated the legendary Faction Shop, immediately clicked to enter it.

[Temporary members cannot view the Faction Shop.]

"..."

Huh?

Facing Gu Lan's somewhat blank look, Bai E sipped his lips lightly, "You still need to work..."

Behind him, Kuang Xin, recalling the experiences of himself and others in the past, suppressed a laugh and comforted, "We all came up this way..."

"Let's go, let's check out our secret base."

Arriving at the spacious underground base, it was almost no different from the last time he was here.

Bai E hadn't been here these past two days, and the players had gone out to do tasks.

Turning to see the four people following him, Bai E twisted his head and called out, "Xu Ruoguang, come down."

Looking at Xu Ruoguang, who only came down after being called, Bai E was satisfied with him; the lad was quite self-aware...

Looking at the five people before him, as well as the Rat People and Gilder standing behind them, Bai E knew these were the core members of his group for the time to come.

After a brief moment of calm, he began to speak.

"Last night everyone was here, so you know some unexpected events took place beyond my expectations."

"It happened suddenly, and for the sake of everyone, I had to accept the proposal from the Arbitration Place to take over Black Street from that moment on."

"Of course, even after taking over Black Street, our organization must still and will certainly be divided into 'Light and Dark' sections."

"The Dark Department is the true core of the organization, still centered around this secret base... We always need some cards that others don't know about."

"But we must also do well with what we have promised. Furthermore, our organization will have to surface eventually, and Black Street is not a bad opportunity to test the waters. As our starting point, everyone can freely try without pressure. Should any situation arise, I can cover for you."

At the moment when the faction's reputation level increased to level 2 last night, Bai E received a notification from the panel—

[As the reputation level of the faction you created (Li Ming) has increased to level 2, the number of faction tasks you can issue to members of Li Ming has increased by 1, the total number of faction tasks you can now issue is 2.]

The previous faction task was to build the underground base, and Gu Lan, having joined the organization, automatically accepted it without needing to say more.

And now...

[Generating mission description automatically...]

[Side Mission—Black Street Protection (Combat-Type Task): Black Street is now your turf, and it's a just cause to defend the Order on your own ground. You need to maintain all the established Order within the "Black Street" area, and when outsiders initiate unjust "aggressive actions" against the original residents of the territory, you must step in to protect them. Successful defense will earn rewards, while failure will also incur punishment. (This task can be executed by up to five people jointly)

Task requirements: Maintain Black Street Order for the day 0/1 (Daily), Resolve external conflict incidents 0/??? (Extra).

Task rewards: Daily (Each Day): General Experience $\pm 50 \sim 100$ points (adjustable), Faction Contribution *10; Extra (Each Incident): General Experience $100 \sim 200$ points (adjustable), Faction Contribution *10~???.]

(Note: "Auto-complete" allowed; after confirming the commission, "permissions" and "expenses" will be deducted and locked.)

[Do you want to issue the current task?]

Faction tasks are not subject to the permission restrictions of individual task issuances, and the type doesn't matter.

Bai E maximized the range of adjustable rewards and chose to issue the task.

"From now on, Black Street will be the place we all need to protect together. The specific public order regulations will be arranged by Gilder, and what you need to do is... to protect this Order."

As faction members, the task was automatically accepted.

The four players, upon understanding the task description, immediately felt their blood boiling with excitement.

Maintaining the basic Order... is the same as doing nothing, and they would earn a net of 100 general experience points and 10 faction contribution points per day.

If there's trouble caused by outsiders, they would need to take action, gaining 200 general experience points and an unknown amount of faction contribution points for each incident.

Isn't this a skyrocketing opportunity?

The trio knew all too well how difficult it had been to earn faction contribution points before; without taking any action, they would definitely not make any.

And now, as long as there's no trouble, they would have contribution points credited daily even while lying down, not to mention the "surprises" they'd get for each incident where they repel outsiders causing trouble in Black Street.

Awesome!

The expansion of the organization indeed affected their own benefits, and if the organization's influence were to expand further in the future, the benefits they could receive as members of the organization were simply unimaginable.

For Gu Lan, it was an even bigger surprise.

She had heard from the trio about their ways of earning contribution points—starting from construction work, which was somewhat torturous for her.

And now, upon joining, she had a "basic guarantee" to rely on, soon able to earn enough contribution points to learn many skills they talked about.

This organization is brilliant!

Only Xu Ruoguang was anxiously watching the four elated players, fidgeting like ants on a hot pot, but without an explanation, he could only look upset, "Did I miss something..."

Bai E looked at the four with a smile, waiting for them to digest the new task.

The future of Black Street was unclear to him as well.

Whether this job was tough or leisurely, who knew?

As the four gradually calmed down and looked back at him, Bai E chuckled before speaking.

"There's one more thing."

Chapter 302 Governance

...

The task of guarding Black Street was just a new mission qualification that emerged after the prestige level of the forces had been raised, and the original task qualifications were still in place. Bai E needed to design new tasks for them.

For instance...

Clearing the danger sources around Black Street.

In this world, it's not just the Bug Race, beastmen, demons, and intelligent machines that are the four major disasters. In this era of chaos among machinery, souls, and genes, it's not only humans that have been affected, but also all sorts of native species in nature, which have become unpredictable under the disturbance of various pheromones.

The wild beasts of nature are constantly undergoing mutations at any given time. Today, they may still be naive newborns, but tomorrow, they might transform into unnameable abominations covered in blood with spikes and tentacles.

Only the city walls can completely isolate the madness of those wild creatures. Around Black Street, and even farther places, you can see bodies from time to time—both human and beast.

Before, no one did this because there was no benefit to doing such things, and besides, those things were unpredictable. Unless something happened to oneself, the strong wouldn't care, and the weak were simply handing over meat to their mouths.

But now, seeking out these dangerous creatures and clearing them out could serve as combat-type missions for the players.

"The wolf packs I previously sent you to clear in the Black Forest were just to train you when your strength was just starting. Now that you have the capability to deal with more crises, I think you should

also bear greater responsibility. The conflicts within humanity certainly require attention, but external threats are happening all the time."

[Mission description auto-generation in progress...]

[Side Mission—Threat Elimination (Combat-Type Mission): The humans living outside the city are constantly threatened by the wilderness. You, with your increased strength, can now try to actively track the traces of numerous dangers and attempt to eliminate them.

Mission requirements: Clear sources of danger 0/3-5 (adjustable).

Mission rewards: Universal experience points 50-200 (adjustable), item rewards (undecided).]

(Note: "Auto-complete" allowed; after confirming the issuance of the mission, "authority" and "expenses" will be deducted and locked.)

[Release the current mission?]

As he spoke, Bai E looked at Kuang Xin, "How do you feel about the battles in the arena? Do you still see hope for further improvement?"

Kuang Xin's eyes lit up, "Yes!"

Definitely yes!

In that place, he could let loose completely, do whatever he wanted. The crazier he got, the more it excited others—as if he were back at home.

Now, just staying near the city at night without going to the arena to fight a few bouts made him feel like he had lice crawling on him—it was irritating.

He was itching for a fight, craving for combat!

"Good," Bai E nodded. The players' improvement meant his own improvement—perfect!

"Then you continue to enhance your strength in that arena, but also be more vigilant. I always feel there's something not quite right about that place."

Thinking back carefully, the burst of murderous intent displayed by the opponent during Blood God's death match felt too abrupt, and Blood God's outburst was also somewhat strange.

Furthermore, the demonic powers he later exhibited in the Pit of Fear, and the abilities of the Lord of Fear seemed to stem from different sources. Also, his actions at the time were very peculiar, not at all like someone controlled by the Lord of Fear.

Perhaps... The demon that blessed him was not the Lord of Fear.

Instead, the atmosphere of the arena had some sort of connection with the powers he displayed.

Kuang Xin's missions continue.

Another type of mission was resource-oriented—

"Those residents of Black Street have been in chaos for too long, they may have forgotten how to live normally."

Farming? Husbandry? Crop cultivation? Crafts? Trade?

It's not that no one had tried to do these things before, but those who did were plundered; they starved to death, while those who did nothing lived comfortably.

Starting anew now, they might not know how to proceed, and efficiency is another issue.

"You need to set an example for them."

[Mission description auto-generation in progress...]

[Side Mission—Essentials of Survival (Resource-Type Mission): Find tameable wild beasts for Black Street, locate suitable land for cultivation, and try cooperative production.

Mission requirement: Enhance the procurement of materials necessary for survival.

Mission rewards: 1 Technology point*, item rewards (undecided).]

(Note: The current mission involves the submission of physical items and cannot be "auto-completed"; it requires "inspection completion". With the increase in force level, a "spokesperson" can be designated for inspection; after confirming the issuance of the mission, "authority" and "expenses" will be deducted and locked.)

[Release the current mission?]

Pretty intelligent...

Release!

"Gilder, I'll have to ask you to pay a bit more attention to what they're doing. You should have experience in this area, feel free to give them some pointers when you have time."

...

"Okay, sir!" Gilder nodded full of conviction.

The sir's arrangements were well-organized; if he cared so much for Black Street that he had just taken over, then in the future, if the people he had led out of the oasis were not doing well, the sir certainly would not let anyone be disappointed.

Devoting oneself wholeheartedly to the sir may have been the best decision of one's life.

["Lucky Strike" charging +3.]

"Furthermore..."

Bai E's tone paused briefly, glancing at Xu Ruoguang, who stood at the back of everyone and seemed out of place. Not having joined the organization and not having received a quota for a personal mission, he looked somewhat pitiful.

"You all must improve your strength as quickly as possible. The future is still far away, and developing just around the outskirts of the city is not our only way out."

Perhaps one's task was to control at least 51% of the real power in Blackwater City, but as a lowly soldier, how long would it take to slowly move up the ranks?

Moreover, these were all powers within the city. Even if they were temporarily under one's command, the power given by others could be taken back at any time; only when one held power truly belonging to oneself could one ensure their voice would be heard by everyone at a crucial moment.

Ever since he had set his goal, Bai E's way of thinking had changed.

"I've discovered a set of ruins in the wild, the foundation is still there, and with some minor repairs, it could be brought back into use. When your strength has developed to a certain point, we can begin to organize and develop it. In this era, too many people live difficult lives; we must create a warm home for everyone..."

"Yes! Sir!"

Xu Ruoguang's lips trembled as he was the first to respond loudly.

Too childish! He loved it too much!

That's exactly what he was into!

This elicited some weird glances from the other players — was this kid getting too absorbed in the role?

"If there are no problems, you can go ahead and start your tasks," Bai E said.

Dai Lian took the hint to dismiss them and actively responded, "Yes, sir!"

After the players left, Bai E turned to Gilder, "The issues with Black Street will need more of your attention from now on. Yesterday I only set a general tone, have you thought about the specific management details?"

Gilder was cautious and very humble, "I've thought of some, but I'm not sure if there's anything I've missed. Could you please take a look, sir?"

"Let's hear them."

"..."

"..."

Set up a patrol guard comprised of Black Street residents, start cooperative handcraft workshops, and organize people to learn productive capabilities.

Born in the wilderness, Gilder could be said to have maxed out his tribe's survival skills. Not only was his organizational ability outstanding, but his ability to create various necessities for life was exceptionally brilliant.

He had a firm grip on management and practical operations.

After listening to Gilder's thoughts, Bai E nodded with satisfaction, "You've considered this very thoroughly. We can adjust to actual problems as they come up, but let's proceed with your plan for now... Just be careful with your approach."

Previously, Wallis could almost be seen as the leader among Black Street's powers, although the "leader's" gold content was not solid and not universally acknowledged, he was definitely the biggest.

He had quite a few followers, and even if they had to listen to Bai E due to external factors, the nature of these people hadn't changed — they were bullies, feared the powerful while oppressing the weak, idled around, and were lazy gluttons.

Gilder chose to put these people through the paces as the lowest-level hard laborers, while Black Street's Li Ming Enforcement Team was comprised of the ordinary people who had been oppressed in the past.

Gilder's intentions were good, but in practice, he had to be careful of the resentment that might sprout from those who were used to being influential and powerful.

Evil thoughts attract the attention of higher-dimensional demons the most. While forcing these people to work, it is also important to focus on educating their minds and spirits.

"I understand, sir..."

"I believe in you." Bai E looked into his eyes earnestly, "But if there's anything inconvenient for you during management, you can get them to do it. Protect yourselves well; Black Street is just a pilot, you are the core."

Bai E then looked up, indicating the direction of the dungeon entrance.

If there's a task, let the players handle it; they are not afraid of death or offending anyone.

To manage well, means are necessary.

"That will be all for now. Communicate with me promptly about any situations. If you cannot come back often, let Fernandi deliver the message. Unless something unexpected happens, I will come by every day at noon."

"Yes! Sir."

"Oh, and I have to assign a task tomorrow. I'm not sure how long it will take. If you encounter any issues that you can't resolve, try to delay as much as possible."

Only after arranging everything did Bai E leave, satisfied.

"Let's go!"

In the afternoon, there were no specific training courses scheduled; Psychic Pressure Resistance Training was held every other day. However, considering the objectives of the task, Bai E wanted to learn some skills that might be useful.

Chapter 303 Anatomy

For instance, "dissection."

The corpses of Bug Race can yield the so-called "Zerg Purification Extract," which is the core material for making Gene Optimization Solution. Bai E still isn't clear about the specific details of production, but having more raw materials is definitely not an issue.

Since he has the desire to establish a large-scale organization, he certainly cannot allow others to choke off his access to core resources.

Technical issues might depend on his own future opportunities or the efforts of the players, but raw materials—that's fair game for whoever wins them in battle.

One cannot always rely on a lucky strike for resource acquisition; it's not stable and is too wasteful.

By mastering the method of harvesting materials directly from cadavers with skill, players can also organize hunting teams to accumulate resources for their own organizations.

There is still a considerable distance to the location of the dissection teaching, but the stench of blood and decay already fills Bai E's nostrils from the air.

It's still early, and the course hasn't started.

There is only one person, clad in a leather coat so soaked in blood that it cannot be fully washed clean... a butcher?

He seems to be preparing the cadavers for dissection for the soon-to-arrive students, and his gaze, filled with lethal intent, sweeps over Bai E as he arrives.

That look made Bai E think for a moment that the man was contemplating where to start cutting from his own body...

"I haven't seen you before, and I didn't receive any notice of new students joining," the other said indifferently, speaking as if the scent of blood lingered between his teeth.

Bai E cautiously inquired, "I heard that anyone interested could come to listen in?"

Dissection is unlike the "dressing" skills he learned before; incorrect treatment could lead to death.

Therefore, one must be arranged and connected to join the student group; a doctor's qualification is fixed, without any concept of a guest appearance.

Dissection, however, is different. Sometimes after a battle, the enemy's reinforcements could arrive at any time. At such moments, every second counts, and you take what useful spoils you can, even if the unorthodox methods mean the spoil's quality is poor or scarce, it's still a profit.

Every military campaign for humans is a massive expenditure, and wars cannot be sustained long without war feeding war.

Even learning a little brings profit, and the barriers to entry are not high.

Moreover, for the individuals among the soldiers, those who can manage to sweep the battlefield post-combat and bring back useful resources for their camp evidently can earn more military merits, making it a win-win situation.

Thus many soldiers like to master more skills in their spare time that can bring them profit. It's not surprising that many visitable courses cover such skills.

"Fine," the butcher nodded and went about moving one cadaver after another onto the dissection tables.

Bug Race's... beastmen's... mutants'... wild beasts'...

The military base hosts countless small units that embark on missions nearly every day, either for reconnaissance or patrol, and these alien species never rest, always presenting opportunities for an encounter.

Soldiers captured by the enemy are naturally buried in the wilderness, while the corpses brought back dead or alive by the soldiers can also be converted into military honors for humans.

Upon this land, sworn enemies hunt each other.

Bai E stands quietly to the side, waiting for the official students to gather.

He actually wanted to lend a hand, but was refused...

The butcher, busy with preparations, occasionally glanced at the figure standing to the side.

The serious and patient attitude was somewhat satisfying, but such waiting was destined to be in vain.

Many of the secrets of dissection aren't demanding, but he wasn't there to teach entry-level knowledge every day.

As the course progresses, some deeper knowledge points require hands-on practice to learn. The bits picked up by listeners, unverified by practice, aren't of much use.

And without the foundation laid prior, one has no room for imagination, making listening from the side a waste of time.

Shaking his head privately and noticing the time had come, regardless of whether all the official students had arrived, the butcher shouted, "Gather up!"

A surge of murderous aura exploded from him, causing some of the faint-hearted to involuntarily turn pale under the roar.

"Last lesson, we talked about what to watch out for when dissecting corpses of different species." The butcher holding a bone-scalpel scraped it across the smooth steel spike, producing a shrill sound. His eyes scanned the warriors in front of him as if calculating who to cut first, "This lesson, we start with practical combat! Of course, for those observers..."

The butcher's gaze flicked over Bai E, along with two or three other soldiers. As the course deepened, the number of observers had dwindled, those who kept coming with Bai E had a certain foundation from the start.

Only Bai E... was a completely unfamiliar face.

"...they can cut as much as they can, even if what they cut cannot be used, it's not a loss. But you!" The butcher's eyes coldly swept across the group of official students, "The superiors have invested time and effort in training you to achieve the best. Your operations cannot afford a single mistake, every usable part of the organ must not be wasted, and every unusable part must not be contaminated!"

Just like the toxin glands inside the bodies of Bug Race, if punctured carelessly during dissection, the blood soaked with toxin immediately becomes unusable.

Moreover, species like the Bug Race and beastmen, even though their wills have perished, the strong vitality in their bodies lets their dead carcasses still retain a kind of stress response. Without paying attention to these feedbacks, precious spoils will be wasted.

"Now... begin!"

The official students teamed up in pairs and approached the dissection tables with various corpses laid out on them.

The butcher surveyed the scene, measuring each apprentice's performance while casually explaining some of the basic points of knowledge.

"The most essential part of the bug is the tender meat that includes its heart. Their essence extract is refined from here. When making the incision, be careful not to let their acidic blood contaminate the surface tissue, or the extract will be rendered useless."

"Orc chest cavity's fungal broth shouldn't be wasted. It's the most precious part of their entire body. Once processed, it can be used as fertilizer for crop cultivation, with an extremely terrifying increase in yield."

While claiming indifference, the butcher could still manage to share some knowledge in an understandable way for the bystanders, without wasting time.

[You are learning "Knowledge — Dissection," progress 1%...]

"The orc's brain is also the core part for extracting their genetic material. However, you can be a bit more rough, to save time, since the fungal tissue isn't as delicate as it appears and is hard to damage."

[You are learning "Knowledge — Dissection," progress 19%...]

Dissection isn't just about cutting a few pieces of meat from a corpse, and the meat cut off isn't just for eating.

The dissection itself requires familiarity with the target's structure and an understanding of how the by-products can be utilized, which are all part of the knowledge needed in "dissection."

The amount of information can be much more overwhelming than simple bandaging.

"Some mutants form a 'genetic seed' in their heart, lungs, brain, or other organs, carrying their core abilities after mutation. They're extremely fragile and must be handled with the utmost care during dissection!"

"When dissecting, you must plan ahead, prioritizing the parts you need. Don't neglect the rest for the sake of the core piece, causing everything to go to waste in the process. Our resources are limited, we must utilize every recoverable resource as best as we can."

Bai E focused intently, his ears tuned to the instructor's lecture while he craned his neck to watch the appalling operation by two apprentices fumbling around in a foul-smelling thoracic cavity at a dissection table.

Luckily, today's formal apprentices were not performing very smoothly. The butcher moved around, continuously giving guidance, his expression growing increasingly stern.

"That's wrong! Follow the muscle fiber, if you cut down hard like that you'll not only exert unnecessary effort, but also risk losing control and hitting parts you shouldn't!"

[You are learning "Knowledge — Dissection," progress 50%...]

[Learning "Knowledge — Dissection" has reached the minimum requirements; instructional mode activated.]

[Instruction: You've already grasped quite a bit of basic knowledge on dissection. Observing others is now your best teacher. You can pay a certain cost (combat experience/general experience) to learn the operations showcased by others to round out your understanding of dissection. But since the

experience level of your targets is lacking, you'll also need to pay an additional experience cost for automatic correction of mistakes. (Cost: 20 points of experience/min)]

Is there even a question? Just learn it.

After all, Bai E, with his tens of thousands of experience in storage, doesn't mind this trivial expenditure at all.

[You are paying combat experience to learn others' dissection experience...]

[You are learning "Knowledge — Dissection," progress 55%...]

[...Dissection experience +1.]

[You are learning "Knowledge — Dissection," progress 61%...]

[...Dissection experience +1.]

Dissection is a skill that combines time and knowledge. Bai E roamed the crowd, learning from the strength of many, and eventually mastered the knowledge of dissection.

[Current dissection experience 0/300. At 300 points, you can master "Level 2 Dissection."]

[Dissection (1/4 levels): Your familiarity with the dissection targets now allows you to have a high probability of extracting "Easy Difficulty" resources from complex bodies.]

Not bad... It cost less than 200 points of experience, a bit more wasteful than direct upgrades, but not by much.

[Detected that the character's current combat skills are outstanding. Your familiarity with the physical structure of combat targets allows you to have a "very high probability" of adding +1 to base proficiency and +1 to base damage when initiating attacks with (small arms, ranged weapons, melee) and other forms of attack.]

Is there also a synergy? What a score! Bai E felt a tinge of happiness in his heart.

The butcher, also patrolling the area, was now standing beside a dissection table, watching two apprentices in the same group fumble clumsily. The butcher's voice even carried a hint of murderous intent, "How long have you been learning! You've had real practice in the past, how can you still be so disorganized now!"

The butcher's stern voice made the two apprentices tremble all over.

However, the instructor, who seemed to have a short temper, did not stop the criticism, "You are too crude for this kind of delicate work, you should be on the battlefield wielding big swords to chop people up!"

"Sorry... sorry, instructor," muttered one apprentice in a low voice.

The reason he avoided the front lines and applied to learn these specialized skills, which didn't require immediate combat deployment, was exactly that.

Even logistics soldiers are soldiers, with an official designation and no need to risk their lives.

The butcher didn't cease his attack, "Useless! Even those bystanders could do better than you!"

Another natural-born soldier, worried about losing his "rice bowl," mumbled under his breath, "I don't believe that..."

"You don't believe it?" The butcher's voice suddenly rose, glancing at three bystander apprentices who were gathering around to watch the commotion, "Come here! All three of you, come over!"

Chapter 304 Essence Extraction Equation!

The two auditing students who were called over had bitter expressions and looked at the outspoken natural-born soldier with a bit of resentment in their eyes.

"Brother, what was the point of talking back? Now you've gotten yourself into actually having to do the practical operation too."

If us and others don't perform well, won't we also be scolded?

Moreover, if these regular students who have the opportunity to practice can't do it right, how can they expect us, who just occasionally come by for a splash of soy sauce, to manage?

And the instructor, why did you have to drag us into your bragging?

It's tough! So tough!

The two auditing students glanced cautiously at the Butcher instructor, only thinking about how to tactfully decline.

"Why are you standing there, go on, you're up."

"..."

The auditing students timidly looked towards the Butcher instructor, their eyes carrying a hint of retreat.
"Instructor..."

The Butcher instructor stared at him with a strange look, "Are you not up to it? I remember you've attended the classes without missing any."

Who could be so serious if not someone who can really learn? As the course deepened, from the bustling crowd of auditing students to now just a few kittens, those remaining are truly dedicated.

The Butcher had a deep impression of him.

At that moment, the voice of the auditing student was even weaker, "I... I just have some spare time..."

Just watching... watching the excitement.

The rest of the words he didn't dare to say, but his timidity was clearly a profound disappointment to the Butcher instructor.

"Hey!"

"May I give it a try, instructor?"

A pair of bright eyes looked straight into the Butcher's, and the instructor looked with some surprise at the "newcomer" he was meeting for the first time today.

"You?"

Bai E's lips bore a faint smile, "Having listened to the instructor's explanations and watched everyone's operations, I think I might give it a try."

Ambitious, proactive.

Since he had decided that he wanted to become a warlord and claim 51% of the real power of Blackwater City, he had to start from the ground up, slowly but surely.

Once all the key players of the city were on his side, the city would bear the name Bai.

Conversely, even if he was unparalleled in strength, he wouldn't forcibly be able to seize power.

If a tyrant represented the brute force of unilateral actions, then a warlord symbolized the convincing power of influence.

He needed to become familiar to everyone and be remembered, even if he hadn't been asked, he had to volunteer and show off a bit to get his face known.

There might even be some energy credits coming in, a win-win situation.

"Are you sure?" the Butcher squinted his eyes suspiciously. "It's your first time here, right?"

"But I think I can give it a shot." Bai E's face was full of confidence, which even influenced the instructor to some extent.

The confident and bright smile made the Butcher's thoughts waver slightly, ready to see what this new face was capable of.

"Come on then." The Butcher nodded his head and stepped aside, revealing the autopsy table behind him. "If you need help, just say so."

[Triggered side quest—Autopsy in Action.]

[Autopsy in Action: Your proactive approach has the instructor brimming with anticipation for your performance. He is waiting for an outstanding show. Be aware! Your performance will determine your reward, so try to demonstrate your most exquisite skills. Quest Requirement: Complete one autopsy 0/1. Reward for Completion: Variable based on performance.]

Another quest?

Oh~ now it's a triple win.

The corpse on the autopsy table was a worker from the Bug Race, specifically a Vanguard Shield type, bulky and heavy-looking.

The reason for pairing up two people was so that when one person was cutting, the other could provide a bit of support, making it easier for the cutter to exert force.

But...

No need.

Since a perfect performance was the goal, it had to pack a significant punch.

Similarly, for a perfect show, Bai E maxed out his autopsy skill in one go.

[Autopsy (4/4 level): Your proficiency in dissection now allows you to perfectly extract "Easy Difficulty" resources from complex bodies, have a high chance of extracting "Medium Difficulty" resources, and a chance to extract "Hard Difficulty" resources, ensuring that everything you extract is "Absolutely Flawless"!]

[Detected that the character's current combat skills are outstanding. Your familiarity with the physical structure of combat targets allows you to inflict attacks (light firearms, ranged weapons, melee) with "at least" a +2 increase in base energy output and +2 in base damage inflicted; "a certain chance" of a +4 increase in base energy output and +4 in base damage inflicted.]

From level 1 to 4, it was just a matter of 1,800 points of universal experience, completely affordable for the current Bai E.

For a perfect performance and unknown rewards, it was absolutely worth the gamble.

There might even be a technology reward for making Optimization fluid, hahaha~

Bai E stepped forward, his expression solemn.

Although knowledge and abilities covered the body like instincts, facing something on the first try, one must never be careless.

In this real world, an individual's subjective performance is equally as important as the abilities they wield.

Bai E's movements were slow, yet steady.

Like a novice learning the ropes, he was filled with reverence for the actions he was about to take.

This cautious attitude was not like the confident ease of an expert, which even if feigned would be difficult to pull off.

"Seems it really is his first time handling this?"

That thought flickered through the butcher's mind as he watched Bai E's movements with interest.

If it was his first time, what gave him such confidence?

Was it true skill or just the fearlessness of the ignorant?

Bai E, holding a sharp boning knife, slowly made the first cut...

Parts of the Bug Race's flesh, once the acid glands and poison sacs were removed, were edible after special processing and contained protein six times that of beef; as the instructor had mentioned, the tasty mush they usually ate occasionally included this substance ground into paste.

The parts of the flesh that could harden were not pleasant to eat and less nutritious; there was no need to extract them.

"Snap!"

"Snap!"

Two large chunks of intact flesh were casually tossed by Bai E to the side of the dissection table, emitting a dull sound.

The butcher moved in closer, surprised and intrigued, pinched the flesh, and observed meticulously—

The cutting technique followed the muscle grain perfectly, not only smooth but also enhancing the texture to a degree; holding the meat in his hand, the butcher felt as if he could see "Flavor +1," "Flavor +1" indicators popping up before his eyes.

Perfect!

The acid glands and poison sacs were not entirely useless, either; these natural biochemical weapons from the Bug Race could be converted into perfect toxic agents after a bit of extraction, and some of their components could even be processed for medicinal uses.

But one must be careful, careful, and then careful again!

Bai E performed the extraction of each gland and the surrounding muscle tissue with precision, neatly arranging the few organs from the worker creature's body, a total of twelve, on the table.

The butcher examined each one and the only word echoing in his mind was—

Perfect!

Then came the most crucial part, the prized flesh, key for refining Essence Extraction fluid. The amount one worker creature could provide was perhaps not even a drop, but little accumulates to become much; given time and technique, each creature was worth extracting from.

"Snap!"

After Bai E first cut away the usually discarded acid glands and poison sacs, the process of excising the prized flesh became much easier.

As the entirety of a creature was almost perfectly dissected before their eyes, with all its tissues presented in different forms amidst the bi-section, the spectators were so astounded they could only gape and stand frozen in place.

A perfect piece of art!

"Is this really his first time?"

However, as earnest as his movements were, they lacked the effortless air that seemed to emanate from the very bones of those who truly possessed such skill.

"Badass!"

The butcher swallowed hard.

He could do it, too, but how many years had he spent mastering this craft? And how long had this seemingly young warrior been exposed to it?

Could his innate talent truly be so terrifying?

And it wasn't just the few nearby, but almost all the soldiers in training turned their heads after noticing the instructor's mouth shut and the quiet environment.

And so...

["Lucky Strike" energy +43.]

[Your outstanding performance has deeply impressed the instructor, raising the mission reward to the highest tier, now drawing the reward.]

[Side mission—Dissection in Action, completed.]

[Mission reward: Technology - Essence Extraction Equation, distributed.]

Chapter 305 Initial Disguise Removal

[You have mastered "Technology - Essence Extraction Equation," and now you can improve the technology level by investing "General/Scientific Research Experience."]

Technology...

This was the first practical, complete technology Bai E had obtained; as long as he paid with experience, he could unlock its applications.

The 1000 points of Scientific Research Experience that he had amassed earlier from collaborating with Helen on the Advanced Physical Training Program 3.0 had been lying unused. Now, it seemed they could be put to use to see the effects.

[Payment: Scientific Research Experience 1000 points.]

[Current "Technology - Essence Extraction Equation" experience 1000/1000, continue to pay "Technology Points*1" to unlock "Level 1 Technology - Essence Extraction Equation."]

[Payment: Technology Points*1.]

[Technology - Essence Extraction Equation (Level 1): You have mastered the basic biological essence extraction process and are familiar with the related materials and equipment involved in the extraction process. From now on, you can oversee the construction and management of essence extraction production lines, and you can somewhat reduce the losses during production. Production Loss -10%]

The biggest difference between technology and knowledge is that one is knowledge you can apply yourself, while the other enables you to mobilize others, completing assembly-line production to expand productivity.

That's why the experience it requires is ten times that of equivalent knowledge...

Using the universal General Experience instead of the specialized Scientific Research Experience feels like quite a loss.

Having satisfied his curiosity with Level 1 technology, Bai E instantly dismissed any further plans to develop in this aspect for the time being. Such an endeavor was too resource-intensive, something he wasn't ready to handle yet.

Mission accomplished.

Time to slip away!

Bai E gently set down the bone-carving knife and politely bid farewell, "Instructor, if there's nothing else, I'll be going now."

"Wait." The butcher gently caressed the knife Bai E had used, looked him in the face seriously, and asked, "To which unit do you belong?"

"Me?" Bai E smiled, "Just an ordinary one, operating mechas."

"..."

As he walked away, Bai E pondered his future plans in the military camp; scenes like today's were worth frequenting.

For one, there was Energy Charge to harvest, and for another, it was an opportunity to make his presence known amongst various personalities in the camp.

Perhaps these numerous grassroots characters couldn't decisively influence everything, but on the odd occasion, support from these different unit grassroots characters could provide an undeniable force.

Who knows...

Moreover, these non-combat capabilities could surprisingly also enhance his combat abilities. Just this fact alone made this learning experience absolutely worthwhile.

The enhancement to combat abilities provided by dissection was a basic numerical increase, which, when coupled with abilities like instantaneous killing or powerful shooting that multiply damage, could cause the base numbers to increase exponentially, significantly boosting the lethality.

The only strange thing was why only "Light Firearms, Long-Range Weapons, Hand-to-Hand Combat"—these three specialized abilities—provided enhancements?

Is it because of... the level of proficiency?

The other specializations were only at levels 1 to 2, while these three were at levels 4 to 5.

So, perhaps the minimum requirement to trigger enhancements was Level 3? Or was it Level 4 proficiency?

Not important, there'll always be a chance to verify this in the future.

Having achieved his set goal, Bai E hastened to the dining hall, quickly ate a few bites, and then rushed to the secluded corner he had arranged to meet Yue Ying.

After slaying the high-dimensional demon and absorbing all the Spiritual Energy it dropped, Bai E's total amount of Spiritual Energy had reached a full 60 points.

Yue Ying once said that he could learn new techniques once his total amount of Spiritual Energy had improved; he wondered if 60 points would be considered sufficient.

Brimming Spiritual Energy kept Bai E's mind consistently lucid; for the past few days, he felt as though he had an inexhaustible supply of energy, hardly feeling any fatigue or exhaustion.

It was still early, Yue Ying had not arrived, so Bai E sat down to meditate on his own.

A one-time transaction was, after all, occasional; there weren't many targets that could burst with Spiritual Energy, and he couldn't always rely on killing to improve his abilities. Regular meditation was an eternal necessity.

Supported by a force both illusory and real, Bai E's body floated lightly as if he were transcending mortality.

The silent figure, who had arrived unnoticed, watched the seated warrior intently.

He seemed to be sitting on the ground, yet he was actually afloat at least two or three centimeters off the ground.

In other words, his Spiritual Energy was already powerful enough to lift his own body.

How long had it been since he first encountered Spiritual Energy?

Yue Ying pursed her thin lips, her gaze complex as she watched the meditating warrior.

Even among her own race, the Elf Race, such a gifted talent was rare to see.

Few, apart from his own sister, could achieve such rapid enhancement.

"Yue Ying?"

A gentle call roused Yue Ying from his momentary distraction.

Feeling an oppressive sense of a foreign object approaching, Bai E opened his eyes and saw Yue Ying looking at him; his bottom had returned to the ground, and he hadn't even realized that he had briefly floated.

"Mhm~" Yue Ying hummed, his elongated, willow-leaf-like eyes fixed intently on Bai E, cutting straight to the point, "Were you the one last night?"

"..." Bai E was startled, having not expected that last night's event would alarm the young miss.

A fleeting thought crossed his mind, and without any hesitation, Bai E nodded in agreement, "Yes."

There was no need to lie to Yue Ying, and it would probably be impossible to deceive her anyway.

If she was asking him this question so firmly now, it likely meant that she had watched the entire event last night.

As for why no one had noticed her presence... Could someone at the peak level of combat power that Bai E currently recognized, who chose to hide, really be discovered by others?

When Yue Ying heard Bai E's almost instant agreement, a slight joy stirred in her heart—

'He doesn't want to lie to me.'

"Actually, I also felt that someone like you... I didn't expect it to really be you." Yue Ying spoke with a tone of slight lament, even though she had guessed and was almost certain, when the person himself confirmed it, she couldn't help but feel a wave of surprise.

The memory of last night's two arrows and their style flashed through her mind again; these were skills and abilities she had never taught him.

Such remarkable comprehension.

And... a leader with enough charisma.

On the long street, faced with everyone's worship, he accepted it nonchalantly and thereafter shouldered the responsibility of managing them.

This was not about glory, but sacrifice.

Just as he said, the meaning of a crown lies not in being above others, but in eternal guardianship.

Such a person would surely rise to a high position in their human cities soon, wouldn't he?

As for the internal affairs of humans, Yue Ying, feeling like an outsider, had no interest in further understanding or interfering; she only wished to deeply connect with the souls that she found interesting.

This human warfighter before her seemed to already possess the qualifications to be accepted by the Elf Race.

For the first time, Yue Ying actively removed the hood that shrouded her head.

Her hood was not tight, but it always prevented one from clearly seeing her face underneath, which felt more like a spiritual energy block.

Only when she performed a specific action... like removing her hood, did it imply that she was lifting this block.

A delicate and charming face appeared suddenly before the eyes, the crystal-pink thin lips parted slightly, shimmering like dusted with gold, irresistible to the urge of drawing closer to passionately indulge in a kiss.

In terms of sheer beauty, even the most captivating and stunning Helen could not compete with the beauty of an elf on the basis of pure looks alone.

Beautiful to the point of surreal, yet tangibly real.

"..." The impact of the breathtaking beauty so close by made Bai E involuntarily space out for a moment, as if the air itself became still, and his heart uncooperatively paused for a split second.

Then it resumed once again.

Using self-restraint to control the secretion of exciting hormones in his body, the light of reason reclaimed its place in Bai E's eyes.

"I finally understand why you have always worn a disguise."

This level of a femme fatale, who wouldn't be enraptured by her looks?

She was a walking aphrodisiac; letting her wander around, Blackwater City would transform into a den of carnal demons by tomorrow.

Yue Ying's lips curved lightly, a smile gracing her features; no one dislikes praise, provided they themselves are not dislikeable.

Her gaze stayed focused on Bai E; under the boost of her attractiveness, such gaze was especially heart-racing. Yue Ying was aware of her lethality to most humans.

But satisfyingly, she couldn't detect a hint of desire in the eyes of the human warfighter before her.

As expected...

After all, she believed that someone who could resist her spiritually-charged desire on that night would not easily be corrupted by mere beauty.

"The policies you implemented yesterday are quite interesting, why do you require them to work?" Yue Ying asked, still locking eyes with Bai E, as it was her habit.

Eyes seldom lie, especially not under her scrutiny.

Chapter 306 Spiritual Energy Curtain

Heaven knows there is a kind of satisfaction in being intently stared at by such a beautifully unreal girl.

Yes, that's right, a girl.

Yue Ying's actual age is unknown, and by the Elf Race's standard for adulthood, she was certainly older than Bai E's apparent age by several cycles, but the trait of this race is to keep their appearance forever young.

Once they reach adulthood, they are forever frozen in that most youthful and beautiful moment, until death.

The slightly juvenile visage combined with Yue Ying's sincere, inquisitive eyes would be unbearable for anyone.

Though Yue Ying might be powerful, and her age meant she had considerable experience, the race's understanding of "the Way" ensured that a part of "sincerity" always remained in their character.

Even if they were vastly superior in status and strength, when faced with something they did not understand, they could still seek guidance with the utmost sincerity.

This kind of completely heartfelt gaze was so powerful it was unimaginable, so much so that even Bai E, who had suppressed his emotions and sealed away his heart with concrete...couldn't help but feel his heart tremble and his flesh quiver.

The true thoughts swirling in his mind thus blurted out, "Create."

"Create?"

"Humans cannot stop creating. When a person stops creating, they start to become narrow-minded, start to select, to stagnate, and to exclude anything that does not fit their cognition. Work is not the goal, but first, I need to get them moving."

The people from Black Street do not engage in production. They only think about plundering, only about encroaching, so the seeds of greedy desire grow within them, waiting for an opportunity to erupt.

The feedback from players' tasks may have accelerated and amplified this process and outcome, but the essence still originates from their hearts.

War gang leaders like Wallis are merely the ones who are most gravely affected and most likely to encounter players issuing large-scale tasks, and therefore the most prone to fall, but he is definitely not the only source of danger.

The extreme of any emotion, if taken to its limit, can become twisted and extreme.

Will all the native inhabitants who have interacted with players and issued tasks to them fall into depravity? Bai E does not think so.

Demons are amplifiers of emotion, but they cannot create something out of nothing.

Bai E's gaze was somewhat distant, as if recalling something.

Perhaps falling into memories was the greatest weapon against the close-at-hand beauty of Yue Ying.

Looking up at the moonlight in the sky, Bai E spoke softly, "The weapons to fight demons are never the blades and swords of the Arbitration Place, but the inner peace and contentment that come from people's hearts."

After coming to this world, having witnessed many things related to demons, Bai E had developed a bit of his own understanding of this seemingly idealistic existence.

Because this world is too terrible, people's hearts are always restless.

They need the golden hope to fight against the instability of life; they need a fulfilling life to stand against the nullity of existence.

The order given in Black Street at that time might have been a spur-of-the-moment impulse, but it was only after calming down and talking to Yue Ying that Bai E truly sorted out the core logic behind each of his thoughts.

"So, I want them to be happy, free, and blissful. To face demons, this is the only and not everlasting countermeasure. Every day I am here, I will exert my utmost effort."

Black Street is just the beginning; this grand ambition will eventually sweep across the universe.

Bai E's whisper settled, and Yue Ying was profoundly moved.

Her Spiritual Energy Capacity was incredibly powerful, and she could sense the bit of will conveyed by the Spiritual Energy emanating from Bai E's body.

Speech can deceive people, but the faith intertwined with Spiritual Energy cannot lie.

In a trance, in her consciousness, it seemed she could only see a cold, golden sun rising in the distant dark space, its eternal radiance offering peace to the souls of countless beings.

The only pity is... that radiance is too far from her, too far.

Far enough to cross time and space.

Far enough to be forever out of reach.

As time ticked by, Yue Ying blinked, coming back to her senses.

Her absolute sensitivity to time made her aware that only three seconds had passed, yet it felt like a century.

Looking at the human warrior before her, Yue Ying's eyes carried a hint of reverence.

There are not many who dare to commit to such grand ambitions. A determination firm enough to be recognized by Spiritual Energy and that seeks to emerge in the world only needs...absolute execution.

And last night, this ability had already begun to show itself.

A bold idea suddenly rose in her heart—

Perhaps, under his leadership, humanity could return to the Golden Age?

But no matter what, the first thing needed was sufficient strength.

Yue Ying's tone became indifferent once more, "Since you want to protect everyone, the first thing you need to do is ensure you won't be taken down first. How is your progress with your Spiritual Energy?"

More advanced Spiritual Energy techniques required a higher Spiritual Energy Capacity to support them. She hadn't felt much Spiritual Energy fluctuation during Bai E's intervention last night, and given he had only recently come into contact with Spiritual Energy, it seemed likely...

"Hoo!"

Spiritual Perception sensed a breeze blowing towards her.

The wind wasn't fast, nor was its force strong, but it was enough for Yue Ying to feel an unusual sensation.

The slightly sensitive touch made her subconsciously part her lips slightly, and immediately after, she realized what she had just witnessed.

Spiritual Energy!

The gathered Spiritual Energy had created a breeze out of thin air, which was perceived by her Spiritual senses.

The amount of Spiritual Energy required to achieve this effect... was at least over 50 points!

Was this something a person who had been in contact with Spiritual Energy for only two days could achieve?!

What kind of monster had she actually taught?!

["Lucky Strike" Charge+5.]

"Not bad," Yue Ying controlled her emotions, trying not to let them become too sensitive, "Since that is the case, you also qualify to learn how to establish your own defensive system."

10 points of Spiritual Energy was considered the official entry level, with subsequent growth in powers of ten marking major stage advancements. However, within each Spiritual Energy stage, there were some finer thresholds.

For example, between the first stage of 10 points of Spiritual Energy and the second stage of 100 points, 50 points of Spiritual Energy was also a threshold for learning techniques.

"When a Spiritual Energy practitioner burns their Spiritual Energy, it causes their Spiritual Body in high-dimensional space to light up like a torch, and this unusual glow may attract the attention of wandering demons from high-dimensional spaces. You should be aware of this, right?"

Bai E obediently nodded, "I know."

Although he hadn't felt anything unusual when using Spiritual Energy the night before, perhaps... probably... it was just good luck?

"There are currently two strategies for dealing with high-dimensional space demon attacks: one is to establish defenses, and the other is to evade."

"Bright" light? Then reduce its "brightness."

If you're likely to be attacked, then actively respond to the attack.

These were the different strategies chosen by humans and the Elf Race to deal with the dangers of burning Spiritual Energy.

Humans were more aggressive, keen on confronting head-on.

The Elf Race, having suffered great losses, preferred to conceal themselves.

"However, the so-called evasion is not about physically reducing brightness, but rather a dim and hidden state of one's own Spiritual Energy, which we refer to as a Spiritual Energy Veil."

[You are learning Spiritual Energy related skills...]

[Triggered teaching mission——Spiritual Energy Veil.]

[Teaching Mission—Spiritual Energy Veil: As you delve deeper into the field of Spiritual Energy, you need to be aware of the dangers this double-edged power brings you. Only by learning how to protect yourself can you go further on the path of Spiritual Energy. Mission requirement: Follow Yue Ying's guidance to completely establish a veil for your own Spiritual Body 0/1. Mission Completion Reward: Mystique +0.1.]

Familiar missions popped up, and Bai E felt a sense of comfort.

Mystique was the base attribute determining Spiritual Energy.

The higher the Mystique attribute, the more sensitive the perception of Spiritual Energy and the more skillful its invocation.

This attribute, unlike physical fitness or reflexes which could be steadily improved through training, was extremely precious with every tiny increase.

"Close your eyes, focus on your 'inspiration'."

To establish a protective veil for oneself, one first needed to recognize the existence of one's own Spiritual Body reflected in high-dimensional space, and from there observe the veil established by the mentor's connected Spiritual Body due to their life force fields being closely interconnected in high-dimensional space.

Any learning's first step always started with observation and imitation.

Bai E and Yue Ying sat facing each other, their fingers interlocking.

When Spiritual Energy was not particularly strong, the life force fields trapped within the body could only be guaranteed to enter "the same area" of that mysterious and strange high-dimensional space when the physical bodies were in actual contact.

Under Yue Ying's guidance, Bai E's Spiritual Energy began to explore "outside."

Not the "outside" space of the physical world, but the "outside" beyond the world's layers...

Chapter 307 First Experience with a Spiritual Body

The high-dimensional space was chaos, and under Yueying's guidance, Bai E, who was beginning to make contact with this space, had not directly perceived what this peculiar space itself should look like in all its splendor.

Without full preparation and powerful cultivation, "directly viewing" the high-dimensional space itself is an extremely dangerous act.

Those immersed in the spiritual energy system for a long time find it hard to control the impulsive desire to roam this mysterious space constantly, and the whispers lingering around their ears are constantly guiding them to explore deeper into this world.

Fortunately, Bai E had not been in the field of spiritual energy for long, and even the whispers of the high-dimensional space had not yet had a real impact on him; naturally, he also lacked the desire to explore prompted by the whispers.

Yueying's guidance allowed Bai E to focus solely on his spiritual body, so he did not observe more unknown territories that he should not come into contact with at his current stage.

Bai E's first perception of his own spiritual body was incredibly stable, a stability that comes from the one-on-one cultivation of the Elf Race.

The spiritual body... was like a soft, defenseless jellyfish.

Translucent, faint glow, fragile... yet variable.

Bai E really didn't know how to describe it; the only image that came to mind that came closest was those elves in the sea.

The only difference was that his own spiritual body roughly still had a human silhouette.

Although it was his own spiritual body, it was as if he was observing with an indifferent third-person perspective.

It was like an eye independent of the body was observing his entire body, a feeling so wonderful that it was somewhat beyond normal cognition, with a kind of forbidden beauty.

In contrast, Yueying next to him had a spiritual body with graceful curves. In the high-dimensional space where the concept of clothing didn't exist, her spiritual body reflected in this space was as alluring as her body concealed by clothing in the real world, a sinuous and buoyant twist that made her seem as lively as a mermaid living in water.

A faint glow outlined her form, with light of different colors and intensities creating detailed parts, and at the core, there was a point like a radiant ice crystal shining brightly in her chest.

Yueying's voice rang in the real world by his ears, and immersed in the spiritual body, Bai E only felt the voice become clearer and more moving, as if a tangible entity had penetrated directly into his body... into his thoughts.

"The presence of the veil is not about physically dimming the brightness, but about deceiving the perception of demons. It's a layer of consciousness deflection built outside the spiritual body. You need to be clear about this point first in order to learn," she said.

Yueying's spiritual body fluttered around Bai E's spiritual body like a nimble fish in the "dark ocean," and the distant yet deeply penetrating cold voice from the real world continued to be received by Bai E, "Now, 'observe' this layer with your spiritual body. I know it's difficult, don't worry, we have plenty of time."

[You are paying battle experience to analyze the veil constructed by the target spiritual body...]

[Current Analysis Completion: 0.3%]

...

There is no concept of space-time in the high-dimensional space, and the passage of time does not correspond to the real world. However, the sense of the passage of time perceived by the spiritual body is the only standard for judging the expenditure of experience.

The flow of "time" was like water, slow and gentle yet irresistibly flowing softly through the two spiritual bodies.

Time took nothing away, leaving behind... only tangible change.

[You are paying battle experience to analyze the veil constructed by the target spiritual body...]

[Current Analysis Completion: 32%]

"That's about it..."

Yueying's voice lightly arose directly in the consciousness, like being suddenly pulled up from deep underneath the sea, Bai E gasping for air only felt an ineffable thrill of the moment of release from suffocation.

"Huff~ Huff~" Bai E breathed deeply out of instinct.

"Establishing a deflection veil is a long process, not something that can be learned overnight. Before you fully learn it, you must be restrained in using your spiritual energy."

Of course, it's difficult to control oneself from using already possessed power, but when using it, one must pay attention—

Careful! Even more careful!

Reduce the frequency of use, and reduce the intensity of use.

Before establishing the veil, every use of spiritual energy is akin to dancing on the edge of a knife, and even after the veil is established, it can only hide a certain degree of spiritual energy intensity.

Excessive burning or active intent would still break the concealment effect of the veil.

"I understand," Bai E nodded cautiously.

The realm of spiritual energy was mysterious and unfathomable, yet adhered to certain rules.

The partial analysis was not enough to support him in establishing his own veil, but at least he had grasped some of the keys to this technique.

Without sufficient progress in the realm of spiritual energy, it is indeed impossible for a beginner to establish an effective spiritual body defense system.

And before growing to the point of being able to establish one's own defense system, the growth process of a spiritual energy practitioner is always accompanied by the covetousness of demons; indeed perilous and fatal.

Safety during one or two instances of spiritual energy burn doesn't mean it's always safe, caution is indeed needed in the future.

Just, Bai E wondered if this mission mentioned by Ying would be troublesome, and when the time came to burn spiritual energy, he would still need to control himself...

As they spoke, a dim light had already begun to spread in the peripheral vision of Bai E.

Bai E stood up and respectfully saluted, "Thank you for your efforts, Miss Yueying."

On this lady from the Elf Race, Bai E had not noticed any trace of utilitarian motives.

She had devotedly taught him all of these abilities without asking for anything in return, as if her sole purpose was to teach.

Such a pure person... elf, deserved respect.

"However, I might not be able to come tonight," Bai E turned to look at the edge of the sky.

The day had fully broken, he hadn't slept at all throughout the night, but he did not feel tired.

The mission that Hu and the others talked about was scheduled for today; he didn't know how tracking sandworms would compare to the last mission of aiding refugees, but chances were that he wouldn't make it back tonight in time. It was better to inform Yueying in advance to prevent her from waiting in vain through the night.

"Alright," Yueying nodded, slowly extending her hands to reshuffle the hood from behind and put it on, instantly concealing herself in a shadow, "Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

Bai E turned and left, for on the day of a mission, Hu and the others got up very early.

Watching Bai E's retreating figure, Yueying, hidden in the shadow of the hood, squinted her eyes.

For some reason, perhaps because she had pointed out his external identity, or maybe due to some change in his own state of mind, today's Bai E seemed a bit... proactive?

Or should it be said, more ambitious?

Compared to his previous "humility," there was a stronger sense of assertiveness.

But it didn't make anyone feel uneasy; instead, it brought a closeness... was it because he became more genuine?

"..." Pressing her lips together, Yueying turned and walked away with her hands behind her back.

She moved lightly, appearing somewhat cheerful.

...

"Whoa! Where'd you go so early in the morning?"

Da Shan, who was organizing his gear, asked in surprise upon seeing Bai E return.

"Training..." Bai E replied briefly.

He felt it was not yet time to reveal the Spiritual Energy he had been learning from Yueying. A synthetic humanoid capable of cultivating Spiritual Energy... Moreover, having learned the Breathing Skill from an elf, who knew what kind of ripples it could cause.

After all these events, he indeed no longer had the worry of being dissected, yet some things could always be advanced in more favorable ways.

A synthetic humanoid warrior capable of cultivating Spiritual Energy?×

A synthetic humanoid warrior who had modified the Elf Breathing Skill to suit the human body! v

The surprise needed to be explosive enough to attract attention, regardless of whether or not the human high command valued it.

So, during ordinary times, a little concealment was still necessary.

Bai E's current vague responses left his teammates thinking he was just exercising in the early morning.

"Awesome!" Da Shan exclaimed in amazement, "Amazing!"

They hadn't seen Bai E when they went to sleep, and they hadn't seen him when they woke up.

Surely, a person couldn't go without sleep, right? Setting aside the impossible, it could only mean that the kid was incredibly dedicated!

They were already trying hard, so why didn't their "hard work" seem as "hard-working" as someone else's?

"Damn it!" You bit her lip in secrecy, her cat-like stubbornness making her pride all the more intense.

"Alright, get your own gear ready. We're preparing to gather and set out," said Hu as he casually tossed a small black circular electronic device to Bai E, "Attach this to your chest. It will monitor your vital signs, allowing the base to keep track of your condition at all times."

"Ah?" Bai E puzzled over the small device in his hand, noticing that it bore a small indicator light, blinking red in a regular pattern.

Song Ying seemed more interested in the tech equipment and took the initiative to explain: "It's new gear from the information department for us to test out. They say it allows the base to monitor the vital signs and approximate positions of those of us out on missions so they can generally determine if the task is completed. More complex sensors are still in development; this is just a basic model. Anyway, just wear it, and consider it providing them with test data."

"Oh~" Bai E nodded in understanding.

This kind of device that surpassed current local area network data transmission ranges was undoubtedly a result of the technological innovations stirred up by the recent reboot of the internet root server.

Major technical changes might be temporarily out of his reach, but such technology, likely already in existence, now simply needed a switch in the signal receiver to make it work, bringing rapid innovation.

Chapter 308 Level 6 specialization

...

Having put on his own gear, Tiger glanced over his teammates, all suited up in their combat equipment, before he began to formally discuss the specifics of the mission—

"Considering the range the sandworms can appear in is vast and their exact location is uncertain, this mission will involve a total of ten squads, each responsible for a different area. We will each set off separately..."

As he spoke, Tiger paused, looking solemnly at his teammates, "The sandworm is a new type of bug, and although there are no strict requirements from above, they only require our five squads together to bring back at least one sandworm corpse, even if it's just broken remains. But we cannot rely on others for anything, we must catch at least one sandworm ourselves, preferably alive. The more we do, the more military merit we earn; you all know this, so I won't waste words."

"The time limit for the mission is three days. Be prepared for prolonged tracking and fierce battles. Everyone got it?"

"Understood!"×4

"Good!" Tiger nodded coldly, took a step forward, "Let's move out!"

Considering the sheer size of sandworms, bringing back their bodies, even dead ones, would require adequate space or carrying capacity.

The massive transport vehicle, with at least a ten-meter-long carriage, lay quietly before everyone's eyes.

The camouflage-painted carriage was enclosed but also easily dismantled to meet different requirements.

This was the first attempt at capturing such new types of sandworms, and no one knew the proper method yet.

"I'll drive," Dashan volunteered as he jumped into the driver's seat, while the two and a half row carriages in front had ample space to accommodate the rest of the teammates.

"Boom!"

The engine roared, and the massive dual tires screeched against the ground.

Numerous tracks left the camp almost simultaneously, with comrades rolling down the windows to exchange blessings before parting ways.

Tiger sat in the middle, took out a map, and pointed to a spot, "Here, including this entire area, is our mission range. Of course, if we track down the exact location of the target, there are no restrictions when pursuing it; completing the mission objectives is our priority."

Bai E scanned over the map and noticed the marked ranges were outrageously vast, far beyond the plains he had passed that day.

On every tunnel dug by the sandworms, there was an important notation on the map.

The entire range practically encompassed all the territories within a radius equal to the distance from the Bug Race hive to Blackwater City.

No wonder ten squads were dispatched at once, and almost from the beginning, they parted ways.

As for the area their squad was responsible for, it lay to the northwest of the Bug Race hive, which Bai E had never before encountered.

The journey was silent and shaky.

The teammates were fully focused, and once they left the protective range of the city, they could be said to have entered the potential activity range of the sandworms.

Facing completely unknown new types of bugs, no one knew their abilities or habits; every patch of yellow sand they passed over seemed like a den in which the sandworms might be hiding.

Bai E, however, was not as tense; with the experience from last time, he knew the advantage his hidden trait "Will of the Bug Nest" had in detecting bugs.

It was as if he had covertly hacked into the Bug Race's internet, a black user unnoticed. Although he currently couldn't use the Will of the Bug Nest to command those lower intelligence bugs to act on his will, as long as there was a Bug Race node network, he could somewhat sense the location of every lower-level individual following the commands from the node network.

Just like the premonition he had before the sandworms appeared last time, this ability stemmed from instinct and would rise to the forefront of his consciousness at the moment of occurrence, alerting him without any need for deliberate effort.

Bai E, with his built-in early-warning system, kept his spirits relaxed, even having the leisure to check last night's efforts from the players—

[Feedback from the assignment: your Insight +0.2, Stamina +0.1, Reflex +0.2, Mastery of Light Weapons Experience +57, Mastery of Light Firearms Experience +18, Mastery of Ranged Weapons Experience +32, Tech - Basic Electrical Manufacturing and Processing Experience +750, Knowledge - Human Body Modification Project 1.0 Experience +44.]

The addition of newcomers along with a brand-new mission resulted in skills improvement feedback from the tasks far exceeding the usual.

The long-silent Wen Jie seemed to have also opened up a new field of research, and the experience feedback also allowed Bai E to master a complete set of technological capabilities—

"Current 'Tech - Basic Electrical Manufacturing and Processing' experience 1250/1000, continue to pay 'Tech Points*1' to unlock 'Level 1 Tech - Basic Electrical Manufacturing and Processing'."

Free technology should not be wasted, and with his accumulated dozen or so tech points looking for a use, Bai E directly paid up, following the principle that if there's an alert, it must be clicked.

"Payment: Tech Points*1."

"Tech – Basic Electrical Manufacturing and Processing (Level 1): You have mastered the basic manufacturing and processing flow of electrical appliances and are thoroughly familiar with most details of manufacturing and assembling basic electrical components. From now on, you can supervise the construction and management of basic electrical assembly-line production, improving production efficiency to some extent. Production speed +10%"

Not bad... The accumulated technological skills would always find their place when building one's own territory. Bai E felt a profound sense of fulfillment as he gradually amassed various capabilities.

He also reviewed the rewards from the last main mission he had completed, taking the opportunity to sort through what he had gained.

The main mission's reward was not just experience and potential repair points but also 3 points that could be used to increase a specialization up to level 6.

The higher the specialization level, the more experience needed to upgrade, so the proficiency points that could directly raise a specialization by one level were undoubtedly most cost-effective when used from level 5 to 6.

At the moment, Bai E's only specialization that had reached level 5 was Combat Prowess, and he had learned quite a few special attribute bonuses under this specialization. Bai E didn't know if there was a limit to the special attribute bonuses for each specialization, but he had no interest in pursuing a perfect limit. After reaching a decent foundation, he preferred to leave the rest to chance.

Go ahead and add it up!

"Learned 'Level 6 Combat Prowess,' and concurrently received Potential Repair Point*1."

"Combat Prowess (Level 6): Punching power +12%, Evasion +6%, Blocking +6%, Combo (Special) +6, Reinforced Defense (Special) +250%, Opportunity (Special) +10%, Joint Techniques (Special) +100%, Intercepting (Special) +20%, Pressure Points (Special) +4%, Whip Tail (Special) +4."

"Current Combat Mastery experience 0 (137)/5500, at 5500 points 'Level 7 Combat Prowess' can be mastered. (Note: Specialization level 7 can unlock the secondary skill tree.)"

"Alert: Your specialization level has reached the limit of a normal human body. It will be difficult to make further progress until your abilities exceed the physical limits. To continue improving your specialization level, you need to enhance your strength and reflex attributes to beyond 15 points."

The promotion to level 6 specialization provided Bai E with plenty of new information—

The abilities provided by level 6 specializations have become impressively powerful with the accumulation of levels, but unfortunately, level 6 is a threshold—this level represents the limit of skills that a normal human body can attain.

Higher specialization levels require stronger foundational attributes for support, and it's not just the limits improved by the Gene Optimization Solution that matter, but one's actual attributes need to be exercised to that level in order to support the training of higher-level specializations.

The core foundational attributes required for Combat Prowess are strength and reflexes.

Bai E's strength has already reached 14.9, just a step away from surpassing 15, but his reflexes are still far behind.

Improvement in attributes definitely can't rely solely on oneself; motivating players more is also necessary...

Reaching the attribute standards sooner and upgrading specialization levels will enable one to experience the glory of the secondary skill tree.

...

"This is the first remote signal collection of our newly established signal base, a trial to test the stability of our base signal. Everyone must be vigilant and not miss any detail of the feedback information," said Minister Likok, his figure slightly emaciated and his eyes dark and sunken, but his expression was vibrant.

Ever since the internet Root Server was restarted, he had been working tirelessly on the reboot and innovative research of new informational technologies, never stopping.

The sensors provided to the military were both the agreed "reward" from the previous deal with Marshal Weslin of the military district and their first experiment.

"Yes, Minister!"

His subordinates responded energetically, but one researcher, without a word, looked a bit oddly at a row of red lights that had flickered a few times right in front of his eyes.

That was... the life feedback light of one of the ten squads out on missions...

Chapter 309 Strange Flicker

The red light symbolizing the life of the personnel wearing monitors was still on, which meant their owner's life was safe and sound.

It could only detect whether a person was alive, unable to monitor more detailed information—this was a temporary technological limitation.

After all, high-volume information transmission technology had been cut off for more than four hundred years; picking it back up wasn't so easy.

Therefore, the information that could be transmitted back through sensors was limited—first, the fairly accurate life feedback, and second, the not quite real-time map location.

Logically, the red light symbolizing life should always be on... or to say, it should either be on or off without flickering.

Their research center's voltage was absolutely stable, unlikely to cause the lights to flicker due to voltage issues.

An illusion?

But the researcher was sure there was no hallucination; for that brief moment of a second or two, the five red lights symbolizing the entire team flickered rapidly twice.

Now it had returned to normal...

After hesitating for a long time, the researcher still raised his hand hesitantly, shouting without turning back to Minister Likok, "Minister, I think I just noticed a problem here."

"What problem?" Accompanied by the muffled sound of leather shoes on the floor, Minister Likok's voice echoed from afar.

"Just now this light, it seemed to flicker twice."

"Seemed to?"

The researcher gritted his teeth lightly, tone firm, "It did flicker twice, I'm certain."

"Tap tap tap!" Minister Likok arrived at the researcher's console, tapped a few keys on the desk, data streams reflected a fluorescent green light on his glasses, his eyes scanned quickly, and a trace of confusion appeared on Minister Likok's face, "I don't see any issues... "

"Could it be that the signal isn't stable enough?" Someone nearby offered their opinion.

Gazing at the data stream in front of him, Minister Likok crossed one arm over his chest and pinched his chin with the other hand, pondering, "It's not without that possibility..."

The signal station had just been established, and it was normal that some old technologies had not been fully recovered.

Plus, the occasional natural phenomena that occur in nature could also interfere with signals.

Over the past few centuries, everyone had been using close-range local area networks with limited transmission rates; encountering some issues while rebooting this branch of technology was nothing out of the ordinary.

"Continue observing; we can't overlook any doubts," ordered Minister Likok.

Not long after, another researcher's voice rose from a corner of the now quiet room, "I just saw the light seem to flicker twice."

It was another squad.

"I saw it too," another researcher's voice confirmed conclusively.

With their teammates' support, they were convinced of what they had observed.

Minister Likok, frowning, gave a cold command, "Take note of the time."

"Yes!"

...

"I've noticed it too."

"I saw it as well..."

As time passed, voices rang out everywhere.

The red lights symbolizing the life of the members of ten squads had the same occurrence.

Minister Likok seemed to be waiting for this moment, standing in the middle with a serious expression, "Pull up the log records of the flickering times."

In the waiting time, Minister Likok muttered softly, "Position..."

Before long, on the large central display of the room, summary data transmitted from each computer was received—namely the positions on the map where the squad members were when the red lights flickered.

Of course, not very accurately.

Without accurate global satellite positioning, the distances calculated by other means appeared on the map only as a rough and vague collection.

'Not on a straight line?'

The rate of advance of the ten squads varied in distance; naturally, everyone was responsible for different areas, the terrain was different, and the linear distances covered after departure were also different.

"See if there's a central point for these circles."

"Tap tap!"

Upon hearing this, the operator manipulated the controls, and simulated circles flashed into existence, trying to incorporate all the locations into a collective whole.

However, they failed very easily.

"Is it the influence of some natural minerals?"

Some natural minerals in the wild have a natural shielding effect on electromagnetic signals, so it's normal to experience some fluctuations when passing through their range.

In any case, there were too many influencing factors, and it wasn't possible to make a determination with so little information.

'Once this team returns, ask the military to dig deeper at these locations for exploration...'

Likok decided and then moved on from the matter.

"Continue monitoring, and report any other anomalies just the same."

...

Sitting in the vehicle, Bai E suddenly lost focus and subconsciously looked back in the direction of the base.

Just now, he felt as if the connection with the base had momentarily severed, but this intuition flashed by in an instant, and without any evidence, it was purely a profound and mysterious "feeling".

"We're almost at the nearest marked location." You, holding a map, identified the current location of everyone.

Places where worm-like creatures had been active and left burrows were marked as key points, and they were the first spots everyone needed to investigate and make contact with.

No amount of reading could compare to witnessing it in person, even the traces left by the worms helped everyone to establish a more concrete understanding of them.

"Look! Ahead!"

Ying, who had the best eyesight, spotted the faint traces of holes on the horizon from afar.

"Vroom!" Dasheng stepped on the accelerator, the tires whirling up sand and stones as they sped towards the nearest signs of worm activity.

"Hiss!" The large vehicle slowly came to a stop, and five agile figures quickly jumped down from the high sides of the cabin.

The team gathered around a hole made by the burrowing of the worm, peering down into it together...

"Wow~" Dasheng was the first to express his astonishment.

The deep hole had no visible bottom, with darkness so impenetrable that not even the sunlight could reach, twisting and turning into the obscure depths.

The first thing they guessed was the depth, and only then did they have the capacity to observe more details—

The edges of the hole were not smooth, and the overall shape was not a perfect circle but a slightly flattened oval.

The brown sand and rocks did not seem to be of a hard rock structure, yet where the sunlight could reach, there were silver "threads" attached to the rocks, appearing like residual secretions that had dried out.

Looking at the large hole wide enough to fit two or three soldiers walking through at once, Bai E's mind seemed to conjure an image of the worm that had once dug this tunnel, speeding through the pitch-black underground accompanied by a rapid whooshing sound.

"Click~" The sound of metal gear rang in their ears.

The teammates decided to go down for a look.

Dasheng and You had thick ropes tied around their waists, while the other end hung from You's body.

She was the team's master in outdoor tracking and searching, with full skills, plus her small and light frame meant Dasheng and You could pull her up directly in an emergency, making her the ideal candidate.

The tunnel was not exactly straight; its winding walls gave You ample leverage. Fully geared up, You delved deeper under the guard of Dasheng and You, with the rope gradually letting her out of sight.

"How is it?"

The close-range walkie-talkie was of course operational, and You softly asked after You disappeared from view.

"A bit dark, the smell... a bit strange, nothing else." You's crisp but buzzing voice came through Bai E's earpiece.

"The walls are hard; these silver threads must be the worm's secretions. They use this viscous substance to stabilize the tunnels."

"Keep going..."

"Found a piece of broken bone blade."

"Keep going..."

"Not long enough..." You reminded softly.

"Oh~" You's voice sounded muffled for a moment, as if making a final observation, "Far away, it seems to have collapsed. Their secretions seem to decompose naturally over time, so the tunnels won't last forever."

"The direction... towards the south, veering west about 15 degrees."

"Alright, pull me up."

Of course, the team would not follow the tunnel dug by the worms; that was too dangerous, as underground was not humans' home territory.

Determining a rough direction was the primary goal.

Chapter 310 Spiritual Perception

You's deep underground exploration hadn't encountered any danger; those sand worms seemed to only occasionally drift past, and not many other traces were found in the tunnels he had dug.

"In that direction, that is where the underground tunnel leads, let's go there to confirm again," said You, who was pulled out, pointing in a certain direction, providing guidance for the team.

"Okay! Let's set off."

"Drive slowly," You reminded.

Sitting in the vehicle again, Tiger curiously examined the half-piece of bone blade fragment found by You.

The bone blade, separated from its host, appeared somewhat dull and even brittle to a significant degree; it felt as though it might snap with just a little force.

"Living bone armor..." Tiger shook his head, "How could there be such a perverted species in the world."

The vehicle slowly advanced, and Song Ying soon discovered the existence of the underground tunnel again.

"Over there."

"Good."

Following the same procedure, You went down alone once again.

A couple of forays couldn't confirm the true direction of activity of those sand worms; even if there were some collapses in the underground tunnels, it was still possible to follow them to a certain extent to determine where the sand worms had gone.

"So chaotic..."

"It seems that it's not just one sand worm... let's extend a bit further."

"Hmm~ indeed it's not just one, at least three... four of them."

Arriving on the surface and taking a deep breath, You pointed another direction, "That way."

...

"That way."

...

"That way."

The creatures' pattern of behavior was to have no pattern.

Each time You descended into the tunnel, he was adjusting the team's direction of advance.

The passages that the creatures occasionally dug out from beneath the surface were the core source of information for tracking them.

Bai E had been enjoying the spectacle, as his teammates' training time was much longer than his; in some professional capabilities, they were far more outstanding than he was.

Moreover, he possessed the ability of "Hive Mind," thus being able to infiltrate the enemy's ranks. If there were any creatures lying in wait underground, it was very likely that he would detect them in advance.

Comparable to a humanoid early warning system, he was safeguarding You's personal safety.

However, the tracking efficiency definitely could not be considered high; occasionally, when there was a long distance, and the sand worms did not leave the underground to burrow up, You would doubt his judgment.

Occasionally adjusting, occasionally continuing forward, turning back and forth, advancing little by little.

Before understanding the responsibility of the evolved new type of creature of the Bug Race and its general characteristics, nobody knew what the purpose of the sand worms' usual activities was.

Maybe they were just hunting? Maybe they were expanding the underground world of the creatures? Who knows.

Fortunately, the direction of tracking was not heading towards the nest of bugs; otherwise, whether to continue following this clue or not would still be a matter of discussion.

As time passed, the light gradually dimmed.

The transport vehicle quietly sat upon the earth; with the poor visibility of the players, nobody intended to continue the pursuit.

"It seems that these sand worms, just like us, also possess the concept of 'organization,'" You concluded based on the findings at hand, "Within a certain area, there may be occasional independent actions, but their overall direction of movement is consistent. And the squadron of sand worms we're tracking, looks to be at least around eight."

Bai E, seated in the back, offered his opinion, "Maybe it's not because of 'organization,' but rather their 'Hive Mind'?"

Bai E, who himself possessed the "Hive Mind," felt that he might have a deeper understanding in this aspect than anyone else.

The creatures seemed immensely powerful, but during the battle on the Bug Race battlefield last time, Bai E also noted a weakness of theirs which couldn't exactly be called a weak point.

The existence of the Hive Mind allowed the creatures on a battlefield to follow the commands of node creatures, responding and adapting at any moment. However, if they lost the management of the Hive Mind, the creatures' own intelligence was quite low.

Their bloodthirsty instincts could even lead them to attack indiscriminately; if they were released beyond the range controlled by the Hive Mind, those low-intelligence creatures acting purely on instinct probably wouldn't take long to endanger themselves.

Were the sand worms of high intelligence or low? There was no definitive answer, but given the encounters from last time and the conclusions You observed this time, there was probably only one reason for these creatures to appear in groups—they needed a central brain.

Node creatures capable of holding the central command of the Hive Mind were rare even among the Bug Race; every group of sand worms venturing out needed the guidance of a node creature to ensure they did not completely break away from the control of the nest after being released.

The fact that the sand worms showed a higher rate of experience from the subtitles seen last time also corroborates this inference from another angle. These creatures gained experience only slightly more than the common bee-type creature, far less than the mantis-type creature that could be called a squad commander among the node creatures. And this was still under the premise that they were larger in size.

It was not that they didn't want to, but they were not permitted to operate alone.

This was, of course, good news for humans; if each of these elusive sand worms underground possessed their own intelligence and could fight in a dispersed manner, it would be much more troublesome for humans to deal with their attacks.

But if they were just low-intelligence beings similar to bee insects and worker insects, then their greatest advantages—stealth and surprise—would be lost if they had to act in groups under the control of node insects.

"Bai speaks from a deeper root," Ying said.

Insects do not have the messy problems of human management, status, or worldly wisdom; they act solely for basic efficiency, with no reason to restrict their own actions for the sake of unnecessary "regulations."

Zhou scribbled in his notebook, his personal conjectures could also be submitted.

The intuition of front-line soldiers is sometimes more accurate than the calm calculations of strategists in the rear.

"So, sand insects aren't node creatures themselves, but they're accompanied by another, more powerful node creature?"

"Is it a mantis insect?"

"I'm afraid not," Song Ying shook his head.

The scene of a mantis insect racing through underground passages was just too low, and whether it could keep up was questionable.

"Perhaps we should broaden our scope."

Listening to the chatter of his teammates, Bai E remained silent, his eyes somewhat absently fixed on the entrance to the underground tunnel left by the sand insects.

'The node creature of the sand insect... Did I see it last time?'

Like slides in a projector, scenes from the last time they navigated through the sea of insects flickered in Bai E's mind.

Although the situation was tense then, and Bai E focused on evading, the scenes captured by his eyes would never disappear, only buried deep in memory, seldom unearthed.

After gaining Spiritual Energy, Bai E found his memory management had greatly improved.

When recalling something, those memories passed through his mind as if they were happening live.

So, every sand insect that emerged from the ground at that time was filtered through his mind, one by one.

Bai E tried to recall if there was one that stood out, significantly different from the other sand insects.

'No...'

'No...'

'No...'

As Bai E's gaze became distant, the fleeting Spiritual Energy escaped from the surroundings of his brain.

It seemed to entangle briefly with the echo of space-time left in the air, and in a mere instant, a vague dark image flashed through his mind.

Fierce...

Massive...

In that brief glimpse, Bai E had no time to remember more details, only these two keywords resonated slowly in his mind.

"Bai?"

"Bai?"

Soft calls came to his ears as Dashan shook Bai E's body.

"Ah?" Bai E blinked and came to his senses, seeing his teammates looking at him with concern.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing..." Bai flashed a bright smile, recalling what Yue Ying had said—

"Premonition..."

Spiritual Energy communicates with all things, occasionally tapping into the memory fragments of space-time or other creatures during highly focused thoughts on matters closely related to one's own fate, thus obtaining information never experienced before.

Of course, sometimes it was also proven that so-called "premonitions" were closely related to the "unclean whispers" of higher-dimensional spaces.

Such completely non-scientific phenomena had no consensus, and the content seen varied from person to person.

Bai E shook his head, trying to recall the vague image he saw in that moment, but found it had dissipated like a dream upon waking in the morning, impossible to remember at all.

Only that feeling lingered in his heart.

Premonition...

Premonition...

Premonition!

With a start, Bai E suddenly remembered the distraction he felt earlier that day, shortly after setting off in the car.

At the time, it felt as if something had snapped... Now in hindsight, could it have been a premonition sounding the alarm?

Bai E's eyes darted around, his dubious gaze making his teammates somewhat curious.

"What are you looking at, Bai?"