

Wow 311

Chapter 311 Ready to hand rub

Bai E retracted his gaze, suddenly lowered his head, and looked at his own chest.

Without a word, he quickly unfastened his combat suit, lifted the black combat vest he wore underneath, and revealed the small, sleek black circular device that clung tightly to his skin.

The red light that had been blinking all morning had long since gone out.

The gray bulb dimly sat there, silent.

"Eh? Why did your light go out?" Dashan hadn't realized what was happening, but curiously asked as he had been intently watching Bai E's movements.

"Check yours." Bai E didn't answer his question but spoke sternly instead.

In fact, even without Bai E's order, everyone else also suddenly tensed up and lifted their own vests.

Only You turned away...

Within moments, five sensors that had long stopped blinking were gathered together.

"They said this light would keep blinking, and as long as it blinked, it meant it was working."

"Didn't they say this gadget is powered by our heartbeat and movement... It shouldn't run out of power."

"If it's broken, doesn't that mean we're already dead?" Dashan tried to lighten the mood amidst the strange atmosphere in the carriage.

"Isn't it normal for a new product from the Scientific Research Institute to sometimes fail?"

You didn't speculate wildly, but instead stared intensely with his glossy eyes at Bai E, who had been silent ever since he first noticed the situation, "Bai E?"

Bai E squinted his eyes, "Not dead yet, but probably not far from it."

"Don't scare me..."

"What did you find?" Tiger also frowned.

The peculiar behavior of a small new product couldn't unsettle a seasoned warrior like him.

Just as Song Ying had said, new products from the Scientific Research Institute weren't always reliable.

"The signal has been interrupted." Remembering the brief moment of dizziness he'd felt and coupling it with the current performance of the sensors, Bai E was certain.

"How do you know..."

"A guess." Bai E didn't delve into his "sixth sense," only explaining with an icy look, "This sensor is an old product; the Scientific Research Institute only changed its signal reception route, turning it from a local network device into an internet one. Its essence hasn't changed, so it shouldn't be a quality problem. And even if they were to break, would all five of ours do so simultaneously? Of course, the most important point is—preparing for the worst... is never wrong."

Tiger looked lost in thought, murmuring to himself, "If the signal was deliberately interrupted..."

A sour and numb chill surged up everyone's spine in an instant.

Everyone's eyes subconsciously looked outside the window. The gradually darkening night sky seemed like an unbounded prison, enveloping the tiny space inside the carriage.

The dim light turned on inside the carriage was the only hope they could cling to.

They were tracking the Bug Race, and it was hard not to immediately associate this signal interruption experience with the bugs.

In this era, there weren't many complex powers in the wilderness, and even fewer possessed such technological means—in fact, it should only be humans.

But had the Bug Race not previously displayed the ability to cause electronic disturbances in the field with their Plasma Cannons on the frontline? So, would it be surprising if they showed such capability now?

This race, which possessed the potential for unlimited evolution, was a miracle of the universe.

And if they were deliberately engaging in this action, did it imply... that the bugs had set their sights on them?

"Isn't it...something we can test?" Bai E did not get lost in endless speculation; his eyes swept across the carriage.

"What are you looking for?" Song Ying was curious about Bai E's gaze.

It was a search with a clear purpose.

In these circumstances, what else could he do?

Bai E didn't respond, as if instinctively, his knowledge and technological ability allowed everything he laid his eyes on to reveal its most fundamental form.

Once he had a preliminary plan in his mind for something to create, he clearly knew which items could be used, which couldn't be, and what could be used after being dismantled.

"Give me that."

"Give me that."

The world's technology sometimes seemed very advanced, sometimes quite primitive, but regardless, whenever they went out on a mission, they all carried various high-tech tools such as remote-controlled reconnaissance drones, walkie-talkies, remote-controlled bombs, and other small tech devices.

From these items, he should be able to craft something he needed by hand.

Was it specifically targeted at these sensors to blast them or did it create a shielding field that covered a certain area? One test would tell.

Level 2 Knowledge — Computer Hardware Maintenance, Level 1 Technology — Basic Electronics Manufacturing and Processing, that's the confidence supporting her attempt.

Of course, whether it was going to work was still something that had to be tested to know.

Bai E never anticipated that the ability she had recently acquired would be put to use so soon.

With a bunch of seemingly chaotic items, including five temporarily "broken" sensors, Bai E dived into the enclosed carriage at the back.

"What is he doing?"

Dashan was completely clueless, "I have no idea~"

Song Ying, stroking his chin, had some suspicions, "He isn't planning on assembling a long-distance communication device by hand, is he?"

"..."

"..."

Everyone fell into a silence.

Could such a thing really be done by humans out in the wilderness with nothing but their hands?

"Instead of talking about that, shouldn't we consider what we should do next?"

The actions of Bai E broke the previous silence; her series of movements as she opened the door and entered the carriage from the back also dispelled the chilling numbness they had felt upon realizing the unexpected turn of events.

They started to think rationally about what they should do if everything Bai E said was true.

"Retreat and go back to send a report?" Dashan inclined toward the more conservative approach.

"But what if it's just a natural phenomenon affecting things?" Song Ying, who had his interests in electronic devices, had spent time and effort studying these matters and was aware of more possibilities.

Heading straight back could easily attract charges of insubordination, as soldiers on the battlefield cannot abandon their responsibilities and missions based on some nonsensical guesses.

"Plus, if it really was the work of the bugs, we should have been targeted already." You's tone was cold, and the way the girl thought about things seemed always to be from a pessimistic perspective, "If that's the case, we should first think about how to get through this night."

And... where the enemy was.

"You, did you really find no possibility of any bug ambush during your daytime scouting?" Hu asked in a deep voice.

"No," You was quite certain, as a comparison of the degradation level of the bodily fluids secreted by the sandworms before and after clearly showed that these tunnels had been long abandoned.

Moreover, the tunnels were dry and sealed.

There was a strange smell, but it was not strong.

Whether it was the unfamiliar but massive sandworms or the familiar worker bugs and bee bugs, there was little chance of a large-scale ambush below.

"Then... let's wait for Bai E," Hu turned his gaze to the carriage at the back.

Bai E was the first to detect the problem, and she remained calm after the incident, seemingly having a thorough plan in mind.

If it wasn't for her checking the sensors first, they might not have found out that the sensors on them had already lost their effectiveness until after the mission was completed and they returned to camp.

It was better to wait for her to confirm whatever she needed to confirm; then they could all make a decision.

"Before that, should we try to get closer to other squads?"

Everyone's movements were pre-planned, and since it was only the first day of tracking, even if the tracking deviated from the planned area, it couldn't be by far.

"That works..."

"Then let's set off tonight without resting," Hu's voice grew firm again.

If they were really being watched, it was just as dangerous to turn off the lights and rest here than it was to start moving closer to their teammates.

By comparing their encounter with other teammates', they might be able to identify the problem more clearly.

Even if they decided to go back to camp to report, they would have a better reason to do so.

Not to mention that, based on their current location, the cost in time to return to camp was far higher than moving towards their teammates.

"Alright!"

"Bang Bang Bang!"

Song Ying knocked on the window facing the back, and asked via the intercom, "Bai, we're preparing to move towards other teammates, will that affect you?"

"No problem, you guys drive,"

Bai E replied simply.

Chapter 312 Confluence

The car's rear compartment was cluttered with miscellaneous items.

Everyone had prepared for a maximum three-day mission, bringing plenty of logistical supplies such as weapons, ammunition, food, and medicine, all of which were piled up in this section of the car.

Fortunately, everything was well-organized and sorted into categories.

Bai E cleared a space by pushing aside the clutter and spread out the jumble of items on the floor of the carriage.

After accessing the relevant knowledge and technological skills, the potential uses for various objects became as instinctive as nature. Holding those things in hand, subtitles explaining how they were directly related to the device he intended to craft based on his own thoughts sprang to the front of his mind—

[Inoperative Information Gathering Transmitter (Sensor Type I): This small, black, round metal disc can transmit your vital signs and current location to a pre-set channel's fixed reception center, albeit imprecisely, provided it hasn't been damaged. Your only option now is to attempt to extract the pre-set signal emission module, which may assist you in crafting the long-range communication device you need.]

Technology is a capacity for mass production through the collective skills of many people, to say nothing of an individual's handcrafted efforts.

Armed with both information technology and electrical manufacturing skills, Bai E wanted to see if he could create a communicator capable of contacting the urban information reception base using semi-finished materials... even if it could only transmit simple signals.

[You are attempting to assemble a machine...]

[Free Creation Mode: You are employing your knowledge skills to attempt to create an entirely new unknown object. Based on your expertise, the current success rate is "low." You can assist your effort by paying a certain cost (General/Scientific Research Experience). (Consumption: 20 points of experience/min)]

No more nonsense, start the burn!

Bai E concentrated deeply and began to work.

[You are paying General Experience to assist your creation attempt... (Consumption: 20 points of experience/min)]

The attempt was far from smooth sailing.

Like the Sensor Type I in his hands, the instincts granted by technology and knowledge merely let Bai E "know" that a particular module within this gadget "might" be useful for his own experiment.

The useful parts provided by other small electrical devices were even more elusive.

Even the control panel's assessment of the creation possibility was "low," meaning that this manual endeavor was not as simple as reading a bar code.

[You are attempting to assemble a machine...]

[You are paying General Experience to assist your creation attempt... (Consumption: 20 points of experience/min)]

[Free Creation Mode: ... current success rate "medium"...]

The carriage shook gently, not violently.

The difficulty did not come from the outside; the abundance of choices and ideas was the real challenge troubling Bai E.

Lacking relevant experience, he could only attempt every idea through trial and error, but thanks to the natural "progress bar" that could determine the right and wrong, he could continually move in the right direction.

...

Luckily.

The ten squads, spread over a wide area, were indeed thinly dispersed, but during the first day of exploration, they had not strayed too far from the initial planned area.

Considering the potential encounters and coordination between squads, each squad's vehicle was equipped with a local area network center that would automatically include any walkie-talkies entering the communication range into the contactable channel.

In other words, when two squads approached each other closely, they could connect through voice communication, allowing them to meet even without a direct line of sight.

"Tch~"

Da Shan drove up next to another quiet resting squad's vehicle.

The other side had already opened their window and shouted across, "What's the matter, brother?"

"Did you guys find something big you can't handle?"

The other side's tone was somewhat excited.

They had been tracking for a day and had eaten dust the whole time.

Almost no traces that could provide information were found in the tunnels left by the sandworms, and they could only track the past locations of the sandworms using primitive methods, just like Bai E's squad.

When another squad came rushing over all of a sudden, did it mean that they had found the target and they would soon be able to complete the mission?

"No," Da Shan replied through the rolled-down window, with an urgent tone, "Quick, check your sensors, are they still on?"

"Sensors?" The person on the other side was taken aback.

That thing was stuck close to the skin, hidden beneath layers; they didn't even need to shower during the mission, and in these few days, they wouldn't even take off their combat suits—who would check this?

However, Da Shan's tone sounded ominous, and while instructing his teammates behind him, he casually asked.

"What exactly is going on?"

Da Shan remained silent, waiting for the other side to provide an answer.

A quick self-check was all it took, just a lift of the shirt.

"It's not lit."

"It's not lit."

"Mine's not lit either..."

The data were combined, and as the opposing squad leader stuck his head out of the vehicle window, his expression immediately turned serious, "What's going on here?"

As he spoke, his eyes were fixed intently on the mountain, "Are you guys experiencing the same thing?"

"Yeah... We are too."

Even if something were to go wrong, it shouldn't all happen to everyone at once.

The items from the Scientific Research Institute might occasionally be unreliable, but they couldn't possibly be unreliable to this extent.

Everyone instinctively understood this clear reality, so the current situation indicated that their sensors had all been attacked by a mysterious force without their knowledge.

None of them were technical experts, and they neither cared nor understood how their opponent had managed to do this.

What they did care about was...

"Who did this!?"

Da Shan spread his hands helplessly, "We just discovered the problem ourselves and thought to check with you for confirmation. Now it seems... it's not just us."

When it became ineffective... they didn't know.

Where it became ineffective... they didn't know.

They were completely in the dark.

The unknown was always more terrifying, and the opposing team leader asked with furrowed brows, "What do you plan to do?"

"Continue the mission?" Da Shan looked bewildered, "We don't know either..."

They hadn't come to any conclusion from their recent discussion.

In their minds, fulfilling the responsibilities they were tasked with was certainly the top priority, but returning to report the anomalous situation seemed equally valuable.

"How about you go back to report, while we continue with the mission?" Song Ying leaned out and offered the plan he had been contemplating.

"That's one way to do it..." the other side nodded, thinking it was not a bad idea.

If one team experienced this, it might still be a coincidence, but if two separate teams both encountered the same issue, it was hard not to be vigilant.

"Shh!" Song Ying, seated behind Da Shan, suddenly spoke out.

The teammates' unspoken understanding immediately silenced the whole team, and Da Shan, sitting by the window, also signaled the other team to stop talking.

Even the engines that had been running were instantly turned off.

"Rustle, rustle, rustle..."

Song Ying's sharp gaze turned to the other side of the opposing team's transport, his head poking out with a look of surprise and uncertainty, "Where is the tunnel you discovered?"

There was no need to wait for a response; the members inside the opposing vehicle had also noticed the anomaly.

"Captain!"

Following a shout, the large transport vehicle was flipped over in an instant.

Right before Da Shan and the others' eyes, the other team's transport, positioned at a right angle, was lifted off the ground by an immense force, followed by a storm of sand and stones flying about like bullets.

"Boom!"

The flipped transport rolled several times on the spot, but the commotion it caused was no longer a concern for Da Shan and the others.

More pressing matters lay before them—the bugs!

The sand worms bursting from the ground screeched menacingly in the air.

The deep droning of the worms overpowered everyone's eardrums.

Was it a premeditated attack?

Or had their unusual gathering behavior triggered the vigilance of the Bug Race, which had been secretly monitoring them by some means, leading to an early outbreak?

But one thing was certain: the masterful sabotage of their sensors was indeed the handiwork of the bugs!

These subconscious thoughts spun through different minds as a chilling voice rose from the back of the vehicle.

"Engage the enemy!"

Bai E stood by the open door of the carriage, glancing back at the assembly apparatus he had crammed into a bundle of soft materials.

The palm-sized device, connected in an ungainly fashion with cables exposed to the air, was blinking with a red light inside the dark cabin, as a stream of data beyond human perception was being sent through a special channel in a certain direction.

The pre-set signaling device would be just as faithful in performing its duties in a different location.

[You have completed an assembly of a communication device, Computer Hardware Maintenance Experience +12, Basic Electrical Manufacturing and Processing Experience +8.]

One could only hope that it would alert the base to the unusual situation of the squad out on the mission...

"Bang!"

Bai E slammed the metal door shut and, with a machine gun in hand, sprayed a burst of fire at the sand worm flailing in the air.

Chapter 313 Sandworms!

Bai E immediately perceived the rapidly burrowing movements of the sandworm underground. Possessing the trait "Hive Mind," he could sensitively detect the signals sent and received by his kin when they initiated actions within this network.

However, he didn't have time to warn anyone.

By the time he sensed it, the sandworm was already too close for any reaction.

Unless he was in a quickly moving vehicle where he could take the wheel at the first opportunity, there was no way he could avoid the sandworm's charge. In a stationary vehicle, even he could do no more than protect himself by jumping out.

Not to mention that he was alone in the rear compartment, and even his work at hand had reached its critical final stage.

Almost at the same moment the sandworm flipped his teammate's transport, Bai E succeeded in welding the last solder point and received the completion prompt.

The so-called communicator he had rudimentarily assembled couldn't be very powerful, after all, even the original sensors given to them by the Scientific Research Institute's information department couldn't transmit much more information, let alone the makeshift transmitter he cobbled together from a pile of scrap.

Sending out his location to the signal reception center was the only function this hastily assembled rudimentary transmitter could perform.

What remained... was left to fate.

Bai E hoisted a machine gun with one hand while firing at the same time, his other hand grabbed the handrail on the outer edge of the carriage, and with a twist, he flipped onto the roof.

Vision!

Facing a sudden attack, it was more important to quickly understand the configuration and position of the opponent.

The "Hive Mind" network's messages were vague and undoubtedly less useful than his own eyes and ears during a direct fight.

Before his eyes could catch sight of information, his expertise in blind combat was already gathering intelligence from the vibrations in the air.

One... two... three... four... five... six...

Six!

Standing alone on the roof of the vehicle, Bai E held his machine gun, his gaze icy as it swept around.

There were only sandworms, eight in total, and for the time being, no other types of creatures were seen.

The subterranean burrowing of the worms meant that no other type of creature could easily keep up with their movements.

At that moment, the flailing gestures of the sandworms in the air seemed to be an instinctive venting, but the reason they didn't take any extra action right away was revealed in the data of the monsters he had been firing at_

[Sandworm (Bug Race): Health 199/200; Defensive Power 20; Mobility: 30% (Overdrawn State); Traits: Symbiotic Weapon, Chitin Armor, Large Creature, Distributed Nervous System...]

[Large Creature: Their colossal size gives them strong resistance to damages that do not exceed half of their body size, and no single injury can ever be more than 10% of their maximum health value!]

[Distributed Nervous System: To control their immense bodies, they don't have a central brain to govern their entire body. Numerous neural nodes are scattered throughout multiple parts of their structure, ensuring they have no absolute weak point.]

A volley of bullets didn't cause enough damage to the opponent.

The sandworms might not have levels as high as the mantis worms, but their chitin bone armor surface defense was even stronger than the mantis worms', being the ones responsible for subterranean excavation.

The reason they flailed in the air without attacking immediately was likely because they had become unavoidably stunned after burrowing and then colliding with the heavy transport.

Even lifeforms like worms, seemingly indifferent to logic, must follow the basic principles of mechanics when interacting with anything in the world.

Perhaps the armor on their bodies was hard enough, but concussive strikes had enough penetrative power to directly affect the worm bodies beneath the chitin armor.

"Fire!"

As Bai E surveyed the battleground, his teammates opened fire in sync, with the heavy machine guns atop the vehicles unleashing a more terrifying roar than the combat machine guns held in their hands.

"Thud thud thud thud!"

The occasional bullet that penetrated the sandworms' massive bodies through a weak spot in their carapace emitted a dull sound, but most bullets struck their chitin shells, ringing out like shots against a metal plate.

"Ssssss!"

Two of the sandworms, not involved in overturning the transport, burst straight out of the ground, their centipede-like bodies rapidly scurrying forward with countless sharp claw blades crisscrossing.

The sharp scythe-like jaws on their heads reflected a fierce, chilling white light under the not-so-bright moonlight.

Hu sprang out of the door; armored in heavy combat gear, he clutched his chainsword and leaped at the head of one of the approaching sandworms when the moment was right.

The rapidly spinning chainsword struck the chitin carapace, sparking a blinding series of flashes.

Da Shan and You also joined in the fray, both warriors inclined towards aggression, charging fearlessly out. Da Shan, favoring strength, shouldered his Tower Shield and charged forward, while You, more agile and reflexive, dashed towards the overturned transport.

A simple overturn couldn't kill the skilled members of the special forces squad inside, and rescuing them to join the fight first was a strategy more advantageous for the battle's development.

Song Ying cradled a heavy machine gun, standing rooted at the top of the vehicle like a turret, unleashing a storm of angry bullets.

The price paid by the other squad, losing their vehicle, couldn't be wasted lightly!

Yet as Bai E scanned, his brows just furrowed deeply.

The teammate's adaptability was fast, and their decision-making couldn't be faulted, even if their killing power was limited.

Whether it was the team leader or Song Ying or even Dashan, their attacks struggled to breach the sand worms' defense and deal substantial, effective damage.

Not to mention the "large creature" trait of the sand worms, which naturally reduced the impact of all small-scale strikes and wounds.

Did it have a weakness?

Yes!

While chitin armor was advantageous for the Bug Race against piercing and slashing damage, the resistance it offered against blunt force trauma was significantly less.

Bai E shouted to Song Ying at the vehicle's front, "Use the grenade launcher! The machine gun isn't very effective!"

Unlike the last time they went out to meet the refugees, this time they had the carrying capacity of a transport vehicle, bringing along various convenient heavy weapons—grenade launchers, mortars, flamethrowers, and so on—to meet different needs.

"Okay."

Song Ying also noticed something was off.

Lacking Bai E's display panel, he immediately realized the machine gun was ineffective after laying down a barrage of fire.

This wasn't the time to confront a sea of bugs; machine gun fire was hardly enough to penetrate the defense of the numerically few but heavily armored Bug Race, while the concussive impact of heavy artillery might be more effective.

A concussion grenade launcher was shouldered by Song Ying, who aimed at a sand worm that was nearly incapacitated by a "stunned state" and fired.

"Boom!"

Flames scattered, and a blinding flash exploded into the deep night.

"Hiss!"

Taken by surprise, the sand worm's body stiffened dramatically as countless blade-like claws swung wildly before it fell backward.

Bai E fired another shot, only to find the worm was still far from death—181/200.

"What a nuisance!"

Bai E swore through clenched teeth.

Even though these sand worms weren't as highly ranked as the mantis bugs, their immense size alone posed trouble.

Dealing with one would have been manageable, but with a total of six, taking them down quickly wasn't going to be easy.

Bai E scanned the battlefield, especially the creeping black line spreading from the dim horizon—a sign that they needed to dispatch these sand worms quickly—

The small-scale bug swarm was following right behind the sand worms, as lower-ranked bugs hidden in the sands started their charge!

Bai E quickly reviewed his abilities and realized none was the perfect fit for his present predicament.

Strong shooting paired with Instant Kill Hundred Heads was undoubtedly Bai E's most damaging combo to date.

But when dealing with such large creatures, arrows as a medium for strong shooting inherently suffered a disadvantage—

Bai E's strong shot coupled with Instant Kill Hundred Heads could easily pierce through the sand worms' defenses, but even if he shredded a part of their bodies, such massive creatures wouldn't die instantly.

Continuous outbursts, moreover, would consume too much energy combined with Instant Kill Hundred Heads, and even exhausting spiritual energy and mobility might not be enough to finish off all the sand worms.

This was the tricky part about their "large creature" and "distributed nervous system" traits.

"Large creature" meant they virtually ignored minor penetrating wounds, while their distributed nervous system negated a central weak point, preventing a decapitating victory.

You had to chip away bit by bit at most of their massive bodies!

Or more precisely, at the inner body beneath their chitin shell!

What to do?

Bai E hesitated slightly as the night breeze gently brushed the hair on his forehead.

His eyes moved swiftly across the panel, and at a certain moment, his gaze fixed on a line of text—

Unarmed combat specialized skill tree... Unlearned, unlockable: Blessing of Liberation, Tactical Evasion.

Of course, the current situation had nothing to do with Tactical Evasion, but Blessing of Liberation...

Focused on enhancing a significant amount of striking power, could pairing with Blessing of Liberation enable sustained outbursts, rapidly resolving the fight?

Not to forget that his unarmed combat proficiency was a full 6 levels, the highest of all his specializations.

Close combat face-to-face?

Bai E licked his lips, his eyes fervent...

Chapter 314 Graceful Relief

Having made his decision, Bai E no longer hesitated.

Each skill in the same tier of the skill tree requires double the experience to unlock than the last, starting with a thousand points; learning a second would cost two thousand.

Fortunately, he had saved quite a bit from the fight in Black Street, with exactly 2,000 points of battle experience remaining to the dot.

[Payment: Training Points*2, Battle Experience 2000 points.]

[Acquired Skill — Blessing of Salvation.]

[Blessing of Salvation: Having fought countless battles, you can gradually identify your opponent's weaknesses during combat. From now on, you can keenly exploit these vulnerabilities with precise strikes. Attack speed +30%~100%, critical hit +10%~30%, armor break +10%~30%. All bonuses will incrementally increase to the maximum as the fight progresses. (Reach peak after engaging the same target for over 3 minutes, when switching to a similar target, bonuses start at half.) Consumption: 10 Spiritual Energy (100 action power reserve) /min.]

A youth's version of a lucky strike which consumed Spiritual Energy and wasn't entirely stable—that was why Bai E hadn't been keen on it before.

But under these circumstances, this skill was the most suitable one.

He activated it right away.

Not only that, under the same Combat Proficiency skill tree — Absolute Defense, Bai E activated that as well.

Blessing of Salvation merely enhanced burst damage; against creatures like bugs who relied purely on physical strength, Bai E still needed to consider his own safety.

Squeezing his fist, Bai E felt the surging power coursing through his body.

Nonchalantly dropping his machine gun, he stood atop the vehicle, waiting for the perfect timing. He then saw the sandworm charging towards him and with a powerful leap from his legs, soared through the air!

"Bang!" Following the moment his heel hit the ground, a pair of iron fists solidly smashed into the head of the sandworm.

"Crack!" A crisp sound rang out for an instant, and crack lines emerged on the sandworm's slightly dark carapace as if it had been cracked open.

The powerful blow ignored the hard chitinous outer shell, continuing to reverberate through to the muscle tissue beneath.

[Used close combat attack to hit target, triggering "Armor Break", Combat Mastery Experience +2.]

[Dealt 10 points of blunt damage to the target!]

Worms have touch sensitivity, but their sense of pain is not sharp.

Bai E's punch hadn't caused much injury to the creature; its enormous body was what it was bred for.

Instead, the awareness of "food" jumping right above its head brought its hunger to a peak.

The giant head swayed left and right, trying to shake off Bai E who had landed on top of it.

The carapace was smooth, and indeed slippery underfoot, as Zhou—who had rushed onto the bug holding the Chainsword as well—can attest to the difficulty in keeping one's footing.

Fortunately, Bai E came empty-handed, and it was much easier for him to adjust his center of gravity within his body.

Moreover, the foundational bonus from his level six Combat Proficiency greatly enhanced his self-control over body coordination to nearly its limit.

As the worm tried to shake him off, Bai E, after observing it earlier, precisely pinpointed that one spot on the sandworm's body that wouldn't move during its writhing.

The sandworm, after all, wasn't like those purely soft-bodied creatures that could twist their bodies at will, even tying knots... It had to maintain some rigidity in motion, and in that brief observation, Bai E had easily noticed this characteristic of the sandworm with the boosts from his various combat abilities.

Striking a snake's vital point followed the same principle.

Raising his right fist, Bai E targeted the spot beneath his foot that would allow him the strongest leverage for his punch and smashed down once again.

"Bang!"

"Bang!"

The small figure moved swiftly on the sandworm's back, striking with his fists, which was far more efficient than other attacks capable of breaking defense.

And as long as Armor Break was triggered, the damage wouldn't be low...

[Used close combat attack to hit target, and simultaneously triggered "Critical Hit", "Armor Break", Combat Mastery Experience +5.]

[Dealt 20 points of blunt damage to the target!]

It seemed the massive force directly shattered a nerve node beneath the carapace, and the nearby bladed limbs visibly lost control in an instant, twitching reflexively at their tips.

"Bang!"

"Bang!"

"Bang!"

By comparison, the small figure was like a black whirlwind, rapidly moving across the sandworm's body.

The chitinous carapace's raised spikes provided the ideal anchor point for Bai E to maneuver.

Twelve seconds!

The huge sandworm's body slowly collapsed behind Bai E...

"Boom!"

Sand and dust were flung into the air.

[Consecutive hits on the target, causing 18 points of fatal damage!]

[You have completely killed the target, gaining 40 points of battle experience.]

"..."

Observing everything happening around oneself during battle is a basic skill for any mature warrior, especially since Bai E's actions were not merely a flash of lightning.

Twelve seconds were more than enough for every warrior engaged in battle to notice the swift and forceful advance here.

The teammates who witnessed this scene, including those from another squad saved by You, all had a moment of stunned silence.

The impact of the contrast, under the huge difference in size, was particularly shocking.

"So... so strong..."

The warrior lying on his side in the overturned carriage, twisting his head around, even forgot for a moment that he was still trapped and unable to move, muttering to himself while looking in that direction.

You, who hastily glanced back, had her eyes round with surprise and shouted a warning from afar, "Careful!"

...

["Lucky Strike" charge +7.]

The experience wasn't high, and it was quite hard to kill.

Bai E frowned, pausing for a moment of thought.

The shadow behind him advanced, and like pincers, the lethal jaws closed in from both sides, attempting to bisect Bai E in an instant.

"Careful!" You's voice traveled across the space, almost arriving simultaneously with the closing jaws.

The jaws sped up as they were about to close in.

"Squeak~"

The muscle tissue strained to clench, but discovered they couldn't bite down no matter how hard they tried.

The human in front of them spread his arms wide like forged steel, effortlessly holding back the sandworm's jaws, preventing them from moving forward even a fraction of an inch.

Bai E looked down at the pair of jaw-teeth curling around his back like curved blades, a cold light flashing in his eyes.

In a large military march, it might be difficult to detect the movements of sandworms underground, but on a small-scale battlefield, the "sibilant" sound they made while slithering through the sand was hard for an individual to miss, not to mention that he possessed the "Blind Fight" talent.

Even amidst the chaos of the battlefield, he could easily detect the approach of a sandworm attack from behind with his ears.

Giving the opponent this chance was to see how its attack power stacked up against his defensive power.

Absolute Defense!

There was a faint blood mark on his arm, the worm's jaw-teeth adorned with numerous tiny spikes had punctured his skin slightly under the immense pressure, but that was all.

Having gathered more data from a direct confrontation with the sandworm, Bai E immediately felt confident.

With a rapid change of his palms directly supporting the jaw-teeth, Bai E's complexion turned a slight red as he exhaled, "Heh!"

Upon a light shout, the pair of jaw-teeth, which seemed monstrously ferocious and nearly half the size of Bai E's body, were forcibly pried open.

The "squeal" from the muscles signaled they had reached their limit.

It wasn't Bai E; it was the sandworm.

Overlimit Drive!

"Bang!"

Fractured bone splinters flew in all directions, a few grazing under Bai E's eyelids, which reflexively closed, leaving the bone splinters to scrape futilely across his skin as hard as city walls...

Holding the forcibly broken jaw-teeth in his hands, Bai E swiftly turned around.

In the worm's enormous lantern-like eyes was the reflection of the imposing human man facing it.

The corners of Bai E's mouth wickedly curved upwards as he took a step forward and punched directly towards the sandworm's face!

"Crack!"

The sound of bones shattering echoed in the stillness, the carapace crumbling under his fist...

"Gulp."

The soldier from the ally squad, who had already opened the dump truck door, climbed out with a flamethrower, and was attempting to set it up, swallowed hard.

"Who the hell is the monster here..."

Chapter 315 Furious Bloodlust!

Bai E's sudden outburst invigorated all the warriors who witnessed it.

With such a tough guy on the team, who would fear these mere bugs?

"Shan Meng, you go help them too! Buy us some time!"

Hu commanded in a cold voice.

The approaching swarm of smaller insects was also a threat, but the biggest threat was still right in front of them.

If these sand insects weren't dealt with, they would always be the biggest threat to their vehicles.

The transport vehicles were hefty, unable to maneuver as nimbly as smaller cars. If they were attacked by sand insects from underground, they would overturn and roll like their teammate's vehicle, with no chance of escape.

They had to eliminate these sand insects for a chance to flee in their vehicles.

At the same time, the bodies of these sand insects were the core of their mission.

The main issue was that against opponents like sand insects, with great strength and size, Shan Meng's capabilities were not suitable for combat. Raising a shield like a punching bag and purely enduring hits was entirely disadvantageous.

"Alright!"

Shan Meng, knowing he was not very useful against the sand insects, turned and ran towards the other side.

The bug wave was drawing closer, and it was visible to the naked eye that there were no large units within it.

All bees and worker insects?

Shan Meng felt the pressure on him lessen somewhat.

Unlike the two thousand new soldiers caught unawares by the insect invasion at the military camp, elite soldiers equipped with sufficient heavy firepower weren't very fearful of a bug wave composed of worker and bee insects.

The most important aspect of human combat wisdom is learning to use weapons.

Shan Meng picked up the flamethrower that had just been assembled by another squad's teammate and stepped in front of him, "Wounded to the back, don't wander up front."

"..." The soldier didn't talk nonsense and turned to rummage through the overturned carriage.

Flamethrowers, mortars, grenades, land mines... they had brought plenty of these.

A bulky supply line had its inconveniences, but during position warfare, ample supplies often meant that firepower could overcome everything.

"Swoosh!"

"Boom!"

"Swoosh!"

"Boom!"

The set-up mortars fired one death-bringing bomb after another.

The "tide" rushing from afar was hit by the first wave of precise sniping from the soldiers.

With You's entire team rescued, even though some were still wounded, operating these long-range heavy weapons wasn't much of an issue.

The advantage of seasoned special forces team members was that, apart from Mechas which required qualifications, there were hardly any weapons they couldn't handle.

Shan Meng, cradling the massive flamethrower, glanced at You, who seemed to be covered in grenades, "Are all the land mines buried?"

"Buried?" You looked at Shan Meng strangely.

Against those insects, was there a need for this word? Worker and bee insects, such low-intelligence creatures, were driven by an extreme bloodlust. Upon seeing an enemy, their shortest charge path was a straight line. As for detailed tactics?

There were none.

All you had to do was turn on the land mine and throw it in the line between the insects and themselves; those bugs would step on it on their own accord.

While the sky was ablaze with gunfire on one side, the battle against the sand insects was left solely to Bai E and the other two.

The mortars dared not fire at the sand insects close to the transport vehicle, and without vehicles in the wild, it was hard to imagine how they would "get home."

Hu held the Chainsword, which was almost as big as him, and watched the sand insects with a fierce gaze.

In the past two missions, they always faced special opponents who launched psychic attacks, leaving them no room to demonstrate their hard-earned strength.

After all, it was not easy to qualify for a special forces team.

The fact that Hu became the team leader was something he had fought for with real guns and bullets.

He tore off the combat suit that served only as a restraint, his muscles bursting with explosive power.

Song Ying fired grenade shots from behind, always precisely helping Hu interrupt some action of the sand insects. The tacit cooperation between old comrades made them instinctively aware of each other's combat abilities and tactical choices.

"Squeak squeak squeak!" The Chainsword's teeth gnawed at the weak spots in the sand insect's carapace, sparks flashed for a brief moment during the struggle, and the greatsword entered the body with difficulty.

It cut a swath, leaving behind shredded flesh and blood!

"Hold off two for me!"

Bai E shouted from a distance.

There were six sand insects in total, with one already dealt with and another showing signs of decline under Hu and Song Ying's coordination.

However, the four sand insects that initially flipped over another team's transport vehicle were gradually recovering from their "dizzy state," leaving not much time for him to execute them one by one.

If his teammates couldn't entangle at least two of them, it would be difficult to kill them all before the sand insects inflicted greater damage.

"Okay!" Hu responded sharply.

Everyone's opinion can be ignored, but Bai E's must be heeded. On the battlefield, the more powerful always have more say, provided they have demonstrated clear tactical and strategic thinking.

Bai E refocused his attention, his well-trained qualities allowing him to take care of his teammates' situation even amidst the battle. Even as he made arrangements while distracted, his assault on the sandworms in front of him never ceased.

An indestructible steel warrior, every punch he threw could cause tons of damage, making the seemingly large sandworms almost powerless against Bai E.

The sandworms, driven to desperation and attempting to burrow away, found themselves grasped firmly by Bai E, who clutched the hardest thorns on their bodies.

The ferocious will, along with a terrifying force, was unleashed to the extreme; "Overlimit Drive" combined with "Instant Kill Hundred Heads" centered a punch on the body of a sandworm.

"Boom!"

The explosive power released, the cracked Bug Race carapace fragmented outward from the center, and the flesh beneath was turned into a mass of mush from that single punch.

Without neural node control, the claw blades that intended to dig and flee stopped their action, merely trembling unconsciously on their limbs.

Without the time to finish it off completely, Bai E once again lunged towards another sandworm that had awakened and was trying to destroy the transport vehicle.

The size of these sandworms was comparable to their transport vehicles, allowed to wreak havoc unchecked, the vehicles could certainly not match the resilience of his flesh which was now shielded with "Absolute Defense."

"Bang!"

"Bang!"

Each punch landed with a heart-shockingly dull thud, occasionally mixed with the sound of cracking carapaces.

The distinct rhythm, even amid a battlefield ablaze with gunfire, sounded incredibly jarring. The warriors, adjusting their firing angles continuously, couldn't help but steal a glance at the lone figure battling the sandworms.

'Meng!'

'So fierce!'

The squad captain watched the approaching tide of bugs, his face notably less relaxed.

"Prepare to assist."

Mortar fire was useless!

The enemy's numbers didn't seem endless, only a vast swarm rushing up together. Even if most were blown to pieces, the remaining tide of bugs closed in.

Next to them was the overturned transport vehicle, with nowhere to escape.

"Kill!"

Flamethrowers and machine guns opened fire in an instant, and the brave warriors stood their ground without faltering; the fiery glow even lit up the night as if it were day.

As the bugs, swinging their symbiotic weapons, closed in, the mountainous Shan Meng with sword and shield in hand, suddenly charged forward.

Like a bulldozer, he cleared a swath of space.

But the bugs' segmented noises were sticky and greasy, dense and numerous.

Once they closed in, these bloodthirsty, maddened bugs seemed to move even faster.

When faced with the tide of bugs that surged up close, the blades on the machine guns stood as the ultimate, strongest weapons.

"For the Empire!"

"For the City Lord!"

The warriors cried out their beliefs, and then... went to their honorable deaths.

Bai E's heart shook at a glimpse of this scene, as a surge of savage rage instantly invaded his mind.

The ever-burning Spiritual Energy seemed to add a blood-red border to the edge of his vision.

Endless power seemed to burgeon from that boundless blood-red...

"Boom!"

Bai E's punch came down, shattering not only the body of the bug before him but also the blood-red border in his vision.

Power... I will acquire it myself.

[In the fierce battle, you have shattered "The Gaze of the Gods," Mystery +0.1.]

A whip-like kick sent the approaching sandworm staggering backward; Bai E's eyes coldly focused as he swiftly drew the Compound Bow that had always hung at his waist.

The mechanism quickly unfolded, and Bai E targeted his shot even while still midair.

Behind the sharp arrowhead were Bai E's eyes, cold and cutting as knives.

Slight draw back...

"Swoosh!"

A hurricane swept through, artificially clearing a desolate path through the densest part of the bug wave.

Blood and flesh rained down through the sweeping hurricane, piece by piece.

Mixed with the blood rain and the stench of the wind.

Still not enough...

The danger is far from over!

Bai E's spirit remained tense, not relaxing in the slightest.

Chapter 316 Hope

Whether it was the small-scale Bug Race tide composed of worker bugs and bee bugs that had surged up, or the sandworms currently entangling with him, they were all low-level creatures within the Bug Race.

They did not have the capability to serve as the core of the Bug Race's nodal network; behind all the crises at hand, there must be a "commander" of the Bug Race.

This was determined by the structure of the Bug Race, and there could be no mistakes.

And the Bug Race individuals who could serve as commanders definitely possessed extraordinary strength.

Mantis bugs could only command small, low-level units such as worker bugs and bee bugs; sandworms were probably not under their control.

The "commander" lurking in the dark was very likely to be even more formidable than the mantis bugs!

Perhaps markedly more so.

As long as the enemy did not show itself, Bai E's heart could not settle.

Indeed, up to this moment, there were no "orders" fluctuating within the "hive mind's will."

The low-level bugs, as soon as they encountered humans, naturally had a desire for flesh and blood that surpassed everything else, completely obviating the need for detailed commands, which meant Bai E couldn't discover that hidden "commander."

Of course, if the enemy consisted only of these present forces, and the hidden commander in the dark still did not wish to show up, then it was indeed a stroke of fortune.

He was about to eradicate all six sandworms by himself and would soon be able to free up his hands to deal with the remaining half of the Bug Race tide; victory was within sight.

Although the battle had been tough, the end result was going to be satisfactory.

The corpses of the six sandworms, even if they couldn't be transported in one trip, would be fine if they could be carried away one at a time by two transport vehicles; it would be a mission perfectly accomplished.

The premise was that nothing else unforeseen would happen...

Wait a second!

As Bai E slammed down his fist, his heart skipped a beat, and the grayish-black images nearly flashed through his mind.

"Fuck!"

Bai E turned to look at Song Ying beside the transport vehicle, "Old Song, run fast!"

And more! Not just six!

Although these large bugs likewise craved flesh and blood, it seemed that their purpose in being created by the Bug Race hive was specifically to target humans' steel constructions.

Human steel constructions, though robust, had mechanical structures that were quite easily damaged; just one or two distorted or broken components could cause the entire construction to lose its intended function.

The intelligent master of the Bug Race hive knew this well, and so the sole objective of the sandworms' actions was to destroy all human large-scale steel constructions.

Trusting in Bai E completely, Song Ying, upon hearing Bai E's warning, almost instinctively hugged his grenade launcher and desperately retreated from the vicinity of the transport vehicle.

The vehicle was certainly important, but the assault of the sandworms was not something his flesh and blood body could withstand.

As long as he was alive, there was always a chance.

One second... two seconds... three seconds...

To the fleeing Song Ying, the battlefield fell so silent it was as if only his own heartbeat was echoing in solitude, and time dripped away in this slow perception.

Until a thunderous boom exploded behind him—

"Boom!"

Bai E and the others' transport vehicle even flipped higher than their comrades' had just a moment ago, spinning in the air before tumbling to the ground and rolling over.

A vehicle body not made of Elementium series metals could not withstand such a high-intensity impact; the cabin twisted and deformed, and the back door of the cargo hold, which Bai E had no time to completely secure, flung open in the collision, and most of the cargo spilled out during the roll.

Bai E shattered the last inch of the sandworm's body in front of him with a punch and turned his head for a quick overview—

Eight!

A shade of grim despair unconsciously rose in his heart.

He indeed wasn't afraid, but he was powerless to stop these bugs from destroying the vehicles and slaughtering his comrades.

He could run, but...

"More and more are coming!"

"Fuck!"

The commotion easily caught everyone's attention, and the eyes of the warriors still fighting showed a gray tinge of despair.

Even if the battle was hard-fought, they had at least seen the glimmer of hope for final victory.

But now...

A calm voice rang out across the battlefield, loud and firm, wielding a power that inspired the spirit.

"Do not fear, await support."

Standing on the head of a sandworm that had raised its body high, and with the ongoing duration of battle, the formidable power from skill enhancement had made Bai E quite familiar with the characteristics of the sandworms, and he took the opportunity of the short stun from a newly arrived sandworm's attempt to ram open the transport vehicle to climb on top of it.

To speak, you had to stand in the highest place to be heard by everyone...

Bai E supported himself with one hand on a spine on the sandworm's shell, his entire body exuding a powerful build-up of energy, his gaze sweeping the battle scene where the remaining human soldiers were resisting ferociously.

At such a moment, what was needed was hope!

"I have solved the issues with the sensors, and the information has been sent to the base reporting our position."

"Protect yourselves well, the achievements we have gained in this battle are already excellent."

"Guard well the fruits of our labor; victory will ultimately belong to humans!"

Standing on the lofty body of the worm, Bai E's figure was almost immovably towering relative to the worm's body.

He raised his fist high with one hand, calling out in a deep voice, "For the Empire!"

The warriors' eyes bulged and veins popped as they shouted, "For the Empire!"

["Lucky Strike" charging +7.]

"Kill!" Bai E slammed down his fist!

"Kill!" The warriors raised their weapons high.

["Lucky Strike" charging +7.]

Chapter 317 Hope_2

Scattered goods on the ground were wrapped in a bundle of soft materials, and inside, the simple assembly of instruments flashed with a glaring red light.

"Tick tock tick tock tick tock~"

The red light quietly flickered, signifying that it was at work.

"Beep beep beep~"

The buzzer emitted a slight alarm sound.

In the quiet and tense environment of the Monitoring Center, this unexpected noise was immediately noticed by the intensely focused researchers.

The man with glasses and dense hair showed a puzzled face and muttered to himself, "Where is this signal coming from?"

Looking at the sudden string of messages that appeared on the monitor, the man scratched his head in confusion.

The channel used by their reception center's signal tower had undergone special processing, ordinary signals should not have been relayed to this analysis center dedicated to sensor research...

Something's not right, this is the place specifically for receiving internet signals!

Even they in Blackwater City had only just recently picked up this technology again, where else could such signals come from that would be sent to their specific channel's reception center?

"Minister!" the researcher suddenly stood up, but before him, more excited voices nearly simultaneously erupted.

"Report to Minister Likok! The lights for Squad 1 have all gone out!"

"Report to Minister Likok! The lights for Squad 2 have all gone out!"

"Report to Minister Likok! The lights for Squad 3 have all gone out!"

...

"Report to Minister Likok! The lights for Squad 10 have all gone out!"

All lights out!

This shocking news made all the scientists in the Monitoring Center feel a sudden chill.

In this rhythm, the researcher who had first discovered the unexpected signal was instantly drowned out.

Minister Likok stood in place, feeling his head spinning.

All lights out?

And all at once?

What had happened?

Had all the soldiers died in an instant?

That's impossible!

The collective death of soldiers from ten squads operating in different areas, even the dominant Bug Race they had once encountered did not possess such capability.

Distance was an insurmountable hurdle, there might be many unbelievable things in this world, but some fundamental laws had to be followed.

It was more believable to assume that some power had instantaneously severed the connection between the sensors carried by all the soldiers and this reception center.

However, who possessed this capability that leaned more towards the technological side?

Other human forces? Could there be other cities developing internet technology faster than Blackwater City, which had just unlocked the server seals?

Or perhaps... the Bug Race?

The soldiers' mission on this operation was to target the Bug Race, making it easy to immediately associate it with the Bug Race.

Minister Likok first picked up an internal communicator, intending to contact the Military Department to investigate this eerie event.

Whichever force it was that had managed this, it warranted their attention and an investigation was necessary.

Others had the ability to intercept their internal communication even though they had not completed their research on internet technology?

However, the moment Likok picked up the communicator, he froze.

The ten squads had moved into different areas, where exactly did the incident occur?

Without a specific direction, the large forces sent by the Military Department would only waste time like headless flies.

In an instant, Minister Likok remembered that strange flicker he had initially ignored.

That seemingly insignificant abnormality might have been the moment when the signal was replaced.

The soldiers hadn't died at the same time, but instead had been attacked separately after the signals were replaced, not giving their base time to react.

Was this an ambush by the Bug Race against humans?

How did they know humans were sending out squads to capture their new type of sandworms?

Of course, that wasn't really important, low-level Bug Race individuals might indeed lack intelligence, but it was no secret among humans that the Bug Race's brain bugs possessed intelligence, perhaps the sandworms roaming about were baits sent out by them.

The pressing issue was to investigate the reason behind the collective death of the soldiers, or rather, the collective disconnection of information.

Should they start from every location where the signals flickered separately? The places where something had happened would definitely leave some clues behind.

"Pull up the locations of their signals when they flickered and mark them on the map to send to the Military Department," Likok ordered immediately.

The voice in the corner hesitantly spoke up, "Minister... Minister... I might have found something special."

As all the signals were cut off, this researcher finally started to take the information he saw seriously.

"I've discovered a strange signal here," said the researcher, standing up amid some chaotic voices.

Minister Likok immediately looked over, "What?"

"An unexpected signal was sent to our receiver."

"Have you decoded it?"

"It's a location, the decoding method of the information is exactly the same as what we use." The researcher had not been idle even during the commotion.

Minister Likok's eyes lit up instantly, "Bring it up quickly!"

The location information was displayed on the big screen, which immediately caused an uproar...

"...At the boundary area between two squads' territories?"

"Where is this signal from?"

"How is that possible!? This is an encrypted channel we just started using!"

"Perhaps our soldiers, realizing something was wrong, tried to notify us through other means."

Chapter 318 Hope_3

The signals they had internally set up could not easily be interfered with by outsiders, so the signals they received must have been from soldiers who had found themselves cut off from the base and had sought out a method to actively establish a connection.

It was unclear how those soldiers had managed to do this, but it was evident... that among those soldiers there was a specialist who had additionally trained in information technology.

"This..." Some researchers were momentarily at a loss for words, a sense of unbelievable shock rising in their hearts. Without any technological basis in the wilderness, to create a communicator capable of supporting internet technology use with bare hands, could such a thing be done by an average soldier?

"No need to worry about that." After ascertaining the specific location, Minister Likok issued another order, "Send this location to the military, our soldiers are battling alone, and we must launch a rescue operation at the earliest possible moment!"

"But it could also be a trap." The first researcher to discover this abnormal situation expressed his cautious opinion.

"Whether it's a trap or not, I'm more inclined to believe that our soldiers have found hope in a desperate situation." Likok's gaze was resolute; in this world, humanity often needs a bit of reckless courage to survive.

"..."

In the midst of speaking, a flash of light crossed Minister Likok's mind, and he finally opened the internal communication channel to the Military Department, "I am Minister Likok of Information, get your Marshal Weslin on the line."

"...Marshal, I need you to send me the list of soldiers sent out on this mission to capture sandworms."

"Hmm?" Weslin sounded a bit surprised but did not refuse.

After instructing his subordinates to comply, he continued to question the communicator, "Is there anything else, Minister?"

"We have a major problem," Likok said solemnly, "The life signals of all our soldiers who went out on this mission have been wiped out."

"What!" Weslin was shocked. The large-scale loss of soldiers, especially the failure of well-planned operations, felt like flesh being torn from his body.

"But based on our observations and conjecture, the signals seem more likely to have been cut and replaced, rather than our front-line soldiers dying outright."

As he spoke, Likok's gaze swiftly swept over the list, pausing on a particular name and revealing a look of realization.

'Bai E!'

With him there, the situation seemed somewhat reasonable.

Back at the site of the Root Server's ruins, this youngster was also a main contributor to repairing the damaged servers.

"One of our soldiers on the front lines has discovered the enemy's conspiracy and provided their location," Likok said with a serious expression. "Marshal Weslin, it is imperative for you to deploy troops to investigate, whether it's to rescue our elite soldiers or to uncover the enemy's abnormal technological power."

"This..." Weslin hesitated slightly.

"This is the will of the Scientific Research Institute." There was an unusual pressure in Likok's tone, "I have already submitted a request to the head institute, please ensure your cooperation."

Weslin no longer wasted words and agreed at once, "Alright."

After disconnecting the communicator, facing the puzzled gazes of his subordinate researchers, Minister Likok smiled at them, "Among the soldiers who went on the mission, I know one person. His name is Bai E..."

In his mind, the image surfaced of that incredibly reliable figure with whom he had once traveled.

In that heartbreakingly ancient ruin, it was he who had secured the final victory, and now, facing the conspiracy of an alien race, it was he who provided the glimmer of hope needed for humanity to break free.

If the internet technology his team had just newly developed seemed like a mere plaything in the eyes of the 'bugs,' it would no doubt be a devastating blow for them, just starting again from scratch.

They had to find the core reason for this signal interruption and research countermeasures, otherwise, the internet they had struggled so much to restart, along with all of its related information technologies, would be as if dashed to pieces.

What truly leads to despair is not hardship or adversity, but the lack of a direction for effort.

Humanity has been trapped in this dark age for too long, they must stride forward boldly to reclaim their former glory!

...

["Lucky Strike" charging +12.]

Chapter 319 Double-fronted Operation!

Bai E felt a slight surge of excitement upon receiving the prompt.

There was a traceable pattern to the several times energy had been credited before, but did the last 12 points of energy credited mean that the base had received his distress signal?

The encouragement of the other warriors was just a lie he had to tell under these circumstances, whether the communicator he made himself through those materials would work sufficiently was still unknown. So was how the potential base that might receive his signal would consider his distress signal.

He too had no confidence in his heart.

But there was no choice, this was all part of what it took to become a leader.

What did it mean to be a leader?

It meant having to lie.

To call for calm when one himself was overjoyed;

To bring hope to everyone when one himself was in despair.

His Spiritual Energy was rapidly depleting; in a minute and a half, he had killed five sand bugs, plus the one that Song Ying and Tiger had killed together. The initial six sand bugs were all put down.

The cost was 30 points of Spiritual Energy he had expended, plus one shot at supporting the bug tide, leaving him with only 27 points of Spiritual Energy.

Not enough!

Not nearly enough!

With eight sand bugs left, even at the rate he was going, plus his own action power reserves, he would likely have trouble clearing all the enemies quickly.

Even though he had absorbed a wave of magic power from the demons recently, the time he had spent practicing Spiritual Energy was still a bit too short.

If he had enough Spiritual Energy, relying on his own skills, he would definitely be able to quickly and completely settle the current predicament!

As for the current 210/100 energy charge for the critical hit, that is, two chances for a critical hit, he couldn't use them for the time being.

Whether it was the sand bugs, worker bugs, or wasp bugs, they were all low-level units in the Bug Race, and it would be a waste to use it on them.

Before the hidden commander made an appearance, this precious opportunity to use it wouldn't be readily used.

Bai E clenched his fists, smashing down the second punch at the sand bug beneath him, driven by a mix of unwillingness and fury!

Die, all of you!

Whether reinforcements could arrive in time or not, he couldn't count on anyone else for the battle that was taking place right now!

[In battle, you've fully harnessed and used Spiritual Energy, which has trained your will, increasing your Spiritual Energy limit by 1.]

[The souls of the warriors deeply trust you; your "Soul Black Hole" has absorbed their scattered fighting spirit and successfully converted it into 5/5 Spiritual Energy, which has been added to your reserves.]

Add 6 points to the limit, and 5 current Spiritual Energy points.

The sudden increase in Spiritual Energy in the midst of battle reinvigorated Bai E's diminishing fighting will.

5 points of Spiritual Energy wasn't much, but it was enough to support the consumption of the Gift of Relief for half a minute.

At such moments, every second is crucial.

However, the eight sand bugs were still not something Bai E could handle alone.

With five sand bugs overturning a transport vehicle and dazed for a moment, and the remaining three, even with Bai E, Tiger, and Song Ying entangling two, there was one wrapping its huge body around the vehicle. Its claws, as hard as steel, scraped the not particularly thick metal of the vehicle, making an unpleasant screeching noise.

Seeing that the small bug nest he was facing had cleared more than half, and although the remaining bugs were still troublesome, they could put up some resistance, at least, with You and the remaining three members of the special squad. Zhou gritted his teeth and charged towards the unattended sand bug.

"I'll help!"

Bai E couldn't handle so many sand bugs alone; even when six appeared just now, it took the captain and Song Ying all their strength to entangle two for Bai E.

Now there were eight...

"Zhou!" You called out hoarsely.

As comrades who had cooperated for a long time, she heard a hint of deathly resolve in Zhou's tone.

Zhou didn't look back, trying to sound as cheery as possible, "Don't forget the results of my hard training these past few days!"

On those occasional moments, his fists... seemed capable of smashing through those ceramic combat suits designed for bulletproofing.

Even though his performance wasn't stable... even though his body was nowhere near as strong as the captain's or Bai's, there was always a chance for entanglement.

Rushing madly forward, Zhou swung his right fist from the side of the shield he held in his left hand.

"Bang!"

"Bang!"

Punch after punch.

The sand bug, focused on destroying, still circled the transport vehicle, trying to completely demolish the human creation, not even glancing back at Zhou.

"Bang!"

"Crack~"

The sound of the fist hitting the bone armor and the slight crack almost arose at the same time, and hearing this sound, Zhou felt a surge of joy, finally feeling like he wasn't working in vain...

Completely cast over by a black shadow, Zhou woke from his moment of joy and looked up.

The sand bug's lantern-like eyes were staring mercilessly at him...

Before the appearance of a sufficiently threatening target, destroying human creations was their primary goal, but when a threat to their own safety emerged, prioritizing the elimination of the threat was the goal.

These simple preset instructions seemed to be the only operating guidelines for these low-intelligence sand bugs.

"Whoosh!"

Countless sharp bone blades chopped down together, as if several top-tier swordsmen attacked at once.

Zhou, who lacked the defensive power of the captain and Bai, rolled away with a start and defensively lifted the shield to protect his surroundings. The fierce struggle left his arm tingling with a tremor.

Chapter 320 Double-fronted Operation!_2

'So ferocious...'

Only those who have faced the enemy themselves can understand the pressure placed on Bai E and the team captain.

And even faced with such formidable foes, the captain's performance was still comprehensible, but what about Bai E?

How skilled must one be to kill a sandworm every 15 seconds on average?

Unimaginable!

Yet, the reality was right before his eyes, and he could no longer afford to lag behind!

"clang, clang, clang, clang!" The shield, forged from yuan-series alloy, blocked every bone blade swung by the insect. This shield, obtained after a long accumulation of military merit, showed incredible reliability.

"Argh!!!!!" Dashan clenched his teeth tightly and made a sudden charge forward after withstanding a series of slashes.

Leap forward with a punch!

A threat! He must pose a threat to the opponent!

He cannot allow the enemy to damage the vehicles, nor can he let this sandworm attack and disrupt his teammates!

Everyone has their duty, and stopping this sandworm was his sole responsibility at this moment!

"Ah!" A warrior engulfed by a swarm of winged insects involuntarily let out a final, desperate scream.

The densely packed sound of articulated limbs emitted a chilling, viscous noise.

In the last moments of life, the warrior pulled the pins from a string of grenades attached to his body.

A trap made with human flesh always inflicts greater damage!

"Boom!"

The explosion sent flesh and blood scattering evenly in the air, the remains of humans and insects indistinguishably intertwined...

The dying cry of his comrade-in-arms further stoked Dashan's fighting spirit; fear and anger surged in his heart as he unconsciously shouted and launched a reckless attack on the sandworm before him.

"Ah!"

The human warrior never feared death; fulfilling the missions entrusted by their superiors with their lives was their only purpose.

A flash of bloody hue swept across Dashan's vision without leaving any trace.

"Bang!"

With a punch thrown, Dashan heard a voice near his ear— "Dashan!"

The voice was distant and cold, vague as if a chant from the sky, barely audible.

But it seemed to be Bai E's?

He turned his head and, unexpectedly, saw a headless body appear out of nowhere.

The body, with fists clenched, tried to pound towards the monstrous insect in front of it, but it seemed it hadn't succeeded.

So whose body was this?

Consciousness forever froze at that moment.

Dashan, with eyes wide open, felt light as a feather, as if drifting freely in an infinite world.

The world was a vast expanse of white, like the clouds seen on an occasional clear afternoon.

As his vision gradually adjusted, a cold, white sun rose from the end of his sight...

"Dashan!" Song Ying shouted loudly, the natural-born soldier who seldom showed much emotion was now extraordinarily agitated.

As a natural-born human, he should have been the most emotionally rich in the squad.

However, having witnessed the loss of too many lives, he had sealed away his intense emotions. The lively artificial soldier Dashan had become his projection of his own other side.

But now...

"Boom!" A blast of flames emerged from the darkness in the distance; another squad member, following in the footsteps of his comrade, used his body as a trap to launch a final assault on the alien species when surrounded by insects.

"TM it!" Song Ying grabbed a grenade launcher, scrambled up the overturned carrier quickly, and took over the unfinished target of Dashan.

"Open your mouth!" Song Ying charged close to the head of the sandworm, lifting the grenade launcher.

"Boom!" A roar sounded as the sandworm let out an unintentional shriek.

Flames swept over Song Ying's body, but the physical impact of the concussion couldn't repel his frame, which he had hastily strapped together with the insect using emergency straps.

"Click!"

The grenade was fixed in place, and the close-range heat from the Concussion Grenade burned his skin until it blistered, yet Song Ying's face was cold with determination.

"I, TM, am going to make you! Open your mouth!"

"Boom!"

The point-blank grenade launcher fired the last Concussion Grenade into the open mouth of the sandworm.

The tail-flame-carrying grenade burrowed down the wriggling esophagus, the massive impact driving it into unseen depths...

"Boom!"

Below the muffled noise, the sandworm's body visibly expanded rapidly. After a brief struggle against its chitin bone armor, a violent explosion tore through the softer underside of its body.

Flames mixed with flesh blew apart most of the sandworm's mobility.

Falling bone blades flailed wildly, dragging down Song Ying, who hadn't managed to untie the straps in time.

"Fuck!"

Boundless rage rose from Bai E's heart as the bloody fringe surfaced again on the periphery of his vision, evaporating a vague aura as if alive.

"Get lost!"

The aura of Spiritual Energy exploded in an instant, and the yet-to-be-formed Spiritual Body shone brilliantly in a dark, high-dimensional space...

And in that hazy, elusive space, countless prowling shadows swam towards the only light like fish.

"Snap!"

Standing atop the sandworm, Bai E suddenly extended his right hand to the side, his palm virtually grasping as if he had caught some invisible entity.

In another reality, invisible in this dimension, a twisted tentacle emerged in the palm of Bai E's Spiritual Body.

