

## Wow 361

Chapter 361 I killed...

"The door is open," Zero reported with swift efficiency. After opening the gates, he first scanned the interior of the information base, discovering that, aside from some devices he couldn't understand, there was no threat of any independently thinking intelligent mechanisms. Therefore, he returned immediately to inform the others.

"Hmm," Bai E nodded, quietly watching the timer on his wrist, unhurried to deal with the base's affairs.

Only Bai E possessed the technical skills to integrate the information base with the human internet network within the team. Zero, still new to learning, hadn't yet managed to handle the complex, cutting-edge technology from the Golden Age.

But connecting to the network took time, and Bai E was uneasy with the possibility of the white-haired captain resurrecting when not within his sight.

After all, the white-haired captain's ability to resurrect over and over was far more critical.

"There's movement." Rose, who was squatting beside Bai E, twitched her eyelids before suddenly speaking with a hint of excitement.

"Hmm," Bai E saw it too.

This resurrection was not as dramatic; the metal arrow squeezed forcibly out of the skull by some mysterious force, the white-haired captain, now lying sideways on the ground in an odd posture, once again opened those sky-blue eyes.

He sat up and looked at Bai E.

A powerful urge to devour immediately took hold of her senses, allowing no resistance.

"..."

"Whizz."

Bai E was quick-eyed and nimble-handed, releasing an arrow in a flash.

The white-haired captain fell at the sound, ending it cleanly.

"..."

"..."

Rose blinked, "You didn't even let her say a word..."

"No change, what's there to say," Bai E retorted and, remembering the other's resurrection time, got up from the ground and walked towards the open gate of the information base.

The brief span of over three minutes was ample time for him to integrate the base into the human internet network, time that should not be wasted.

Difficult for those who don't know, easy for those who do.

Once you have the technology, the practical operation is quite simple...

What appeared to be a complicated and flashy panel was, in front of Bai E, who was familiar with the process, nothing more than a two to three-minute task before the base was once more incorporated into the human internet sector.

"Hello? Hello? Can you hear me?" After testing the linkback to base and ensuring no issues, Bai E finally breathed a sigh of relief.

"Phew~"

By completing the restart process, even if intelligent mechanisms regained control of the base for "mining," they couldn't prevent humans from using the base to transmit information.

These signal bases came from the Golden Age, and their ability to convey information was almost an inherent feature, one which the intelligent mechanisms, even those originated from the same era and sharing the same ancestry as the signal bases, couldn't stop from functioning.

Unless they destroyed it...

But if they chose to destroy, they would equally be unable to mine.

A lose-lose situation.

Of course, the "mining" performed by the intelligent mechanisms would definitely interfere with the transmission speed of human information. As such, whether the military would counterattack the nearby Intelligent Mechanism Base and station a significant force here depended on the opinions of the high-ranking military officials to whom he would report back.

It wasn't his concern...

"Captain, she seems to be waking up soon." Stone, who had been watching the white-haired captain from Grey Iron City outside, suddenly ran in to report.

"Oh?" Bai E nodded, "Understood."

With that, Bai E gave the base one last look. The main structure was no different from the first base he had explored, except this one, having been in continuous use, was not a "ruin" and therefore didn't trigger the exploration process of a ruin.

Besides that, there were some "mining" devices placed by the intelligent mechanisms—

Long legs like that of high-legged spiders stood throughout the base, with the core crystalline light rings encircling the base's own crystal column as if they were a natural formation.

Below each mechanical arm was a blank logic cube embedded within a fixed slot, waiting for the "core" to be infused.

In a corner, there was a neatly arranged stack of logic cubes already infused with the Computing Power Modules, glowing blue, crystalline tendrils stretching and changing within them, slowly rotating, exuding a mesmerizing magical allure.

These were the core existence of every intelligent mechanism. Just put a "metal shell" on the outside, and a brand-new intelligent mechanism is created.

Of course, humans neither knew the specifics of the manufacturing technology nor had any interest in learning it.

Looking at those crystalline blocks, Bai E felt as though he was looking at embryonic cells awaiting development and growth, like...artificial humans?

"Take it apart," Bai E ordered softly, then turned and stepped out.

No matter whether the intelligent mechanisms would rebuild or not, since he had come, he might as well leave something behind, not to mention he needed to take pictures to report back...

...

"How do you take it apart?" Stone touched the back of his head.

"Violent dismantling? Don't you know that?" Bai E stopped, glanced at him.

"Oh?" Stone's eyes lit up, "Oh!"

He got excited!

The daylight outside had already begun to dim.

The white-haired captain lay on the ground, furrowing her brows lightly, but still hadn't woken up.

"Is she having a nightmare?" Rose asked softly.

Setting aside the absurdity that came with her peculiar personality when she was awake, the one lying in a "coma" was evidently just a delicate-looking little girl.

It was even hard to tell her gender.

She was merely an underdeveloped child with a delicate appearance, devoid of any gender characteristics.

Yet, such a child possessed such tremendous power.

Against Bai E, this captain from Grey Iron City seemed to have no power to fight back, but facing the current Bai E, how many could truly confront him?

So, why did this "child" attack Bai E in the first place?

And how the hell did she become the captain of a special squad in Grey Iron City?

What kind of nightmares was she having?

Rose blinked her eyes, somewhat curious.

She was uninhibited in her personality, but it didn't stop her from also having the meticulousness that came naturally to women.

...

"Pain..."

"So painful..."

Every time she was killed, she had to endure the agony of death once more.

The pain in her body was secondary; she had already been through countless such episodes during past modifications, and she was the only one among the kids who underwent the same process to make it to the end because only she had endured each extraordinary torture.

The physical pain had become familiar to her body, even to the point where it seemed to bring "satisfaction."

But the soul...

The soul hurt so much too...

Every killing blow was like a shattering of the soul.

As if a piece of exquisite porcelain was smashed on the ground, shattered to pieces...

And she had glued it back together with sheer willpower.

In the past, a new soul was used with each death because none of those souls had the determination to continue living in this world.

If life had no meaning, death was equally meaningless.

It was just that this time, she had a reason she absolutely had to keep living!

But... it really hurt so much.

So much pain, so much pain, so much pain, so much pain!!!!

"Huff!" Like a drowning person suddenly rescued from underwater, nearly suffocating, the white-haired girl abruptly sat up.

Memories rushed back as she got up, and the first figure she saw upon opening her eyes once again triggered the judgment criteria of the brand, an astonishing desire to devour interfering with her thoughts at first sight.

Every following action had to be centered around the goal of devouring him... one cannot deceive oneself.

This time, however... that impulsive desire seemed to have faded slightly?

"Poof!"

Without the chance to think, darkness enveloped the white-haired girl's vision once more.

"..."

Rose glanced sideways at Bai E.

"She died again..."

"I killed her."

...

Chapter 362 Gold Seed

Bai E didn't believe that there could really be people who never died, even if every rebirth involved a soul exchange, a flaw. For humanity as a collective, that was a terrifying existence.

Not to mention that this person had already died several times. What happened to the promised soul swapping?

Such a defy-nature individual couldn't possibly exist, and even individuals with a limited number of rebirths were unlikely to appear on a large scale.

This Captain Bai, even in Grey Iron City, was probably a special existence.

Bai E was interested in seeing her limits...

Against a definite enemy, there was no need for mercy.

...

Four minutes later...

"Pfft!"

Five minutes later...

"Pfft!"

Six minutes later...

"Pfft!"

Seven minutes later...

"Captain Bai..." The two remaining warriors from Grey Iron City had returned.

"Hmm! Stay aside."

"Pfft!"

"..."

"..."

"That... Captain Bai." The acting captain gulped nervously, looking at his own captain who had just met an unnatural death right before his eyes. He was somewhat at a loss, cautiously observing Bai E's profile and asked in trepidation, "May I ask if Captain Bai has any... orders for our next move?"

Or rather, processing.

"Orders?" Bai E furrowed his brows as he looked at the fallen white-haired corpse and pondered for a moment. He found the changes in the eyes of the opponent after waking up somewhat strange.

It seemed... not so fierce anymore?

But still fairly fierce, killing was certainly the right decision.

Assured that his actions were justified, Bai E turned to face the two survivors from Grey Iron City and waved them over, "Come here, I have some questions to ask you."

"You see..." The acting captain and the boy stiffly moved closer, their faces reluctantly ingratiating.

"Tell me, what would your city normally do if they found out you were missing out there?"

In their Blackwater City, it was no big deal; squads going out on missions and disappearing in this dangerous world was all too common. The vital signs monitoring sensors they had tried were not yet widely implemented, and depending on the dangerousness of the mission, going missing for a certain time was equivalent to being considered dead.

No one cared about the lives of a few cannon fodder.

But in Grey Iron City, it might be different? They were already implementing an elite strategy and perhaps valued the life of every warrior more.

When Bai E asked the question, the two squeezed their buttocks tighter, rather panicked.

What did that mean?

Were they about to be "missing"?

"Captain Bai, to tell the truth, we are not that loyal to Grey Iron City."

"..."

"..."

Bai E looked bewildered as the acting captain revealed his determination, "You don't know, Captain Bai, but the surgeries that most of us in the city must undergo are extremely painful and compulsory. Surviving once doesn't guarantee survival the next time, and each surgery is a torment we can hardly bear. We couldn't stand that damned place any longer!"

The acting captain grew more agitated as he spoke, his face growing red with emotion.

"Frankly, we've been planning to live independently outside the city for a while now, it's just..."

"It's just what?"

The acting captain's face was uncomfortable to look at, not quite sure how to continue.

'It's just that I haven't made up a story yet...'

Although they hated the pain endured during each surgery, the sense of power that came with the transformation after each operation was obvious.

They loathed the city, yet craved power.

Selected to join the official forces of Grey Iron City, they were already chosen for their mental resilience.

To say they hated it was one thing, but actually, they'd never entertained the thought of leaving.

"Stabilizing Repair Fluid..." The boy beside suddenly spoke up.

"Right!" The eyes of the acting captain lit up, seizing the perfect excuse, "Our bodies have been transformed surgically, those additional organs or mutations have become an integral part of us, but since they aren't original expressions of our genes, they sometimes cause rejection reactions, requiring regular injections of Stabilizing Repair Fluid to prevent our bodies from collapsing."

As he spoke, the acting captain emphasized, "If Captain Bai wishes to take us in, we're gonna need enough Stabilizing Repair Fluid for sure!"

"Oh~"

A city that uses such core resources to guarantee a high-pressure rule?

...

Was the rejection reaction just a result of immature technology, or an intentional backdoor left behind?

A simple suspicion flitted through Bai E's mind. He nodded, "But all I wanted to ask was about the city's possible contingency plans after your disappearance. That's my actual question."

"Ah?"

Could it still be an attempt to silence them?!

Damn!

A trace of ruthlessness appeared in the acting captain's eyes.

Bai E smiled warmly, "Don't misunderstand, I'm merely asking about the consequences, I have no intention of harming you."

The acting captain looked skeptically at Bai E, hesitated for a long while, and then replied in a hesitant tone, "We'll try our best to recover... Alive, we want the person; dead, we want the body."

They had all carried out many similar missions in the past and understood this all too well.

Bai E raised an eyebrow, appearing to ask casually, "Recover what?"

"Each of us who has undergone surgery has a certain probability of generating a special 'seed' in our bodies. That 'seed' is the result of coordination between our modified organs and our original genes. The person who accepts this 'seed' won't have a rejection reaction when they receive the surgeries that the 'seed' provider has undergone. It's also known as 'Gold Seed'."

"Gold Seed?" Bai E murmured softly.

It seemed to be a side-effect-free version of human modification technology.

So, does the rejection reaction in modified humans occur merely due to technological limitations?

Perhaps the higher-ups of Grey Iron City also enjoyed seeing such limitations...

Bai E smiled amiably at the two, "So, what about the body modification surgeries you mentioned earlier?"

Blackwater City isn't the only city in this world, and the technologies of other cities might also have something worth learning from.

Since he had determined his goal was to be a warlord leader, he naturally couldn't overlook any technology that might mass-produce military strength.

If their technology truly works, he might as well make use of it in the future.

"Our modifications..." The acting captain narrowed his eyes, revealing everything honestly, "Each surgery comes with a certain increase in physical base attributes, and sufficient physical base attributes are also a prerequisite for the next surgery. Our bodies also need time to adapt to the enhanced functions post-modification."

After all, these weren't really secrets; anyone in Grey Iron City could easily find out about them with a little inquiry.

The gorilla had undergone surgeries for: heart, multiple lungs, skeletal modification, and sweat gland modification.

The acting captain had surgeries for: heart, multiple lungs, muscle enhancement, and nerve junction.

The burly man had surgeries for: heart, multiple lungs, blood modification, and a preset stomach.

The boy had surgeries for: heart, multiple lungs, modified eyes, and taste detection nerves.

Heart and multiple lung surgeries were basic, and everyone starting modification had to begin with these two.

After that, the choice of surgeries varied according to individual differences in physique and personality, with no priority in the remaining procedures; everyone's path was slightly different.

For example, the gorilla's defensive power came from his modified skeleton which could form bone plates at the right moment, and his sweat gland modification was designed to conserve energy for more sustained bursts of power.

The burly man's preset stomach allowed him to draw adequate energy from various sources to fuel his recovery powers, complementing each other.

The acting captain's muscle enhancement gave her an incredible surge of strength, while her nerve junction modification allowed her to restore her spirits without needing to sleep.

The boy's modifications were more functional: his modified eyes allowed him to see in infrared, like a thermal imager, and his taste detection nerves made his sense of smell even sharper than a dog's.

Only those who had undergone at least three surgeries qualified as warriors of Grey Iron City.

All of them had been through four surgeries, making them elite.

As for their white-haired captain... it was unknown.

As the acting captain spoke, her gaze drifted to their leader, who seemed to be in a silent slumber. A visible reverence flashed in her eyes.

Everything about this captain was a mystery; even though they had been on several missions together, there was little interaction or understanding between them.

All that was known was that this captain seemed to have some connection to Dr. Sabos, the most revered figure in the city, but no one dared to ask about the specifics.

"He's awake..."

As they spoke, the bullet hole in the white-haired forehead gradually healed.

The two survivors from Grey Iron City instinctively stepped back and turned away, not wanting to witness their captain meet a gruesome fate again.

After all, it was rather awkward from their perspective...

If they didn't have to watch their captain getting killed by someone else, maybe they wouldn't have to bear the responsibility of avenging their captain, right...?

Their captain's voice as he awoke clearly reached their ears.

One breath...

Two breaths...

All was silent.

The captain from Blackwater City hadn't made a move?

The two, who had deliberately avoided looking, cautiously exchanged glances before daring to look back.

But they discovered that the two captains were merely looking at each other in silence, as if they had come to some sort of understanding.

Seeing the calm in the eyes of the man who had died several times yet never switched personalities, Bai E finally smiled, "Can we talk?"

The white-haired nodded calmly, "We can."

...

## Chapter 363 Reborn

"Why did you attack me?" Bai E got straight to the point, he could only see the obvious malice in the other's eyes, but he never understood why someone he was meeting for the first time wanted to put him to death.

Even in the words he heard during his "death" when he was split in two by a high-energy ray, there was no clear indication of this.

Rose stared at Bai E quietly, her cold demeanor somewhat eerie, like an invisible monster roaring inside her petite body, "To... eat you."

Before Bai E could ask any questions, Rose explained first, "Genetic extractor."

It was also one of Grey Iron City's cybernetic enhancements, yet most of the warriors could hardly endure the surgery, so not many warriors knew about it.

Only she... someone born with an "undying physique," could successfully undergo the surgery and allow her body to finally get used to that sinister and powerful special ability through a long series of regenerations and dissolutions—

Devouring.

By devouring the organic tissue of the target, one could gain the abilities the target excelled in, and even memories, knowledge, and so on; the theoretical effect was incredibly powerful, but there always seemed to be something lacking in practice. Anything extracted was almost always a damaged version, but with enough substances absorbed, it could lead to subtle and pervasive improvements.

"As far as I know, I'm the only one in the entire city who has successfully completed this surgical transformation and survived," Rose said quietly as she watched Bai E, "so I'm of great value to them, and they will spare no expense to track down and retrieve my body."

Bai E narrowed his eyes, "Are you threatening me?"

"No," Rose said earnestly, shaking her head, "I hope you can appreciate the significance of this and provide the technical support to help me remove the tracker inside my body. I can't do it myself... and I can't rely on them."

Rose glanced at the two survivors beside her while she spoke. They didn't understand Rose, but Rose, who had the memories, understood them.

Their stance was quite chaotic, their minds disturbed by cybernetic enhancements, always on the verge of doing something unexpected impulsively, capable of anything.

Unreliable.

"But you just attacked me," Bai E said, staring intently into her eyes. Eyes are the windows to the soul; they also speak.

"It's the brand the doctor etched into me; I couldn't resist."

"And now?"

"The repeated deaths and resurrections in a short period seem to have diluted the brand's hold over me; that's the only explanation, otherwise, it would be difficult for me to sit here and talk to you calmly now."

"How can I trust someone who just attacked me? Even under the assumption that we are comrades..."

Rose smiled, like a cloud floating in the sky.

She stood up slowly and carefully in the least suspicious way possible, bowed seriously to Bai E, "As a form of atonement, after I have fulfilled my responsibility, I will vanish completely. All the sins of the past will have nothing to do with the next master of this body. I only wish to give the next successor absolute freedom."

"What if I intend to pursue this to the end?"

"Although I don't believe Your Excellency to be a person of such cruelty, if you really can do it, an eternal calm, I suppose, is something every transient guest of this body would like to see."

Rose's gaze was calm, and her quiet recitation of these facts made her as trustworthy as the most rational sage.

"..." Bai E said nothing more.

It was clear what Rose meant; she wanted to follow him and have him help her completely escape the control of Grey Iron City.

He might gain a subordinate with endless potential, but at the same time, a ticking time bomb.

Grey Iron City placed great importance on her; they would surely pursue her relentlessly.

If the hiding was good, then all was well, but if it was not and they were exposed...

The variables involved in an inter-city conflict were too numerous.

With his current status, he couldn't even judge what stance Blackwater City would take towards a neighboring ally.

And if he didn't wish to take her in, walking away after a slap on the backside probably wouldn't be a problem... provided that the big wigs of Grey Iron City didn't mind everything that happened since Rose attacked him.

Probably... they wouldn't mind, right?

As long as he didn't take away Rose, whom they valued greatly...

"What should I do?" Bai E whispered softly, as if seeking advice.

Only Rose, who was close at hand, heard his voice and turned her head, her bright eyes focusing on Bai E's profile, "You know what kind of person you are, don't you?"

What kind of person am I...

Bai E let out a snort of laughter and sighed.

Looking at the white-haired figure sincerely gazing into his eyes, Bai E asked, "Will your successor remember all this?"

"Bits and pieces, all unclear; anything is possible."

"How do you plan to ensure that your successor can achieve true freedom?"

"Spiritual Energy..." the white-haired one asserted firmly, "That's the only power I can control freely. I will use a part of my Spiritual Energy to eternally seal the current indistinct branding. I'm not sure if this attempt will be effective, but it's the only effort I can make."

"..."

A marvelous world where anything can happen.

Everyone is taking risks.

Bai E nodded and finally asked, "I could carry a few words for you, to your... successor."

"..." The question seemed to stump the white-haired one, as if she had never considered this.

After a long pondering, she looked at Bai E seriously and spoke word by word.

As if standing opposites her was the same body being manipulated by another stranger's soul—

So her gaze was soft, as tender as water.

"Milk tastes good, so do chicken, duck, and fish, and synthetic food is nice at first, but it gets tiresome after a while.

Exercise regularly, ensure you rest, and remember to brush your teeth. Don't trust others too easily, but don't give up on trust; having someone you can fully rely on is very fulfilling.

Read more, think more. Regardless of what you study, what you think about, just ask yourself one thing—what's the fact.

Never let what you want to believe, what others want to believe, or what is beneficial to the majority influence you, but simply scrutinize, what's the fact.

And last, but most importantly, remember this—love is wise, hatred is foolish."

The white-haired one pursed her lips, looking at the other self's apparition, and said goodbye:  
"Farewell..."

In the slight quiet, Bai E spoke softly, "What if I suddenly change my mind? You could go on living..."

The white-haired one blinked, smiled with a spectral sort of misery, "I still remember the thing about the branding... I have to disappear completely. Only a thorough and clean rebirth can possibly bring about real freedom."

"What is your name?"

"I have no name..." the white-haired one's eyes were filled with confusion, "They always called me Alpha, or Captain. But... Feier Ade, you can call me Feier Ade. It's the name I gave myself."

Also called... "Freedom."

"I ask of you... don't let this body's next owner die again, it really hurts."

"...I promise."

"Heh~" The white-haired one smiled brightly and then collapsed thunderously.

When the persistence that drove her actions disappeared, Spiritual Energy could no longer sustain this soul's "life."

...

"Hiss hiss hiss... it hurts, it hurts~" Not long after collapsing, the white-haired one woke up again, holding her head and grimacing in pain every few minutes.

Chapter 364 The dead

"Bang!"

Having slammed the trunk of the car shut, Bai E instructed Zero, "Call them over."

With the situation here resolved and Grey Iron City's trio turned into supplies stuffed into sacks and tossed into the trunk, it was time to call over the other two teams who had won without lifting a finger.

Bai E didn't want to hand over Grey Iron City's "prisoners" for the time being, due to the too unique existence of the white-haired one and the city's upper echelons' decisions being too chaotic and unknown. Bai E planned to swallow this windfall himself.

The two dead bodies and the "seized" vehicle would serve as proof of this battle... anyway, the photos had already been taken.

Under the still-intact floodlights of the smart fortress, the two squads called in over the regional radio saw the remnants of the battle littering the ground and, with incredulous glances at the unscathed Bai E and his four companions, eventually swallowed hard in silence.

The traces of battle were still very fresh, and they were all experienced veterans who could roughly reconstruct the combatants involved through the scene—a basic skill.

Which was why the fear in their hearts grew.

["Lucky Strike" charge +10.]

"My goodness, you guys took all this down?" Even after confirming it, Squad Leader 5 still asked in daze.

"A few friends from Grey Iron City lent a hand," Bai E said, widening his eyes as he stated the fact.

"Oh~" Squad Leader 6 nodded and asked, "Where are they?"

"Over there," Bai E pointed, and the two corpses on the ground "greeted" them.

"..."

An "8" and a speckled star, both quite ghastly.

Neither looking like the work of humans, which somewhat proved the horror of this battle.

So, how did a team with only five members manage to survive to the end without losing a single one?

How strong exactly was this squad?

"Gulp!"

The two squad leaders exchanged glances, once again grateful that they hadn't been too unruly when they first met.

They were quite amenable to "advice"...

"So, do you need us to clean up the battlefield?" Squad Leader 5 rolled up his sleeves, feeling that he and his people needed to do something to not look so useless.

"Has the base station been rebooted yet?" The technician following the two squads also stepped forward to ask.

"No need," Bai E said, smiling at them, "I just wanted you to take a look. Let's prepare to retreat."

"What?"

Bai E looked at the increasingly dark sky, heavy as if about to pour down a torrential rain, and then glanced in the direction of the smart machine transport team's approach.

"If nothing unexpected happens, the smart machines' main force should arrive soon. Does anyone want to stay here?"

"..."

"Smart machines?"

"Main force?"

After scanning the horribly battle-damaged debris on the ground, the team members from both squads shivered, "That doesn't seem to be part of our mission."

"That's fine then," Bai E said cheerfully, clapping his hands while pointing to a corner not too far away.

A series of logic cubes were stacked in the corner, which were the spoils of war Bai E had the two survivors from Grey Iron City drag over from where they previously stored their supplies, "Could you

move those to the vehicle and pack them up? Those are important resources we've captured, and they'll count as military achievements when we get back."

"Us?" Squad Leader 6 asked with a hint of luck in his voice.

Bai E smiled slightly, "Us."

["Lucky Strike" charge +3.]

"Deal!" The two squad leaders immediately beamed with joy, hustling their members to get to work, "Hurry up, hurry up, once we load up the stuff we can head home!"

...

"Boom!" Out of nowhere, a thunderclap struck the empty space behind the three SUVs.

The weather in this era was far more temperamental than during the Golden Age; one moment it could be clear skies, and the next, overcast with dark clouds.

The thunder dragons surging in the dark clouds, under the influence of an unknown compound, actually sparkled with a hint of purple flash.

The harsh weather made Bai E think of the day he was "born."

Speaking of which, since he "awoke," he hadn't encountered such severe weather many times.

The heavy dark clouds pressed oppressively on the earth, making it almost suffocating.

Soon, the curtain of rain caught up from behind, pattering against the metal shell of the vehicle like pebbles.

"It's acid rain!" a teammate's voice came over the radio, and the window that had been open instantly closed.

The downpour shrouded the world...

Thus, the inside of the vehicle felt even quieter.

A head with soft fur popped out from the trunk of the car, resting on the backrest of the rear seat, "Phew~ I was about to suffocate."

Next to her, the other two "prisoners" from Grey Iron City, wrapped in bags, also wriggled out of the bags on their own.

Sitting in the backseat, Bai E glanced at the white-furred head next to him and said in an unrippled tone, "Didn't I tell you not to come out until we reached our destination?"

"But it was getting so stuffy~" the white fur's tone was soft and sticky, and her lively eyes spun around, "So where are we going now?"

"To the military camp..." Bai E didn't peep, so Rose took over the conversation.

"What is the military camp?"

"A military camp is where we live?"

"Where do you live?"

"It's the military camp..."

"..."

"Rose." Bai E suddenly spoke up, interrupting the conversation between Rose and the white fur.

If he let the two of them talk, they could go on for a whole day. In the brief awakening exchange just now, Bai E had already realized this.

"Nova, have you forgotten all the things your sister told you?"

Nova, was the name that the new owner of the white-furred body had given herself, and she seemed to be quite opinionated.

As for Feier Ade, who had left her some memory inheritance including those words, she was considered a sister.

"I remember..." Nova placed her hands on the back of the chair and counted on the tips of her fingers with her right hand, "Stay vigilant, don't trust others easily, observe more, think more, express less, be less impulsive..."

"So..."

"So, are you guys bad people?" Nova moved closer to the side of Bai E's face, her eyes blinking rapidly.

"..."

Unable to answer.

Bai E sighed and compromised in resignation, "At least don't talk so much, it's noisy..."

So Nova instantly narrowed her eyes, curving them like a crescent moon, "Got it, Bai."

Watching their squad leader now looking obedient and sweet, and then recalling Bai's past capriciousness in front of them, the two remaining members from Grey Iron City looked at each other and couldn't help but shiver.

It was too strange...

Fortunately, the personality that had come out this time was quite good, and she seemed to be completely unaffected by the stigma. Feier Ade's experiment had really succeeded...

The girl with clear eyes appeared again in front of Bai E, smiling softly before leaving.

...

"The sun?"

The ethereal girl with white hair looked down at her semi-transparent palm curiously, her body felt as light as if she were floating on clouds, not subject to gravity. In the distance, a massive white orb emitting a cold light hung firmly in the sky.

What was that?

"The sun?"

"And where is this?"

Chapter 365 tracking

"Whoosh!"

Under the onslaught of the downpour, countless newly destroyed mechanical debris were washed by the rain, extinguishing their last bits of light.

Numerous figures in black raincoats stood silently around a towering figure over two meters tall, loyally guarding the deity of their hearts.

"Where is the person? Where is the person?"

The center of the slightly coffee-colored eyebrows was deeply furrowed, and the tall man in a white coat grew more impatient as he watched his subordinates search around and finally bring back the news.

"Where is the person! Find the person for me!"

The tracking signal was lost right here! Even if dead, his most perfect test subject should have died here.

Besides... how could she possibly be dead?

How could she be dead?

This was an exceptional test subject bestowed by the heavens, surpassing the technology of the Golden Age, irreplaceable by anyone!

Prototype wouldn't die!

"Doctor, we have searched everywhere, really, there is no..."

Boom!

The officer reporting the news was instantly grabbed by the neck and hoisted up, his choking pain causing his legs to kick unconsciously in the air.

With gray-white pupils that seemed murky due to age, the doctor stared at the struggling officer with an expression filled with icy death, "If you can't find her, you all deserve to die!"

"Snap!"

With a casual throw, the officer was tossed to the ground in the distance, rolling several times, but he didn't dare take any time to alleviate his pain and immediately got up on his knees to express his determination, "Yes, Doctor!"

The doctor didn't utter a sound, his gray-white eyes just silently swept over everything before him.

A large number of mechanical bodies were eradicated after he arrived, but it was clear that a great battle had taken place here before that.

Whether it was the mechanicals that came later or some unknown individuals involved in the earlier battle, the battlefield had been cleaned up neatly, leaving too few clues to prove the identities of the previous combatants.

But based solely on the damaged yellow first-generation mechanical body found, the identity of the unknown combatants could be roughly determined—

Soldiers.

First-generation machines were generally hard to destroy, and even if they were damaged in battle, they would be sent to the mechanical core base for repairs quickly; the damaged mechanical corpse left here was obviously destroyed in that battle.

Every first-generation machine was unimaginably powerful, and a mechanical fortress with a first-generation machine at its core was probably not something that "Prototype's" squad would dare provoke.

Even if they had launched an attack without prior knowledge, with their fighting strength, it would have been absolutely impossible to completely destroy a first-generation machine.

Unless there was another team of equal size or even greater strength coordinating the attack.

And who would actually lift a hand against mechanicals, a foreign race from which little benefit was to be had? Perhaps the signal base station here could explain something.

The human cities that had only just restarted internet technology.

And which city was closest to this base station?

Apart from Grey Iron City, there was only Blackwater City.

If they really couldn't find many clues, perhaps... he himself needed to take the time to visit Blackwater City.

Dare to take Prototype away?

Anyone in contact with Prototype, they all must die!

Similar incidents had occurred in the past, and so-called "self-awakening" was not the first of its kind, but never before had Prototype truly escaped from his control.

Prototype might not know where the sensor inside her body was hidden, but her powerful Spiritual Energy could unreasonably shield anything she wanted to shield.

Of course, this couldn't last long. She wouldn't be able to escape!

...

"Sis said you would help me, okay~" Nova rested her chin on the back seat, gazing expectantly at Bai E, "I can't hold on for long, the big villain will come looking again."

"Or should I dissect you right now?" Bai E glanced back at her.

Simple dissection might solve the problem, but the violent dismantling might be more than the new soul can bear, risking its rebirth from the unbearable pain.

Let's not even mention that Bai E had promised Feier Ade not to let Nova be reborn again; as for the current personality named "Nova," Bai E found it quite decent.

The character he had rolled this time was a good one; there was no need for Bai E to want to switch it out.

And thanks to the feedback from Wen Jie, he now possessed body modification technology that was nearly level 2, making his work a bit more technical.

Paired with his own maxed-out dissection skills, it wasn't entirely impossible for him to operate on his own.

However, it wasn't perfectly safe; without professional equipment, the success rate had to be discounted to some extent.

If he could increase the level of his modification technology skill, he would obviously feel more confident when operating.

Having heard about the follow-up treatment from Bai E, Nova immediately shrank her body and revealed a visibly fearful expression, "Don't... I'm afraid of pain. You said you could be gentle, you can't start now."

Bai E rolled his eyes, "Then why are you rushing me."

Nova instantly grinned, "I was just looking for an excuse to talk with you~"

"..."

He had fallen for it after all.

This girl was a real chatterbox; even without anything to say, she'd find a topic and forcibly start a conversation.

Bai E didn't pay her any more attention but appeared to be resting with his eyes closed, starting to take stock of his gains this time—

The biggest one was obviously from the blown-up minion, from which he acquired "Mechanical Mindset."

[Mechanical Mindset: Your familiarity with machinery allows you to fully immerse your thoughts into the properties of machines. From now on, you will find it easier to establish connections with machinery

and receive the acknowledgment of the "Machine Spirit". Moreover, your own thought process can become similar to that of machinery logic when needed (you can multitask with no burden, simultaneously running multiple unrelated processes without interfering with one another).]

In combination with the previous "Body of Machinery," he already had both the hardware and software related to the "Machine Spirit" fully equipped.

As for the other knowledge and technology, he wouldn't consider them for the moment; lacking sufficient scientific research experience, Bai E did not want to waste precious Universal Experience by simply adding points.

Apart from that, the most important thing was actually his own Spiritual Energy.

The breakthrough of 99 points of Spiritual Energy required an intense burning of the soul.

Only the eruption of will caused by certain matters could possibly break through this final step.

Combat was one of the simplest methods.

This is what Yue Ying had taught him before.

Regrettably, this battle only grazed the threshold, but the ensuing ripples were not strong enough.

Was the opponent too weak? Or were the core emotions involved insufficient to make him truly "boil with passion"?

Bai E leaned towards the latter.

The battle was difficult, and if he hadn't possessed the "Resistance to Death" trait, he might have been instantly wiped out.

But overall, there was no strong emotional fluctuation.

The smart machines were adversaries to humans, but that was it.

They were like neutral map mobs, not powerful enough that he had to rely on bursting seeds to fight them.

It would have to be those demons that could better stir up emotions from the bottom of one's heart.

Perhaps on his return, he should find trouble with that colosseum...

Bai E's thoughts drifted off, returning to his true foundation.

[From the commission's feedback, you gained +0.1 in Insight, +0.1 in Physique, +0.1 in Reflex, +0.1 in Mystery, +21 in Light Weapon Mastery Experience, +12 in Light Firearms Mastery Experience, +20 in Ranged Weapon Mastery Experience, +15 in Combat Mastery Experience, +52 in Knowledge - Human Body Modification Project 1.0 Experience.]

"..."

Pretty stable.

While he had no time to train, others continued to shoulder weights and advance on his behalf.

Gradual feedback from players was always a significant channel for improvement.

Chapter 366 Pray

"It's raining again..."

The lame old veteran leaned on the doorframe, watching the heavy rain pouring down outside the window, his tone somewhat wistful.

Moisture breeds bacteria, and the room smelled musty.

Along with the decay of bodily wounds and the foul stench of uncleanness, the air seemed to sting the eyes.

However, the pouring rain from the sky, mixed with a cool breeze, was cleansing the earth and also dispersing some of the murky air that seemed tinted with color.

It made it easier to breathe.

Tiger hopped on one foot to the door and took deep breaths of the fresh air outside.

The room was always stuffy, and ordinarily, even standing at the door brought no fresh smells... the air circulation was poor.

We were all decaying together in this room.

Although they were not short of food and drink, these retired veterans with limited mobility could not move freely and were confined to this large courtyard.

The open yard at the center of the courtyard was the greatest extent of their world.

Staring at the rain crashing down from the sky, Tiger's eyes slightly glazed over—

Is this what the future held?

A piercing pain suddenly shot through his amputated leg and spread along his nerves to his brain.

The pain coursed through his entire body, felt acutely by every cell.

"..." Tiger furrowed his brow and endured this sudden onslaught of pain, his remaining right hand gripping the door frame so tightly it turned white.

The change caught the attention of the fellow old veteran beside him.

After Tiger's stabbing pain subsided, the old veteran patted his shoulder, "What? Does it hurt again?"

"Mhm~" Tiger responded softly, his lips pale and chapped from dryness, looking utterly disheveled.

After another pat on the shoulder, the old veteran let out a sigh, "That's normal, we all came through pain."

The medical services in the army dealt with the injuries of these soon-to-be-forgotten veterans in a very simplistic way. Just being alive was already the greatest blessing; one couldn't expect much for the treatment of their injuries.

Without perfect care and therapy, even though the wounds from amputations had long healed, there would always be pain due to internal injuries in the years to come.

Every old veteran had gone through it.

Tiger would be no exception.

"I see that most people... don't seem to suffer like this?" With the sharp pain gradually fading, Tiger narrowed his eyes, asking curiously.

Do you become accustomed and numb to the pain?

Perhaps.

But Tiger felt otherwise.

This pain was from the body, occurring sporadically, difficult to grow accustomed to.

He did not know how others felt, but he believed that even after ten more years, he would still find it unbearably painful during attacks.

Soldiers are not without fear of pain, but they have responsibilities far more sacred than the torment of suffering.

What about now?

Forget pain, Tiger glanced behind himself—facing the extremely turbid and nauseating air in the room, the others behind him seemed content.

Not to grasp this rare opportunity to get some fresh air was, to him, inconceivable.

"Us?" The old veteran hopping on one foot found a more comfortable position against the door, his yellow-brown uneven teeth showing as he smiled, "We got used to it."

"But..." The old veteran hesitated, glanced at Tiger's relatively clean appearance, and said with some hesitation, "If you truly feel the pain is unbearable, you could also... pray."

"Pray?"

"Yeah... pray." The old veteran looked distantly through the window, "Pray, and there will be an answer."

"To whom should I pray?"

"I don't know..."

"You don't know?"

"I don't know," the old soldier nodded, "The merciful God of Life will treat every creature in pain equally."

"Snap!"

On the fence of the courtyard, a yellowish-brown shadow flashed by, with only a large package thrown over by a powerful force.

It brushed over the Tiger's head and crashed heavily onto the floor inside the house.

The old soldier who had been standing by the door immediately laughed even more joyously, as if he had been waiting for this moment to happen, "This is a blessing..."

Hopping on one leg, he bounced towards the direction of the big package, and at the same time, other old soldiers who had been resting around the room also crawled over.

Their bodies were feeble, but the scene was somewhat sensational.

Tiger couldn't help but shiver, even though the piercing pain from earlier hadn't made him feel cold, now an astonishing chill crept from his tailbone all the way to the top of his head.

"Who is that?"

Despite this, Tiger mustered his courage and slowly moved closer, asking the chatty old soldier.

"I don't know..."

The old soldier casually responded to Tiger's question while unwrapping the package made of waterproof oiled cloth.

The contents spilled out: they were items that were not particularly refined but sufficiently practical—water, food, bedding.

None were particularly clean, but they were enough to provide warmth.

Especially on this rain-drenched cold night.

The supplies normally provided by the managers could ensure their basic survival needs, but nobody disliked additional resources... and the "goodwill" that came with them.

"Who is that?" Tiger asked again.

"I don't know," the chatty old soldier replied once more: "It doesn't matter. All we need to know is that someone still cares about us waste of space, and that's enough."

"Why would he do this?" Tiger asked instinctively.

It was a question for the others and for himself.

"Why?" The old soldier paused while distributing the supplies and then smiled, "I'd also like to know why..."

More frightening than being abandoned is no longer being needed.

If someone truly needed them, these useless individuals... that would be wonderful.

...

"Open the door!" Wearing a rain cape, Xu Ruoguang pressed his hand on the hilt of his sword at his waist, standing in front of a decaying black wooden door and commanding with a stern face.

The old soldier equipped with a prosthetic limb attempted a negotiation with an embarrassed expression, "Captain... do we really need to check this place?"

Xu Ruoguang, with a frosty look, glanced at him sharply, "Do you think the regulations set by our superior are just for show?"

"But this is where our comrades live..." the old soldier's face turned slightly ugly, yet he dared not argue fiercely.

Xu Ruoguang was the captain assigned by their superior to manage them, an airdropped authority figure in such a vast Black Street with no confidants in the guard was certainly unsettling, and they all understood that.

But under the overt and covert struggles of these few days, they unexpectedly discovered that this airdropped captain had some tricks up his sleeve.

He seemed youthful, but he was quite capable.

His execution was on point, decisions were decisive, and he had some authority among them.

Just that now... the inspection had come to their own heads.

"Captain... we just fear soiling your eyes," another old soldier approached from the side, "The place inside smells very bad; we usually don't like to go in."

Xu Ruoguang maintained a stern face, "Working for our superior, no hardship is a hardship. Do you wish for the chaos of the other day to happen again? Open the door!"

"...Yes."

Chapter 367 Rotting corpse

"Creak~"

Accompanied by the grating sound, the thick, dilapidated black door slowly opened, and a pungent mix of rot and mildew assaulted the senses.

Xu Ruoguang frowned slightly, bypassing the veteran who automatically stepped aside after opening the door, and entered first.

The veterans behind exchanged a look and reluctantly followed suit.

They weren't afraid per se; as former soldiers themselves, they could move freely with their prosthetics, while these veterans were all crammed together here waiting to "rot."

This stark contrast made it easy to draw certain conclusions, particularly when the team leader, a confidant of the local administrator, did not want to present a bad impression to that administrator before their true intentions were exposed.

As for this Block No. 2 Veteran Camp itself, they felt there was nothing to hide...

"Shing!"

As he set foot inside, Xu Ruoguang's longsword slid partially from its sheath. He glanced over his shoulder with peripheral vision at the veterans following him and said coldly, "Is this the 'absolute safety' you spoke of?"

For some reason, even though it was only a game, Xu Ruoguang had zero tolerance for any heresy in this game world, beyond humankind.

Any human tainted by heresy needed to be utterly eradicated, which was the only way out for mankind.

Cutting off the rotten flesh, even at the cost of harming sinew and bone, was the only way to ensure the health of the whole body.

OCD? Or too strong a sense of immersion?

Xu Ruoguang didn't know; he was just acutely aware of the presence of heresy.

In the past few days, he had led the Black Street Guard, composed of veterans, to purge many residents of Black Street who were still consorting with demons.

These people, who had witnessed the existence of demons with their own eyes, and even encountered them in person twice, had an extremely high rate of corruption.

During every moment of distraction, during the nights of sleep, those insidious whispers eroded their wills unseen.

Not every common person had a will strong enough to resist.

And now, the high-dimensional demons revealed their fangs once more with their corrupting influence on mankind.

The foul stench of undead flesh hit their nostrils, and bolstered by some unending authority, humans had become "immortal" monsters!

"Eh~"

"Eh~"

Uncontrollable groans rose from the rotten throats; their gray-white eyeballs bulged unnaturally, and their faces melted like wax, barely maintaining a human shape.

The sound of the door had disturbed these mindless wanderers, so they all turned their stiff bodies to look over...

"Click!" The veterans following Xu Ruoguang drew their pistols and rifles at the sight of their former comrades turned grotesque and instinctively turned off the safeties.

Bullets chambered.

The deputy team leader, one of their own, cautiously stepped forward with a frown and asked, "Old Lin, what happened to you all?"

The decayed faces still bore traces of their original appearance; the deputy team leader, who was very familiar with every comrade, attempted to communicate.

But all they got in response was saliva dripping from the corners of their mouths, and guttural growls like those of rabid dogs.

"Haven't you realized? Your companions have fully enlisted in the demon's ranks!"

Xu Ruoguang's longsword was unsheathed, its blade glinting against the wall.

The target confirmed, humans who had joined the legions under the Eternal demons would become these ghastly, undead corpses.

Not every Eternal demon could benignly bestow equal blessings upon every believer, often just fortifying them with some "life" authority instead.

They would not lose life due to infections by bacteria and viruses, immune to sickness, but both their bodies and minds would be corrupted by high-dimensional powers into forms unacceptable to mankind.

Against such adversaries, the only recourse was... to kill!

Xu Ruoguang flashed into action, activating bullet time.

The longsword swept across throats but did not bring about the withering of life.

As they turned into undead, these bodies had lost the vulnerabilities they possessed as normal humans.

Their lives had been fully "digitized," and only by depleting their health points with sufficient damage could these inhuman creatures be thoroughly purged.

"What are you waiting for?" As the blade's light fell like snow, Xu Ruoguang's frosty voice also rose.

Urging the veterans behind him to take action.

Although they left their comrades here, these veterans merely wished to use the constraints of the mundane world to make their brothers fully recognize this harsh reality and join their noble cause.

They never truly wanted to abandon these brothers who emerged from the same predicament... On the contrary, they held deeper respect for those steadfast in their beliefs.

The more resolute a person's belief, the tougher they become upon switching sides.

But no matter how they yearned to learn why their former comrades had become what they were now, under Xu Ruoguang's command, they had no choice but to pull their triggers.

The harsh reality was laid bare before them; brothers corrupted into demonic henchmen could no longer turn back...

"Bang!"

"Bang!"

Guns handcrafted by Black Street themselves discharged single shots, the random gunfire tearing apart several undead corpses.

Yet the gunshots undoubtedly attracted the attention of more undead deeper in the Veteran Camp, and more twisted figures rushed towards them with their seemingly broken bodies.

Chapter 368 Rotting corpse\_2

The undead's movements in confined spaces were not very agile, but their linear speed was quite astonishing.

Their numbers far outstripped the patrolling squad, and the oppressive force when they charged one after another was overwhelming. Moreover, their decaying claws carried lethal pathogens, and a single scratch could send you back for months of rest and treatment. The veteran holding a gun instinctively retreated,

moving the battlefield to the more spacious streets outside.

Fortunately, it was nighttime, and the curfew order on workdays also meant that the rainy streets were devoid of any human presence.

"Bang!"

"Bang!"

The sound of gunshots carried far in the quiet evening only disturbed by the pitter-patter of rain. Residents hidden in their homes were startled awake, their eyes glazed over, murmuring to themselves, "They're purging the dissenters again..."

Every day it's like this... every day it's like this...

Who knows whether those they're killing are actually heretics or just fellow citizens they simply took a dislike to?

When will such days ever end?

Alas~

"Stop talking, the guard are all following orders from the higher-ups..." His wife tugged at the man's sleeve but was roughly pushed away by him.

"Don't touch me! I've seen you making eyes at the young man leading the guards for a long time now, don't you start defending them!"

"I..." Tears glided coldly down her cheeks as the woman huddled in the corner, wrapping her arms around her knees, just quietly weeping.

The rain washed everything away.

Including the pus oozing from the bodies of the undead.

In the curbside gutters clogged with grease and overgrown with moss, the pale yellow pus washed down by the rain flowed toward lower ground. As an undead charged forward heedless of death, it was suddenly yanked back by an overwhelming force and slammed against a door. An emaciated figure in a flaxen poncho, unbeknownst to when, had placed himself at the center of the conflict between the veteran and the undead.

"Stop!"

Xu Ruoguang flicked his sword to shake off the rain coursing down his face, his expression icy as he addressed the figure blocking the way, "What do you think you're doing?"

"They..." The Believer's voice trembled, his whole person lacking confidence due to facing matters he was not adept at, "They are harmless."

They lived secluded, and as long as they weren't startled into mutation, they wouldn't turn into undead, let alone attack other humans.

Like the compassionate Heavenly Father who watches over all His children, the Believer was aware of the ordinary lives of these common believers, perhaps even more humble in status.

Reverence for that Heavenly Father didn't require calling His name, offering sacrifices, or even acknowledging His existence. The merciful Heavenly Father would bless every poor soul who sought escape from suffering yet had no means to do so—that was the definition of a "Believer."

And only the more favored "Elect," like him, who possessed special "random blessings" and could maintain their form through consciousness, were such beings.

Everyone was of the same origin.

This was also the core reason he took the initiative to help these battered veterans after settling into Black Street, drawn by the scent of "kin.

But now, even these "harmless" commoners were being cruelly exposed to the light of day?

"Harmless?" Xu Ruoguang sneered, his sword pointing toward the earthy-yellow solution flowing with the rainwater in the sewer, "Look at that foul pus! How many people have fallen ill because of it in recent times? As the personal guard by the master's side, you must not be insulated from these critical figures, right?"

After the master had decreed the building of bathhouses and consumption of hot water among other measures, the illness rate in Black Street rose instead of falling, a strange development that put Xu Ruoguang on alert. This was the very reason for his unscheduled inspection tonight.

Perhaps these undead had no intention to harm others, but their mere existence was a threat to humankind.

That was heresy! Their very existence was a blasphemy!

"Stand aside!" Xu Ruoguang flicked Longsword, throwing off the rotten flesh attached to it, then pointed the sword at the Believer, "You are a trusted confidant of the master. I won't deal with you today! But once the master returns, I will demand an explanation from him! But for now... do not obstruct my execution of duty!"

"They are innocent!" The Believer was at a loss for words, not knowing how to argue.

His simple mind could not conceive that his "status" meant nothing to the other party, so with a blank mind, he extended his arms protectively over the undead behind him, slowly retreating.

"Bang!" A gunshot resounded from behind him.

Tiger, limping with the support of a cane, hurried out from the far end of the yard.

The gunshot had come from the cane in his right hand.

"There are still survivors?" Seeing normal people emerging from the nest of undead, Xu Ruoguang's gaze sharpened. He signaled to the veteran guard behind him, "Prepare to protect!"

To eradicate all heresy and protect all humankind.

This was the creed he was determined to uphold.

...

"Look at yourselves!" Tiger's eyes were wide with fury as he looked at those companions who had just been chatting casually with him.

Right before his eyes, these companions had rapidly decayed from their normal human forms into their current state of corruption under the stimulation of gunshots.

Was the transformation sudden, or were there early signs?

Tiger didn't know.

All he knew was that this blasphemous existence was the enemy of all mankind.

"Look at what you've become now!" Tiger's gaze swept over his former companions, who turned their attention to him because of the sound of gunfire.

Their ruined faces with those pale, bulging eyes seemed utterly repulsive.

"Our duty is to protect this world for humanity!"

Even if these chaotic heretics were not the usual foes for ordinary soldiers, they were still enemies of humanity!

"You are becoming enemies of humanity! Who gave you the right to desecrate the duty you were born with!" Tiger stood in the rain, not knowing whether it was rain or tears that were mingled on his face, cascading down.

Facing the living humans close at hand, the rotting corpses showed no desire to attack.

Those pale eyes blinked slightly, a deep ink color slowly emerging from their centers.

It was as if their own consciousness was trying to gain control of their bodies.

"I know we may never have the chance to go into battle for humanity again, but that's no reason for our downfall!" Tiger spoke passionately, the things he had seen and heard recently filled him with sorrow and rage.

"We may no longer have the capability to fight for humanity, but we must never turn against mankind. If needed, I can bleed out every drop of blood for the city."

In the days since leaving the military camp, even if life hadn't been great, the memories of fighting for humanity shone like gleaming gold.

It was the most honorable cause of their lives.

"Just a bit of suffering has made you lose the pride of being human warriors. Do you still remember the blood and sweat you once shed for that struggle?"

"Click!" The defensive pistol was reloaded, Tiger tucked his cane under his arm, raised the pistol with a steady hand, and pointed it at his comrades of old, "Must we really confront each other with weapons?"

"No..." came a strangled voice from the decaying throats.

The bodies of the rotting corpses visibly began to tremble.

"No! It won't happen!"

"We... are brothers."

"We... have never, ever been enemies."

The decaying old soldiers shed bloody tears, their corrupt faces conveying a profound apology unique to humans.

"I'm sorry..."

"Sorry, brother."

The rotting corpses knelt, begging for death.

"Kill us."

"Kill!" Xu Ruoguang's cold command resounded.

Tiger frowned deeply.

He didn't want to see his brothers turned into this, but he didn't want to see them die either.

The old soldiers also remembered their innate camaraderie and hesitated to strike.

Seeing this, Xu Ruoguang's brow furrowed deeply as he snatched the rifle from one of the old soldiers, kicking away the stiff body.

"Bang!"

"Bang!"

"Bang!"

The sound of gunfire formed a continuous volley before a short and clear voice could be heard through the curtain of rain from a distance.

"Don't kill them!"

Chapter 369: Expedition Plan

However, it was already too late...

Bullets had shredded the body, and the corrupt flesh scattered on the ground.

It was only after seeing who had arrived that Xu Ruoguang, with a puzzled look, asked the newcomer, "Miss Franca?"

This lady came from the Arbitration Place in the city, and ever since the last incident, she frequently appeared on Black Street, and thus was well-known to everyone.

Even many of the heretical and world background-related contents known to the players came from her.

She was the demons' greatest enemy, and also a warrior who walked on the frontline against demons among humans.

And now, this enforcer from the Arbitration Place was telling them to stop... what did she mean?

Franca did not respond immediately, but only looked at the scattered remains on the ground with a slightly sad gaze.

She closed her eyes, holding back the tears welling up at the corners, and only then did Franca reopen her bright eyes to address Xu Ruoguang, who was leading the group, "They could actually have been saved..."

Ever since she witnessed how that noble figure resolved the demon corruption, those "naive" thoughts she had once personally quashed in her heart began to stir once again—

Perhaps, even those humans who had embraced the demons, could be attempted to be rescued?

With that idea in mind, she had gone back to read through old texts.

Reading was really just for confirmation; she had long memorized those recordings in her heart.

The mysterious manager of Black Street relies on the human heart's willpower and self-discipline to combat the constant whispers from high-dimensional space that are indiscernible to humans.

This was cutting off the source.

But for humans like the ones in front of her, who had already unwittingly become the claws and teeth of demons, no matter how strong their will was, they could only end up like they were now—surrendering without a fight, willingly allowing normal humans to kill them.

Afterward, their souls would return to high-dimensional space and become one of the lowest existences within the domain they had devoted themselves to, suffering eternal torment and pain...

The reason lay in the fact that their Spiritual Bodies, which were projected into high-dimensional space, had already fallen under the domain of the demons without their own awareness.

So, the solution to save them was actually quite simple—invade high-dimensional space and rescue those bound Spiritual Bodies from the domain of the demons!

Simple to say, yet as difficult as ascending to heaven in practice.

Humans have always held high-dimensional space in awe, with very few daring to actively enter that enigmatic dimension.

Not to mention organizing enough Spiritual Energy wielders capable of "High-Dimensional Walking" to collectively enter the demons' home field for a battle. Should anything unexpected happen, the very foundation of humanity, or rather the city, would be utterly shaken.

"High-Dimensional Walking" is an ability that only Spiritual Energy wielders of at least the second stage can master. To form an army out of these originally precious high-level Spiritual Energy wielders, similar to how ordinary people might, and invade high-dimensional space to initiate combat against a certain demonic authority, such a bold and insane idea had never been dared to be brought to the table by anyone, as nobody could bear the responsibility that came with it.

Furthermore, even if they successfully rescued those True Spirits belonging to humanity, without a physical entity in the material world and insufficiently strong Spiritual Energy, they could neither survive independently in high-dimensional space nor return to the material world.

The final outcome awaiting them was merely a complete and utter rest... an end in which they would rest free from demonic control.

But what do the sufferings of millions of ordinary people have to do with "me"?

The tormented ones are not me; those who willingly degrade themselves aren't me...

Humans had never launched any kind of initiative assault on high-dimensional space.

So this idea... was both bold and naive.

Franca did not know whether her thoughts would be agreed upon by the other enforcers, nor whether such an action would be successful.

But if there were a day when this action is taken and proves successful, those who had not been destroyed and still possessed a physical entity in the material world... would again have the hope of continuing to exist as humans.

But now that they were dead, all was resolved.

"Rescuable?" Xu Ruoguang's eyes narrowed. The shallow knowledge he had gained since entering this "game world" left him unable to fully understand the key points behind it. Currently, with full trust and an attitude of seeking teaching, he sincerely asked the enforcer lady from the Arbitration Place, "How can they be saved?"

He always had this subconscious feeling—that anyone who had embraced the embrace of demons and fallen was beyond redemption.

This unspoken subconscious conviction drove his firm action to eradicate heretics.

However, the compassion and kindness inherent in his personality, stemming from his fellow humans, made him harbor a subconscious hope for what the enforcer in front of him said.

Even if these old soldiers had been annihilated without any chance of turning back, what about future encounters with similar situations?

His enemy was the heretics.

Any heretic who could revert to their human identity was no longer an enemy.

Franca's gaze dimmed as she shook her head, "It's just a possibility... but for these 'harmless' heretics, we could first try to completely isolate their influence on normal humans. Whether they can be truly saved will depend on future developments."

"So, the method you're speaking of is specifically..." Xu Ruoguang's gaze was fixed intently on Franca, with a determination to get to the bottom of it.

Franca sighed softly, feeling that in front of these non-colleagues, she might as well share her ambition, "Expedition into high-dimensional space, counter-attack against the demonic domain..."

Chapter 370: Expedition Plan\_2

"But there are so many demons..." Xu Ruoguang instinctively voiced his doubt.

Clearly, Franca's plan was not just a fleeting thought. For the action that would follow, she already had a rough outline in mind, "That's why we need a corrupted guide with the same origin as the demons to 'lead the way' for us."

As she spoke, Franca shook her head, her gaze once again sweeping over those corrupted corpses on the ground, only to sigh and say, "It's come to this, no use talking about that now."

A discreet voice suddenly interjected from the side, gently asking, "So, you need someone to lead the way, do you?"

Franca looked straight at the speaker, the fact was she had noticed their presence long before.

This was their first official meeting since the person had been rescued last time.

That... "Eternal" elector who had caused the Tide of Rats.

Of course, she had never really intended to execute the person on the spot, and now she was even less keen to pursue the matter.

Arbitration Place had no style of action, the style... lay in each individual arbiter.

But Franca still found it strange that the person dared to speak up at such a time, "You..."

"As long as someone leads the way, you can save everyone... is that right?"

Having received kindness from this world, the person wished to repay the world with the same kindness.

The rodent-person lifted their head, their somewhat childish face shimmering under the dim light, "Is it?"

"Yes..." Franca faced those fervent eyes, seeming somewhat unaccustomed, "But this is just an immature idea of mine."

The rodent-person didn't care, a glimmer of hope was enough to unleash their full effort, "So... what do I need to do to lead the way for you?"

"You..." Franca found herself at a loss for words.

"I share their origin, I can sense their presence..." Once the rodent-person resolved to do something, their tone became firm and succinct, all their words served to achieve their goal, "Tell me what to do, I can do it!"

"..." Franca parted her lips, then after a long pause, fixed her gaze on the rodent-person's eyes, and whispered softly, "Burn."

Burn one's will, burn one's soul, burn everything that is oneself.

A soul burning fiercely is like a bright flame in the pitch-black Sea of Distortion, capable of easily piercing through the endless darkness.

Especially when such burning is accompanied by a kind of firm belief, based on the fundamental utility of Spiritual Energy, the Spiritual Energy users on the human side can clearly feel that intense call.

And use it as a beacon to guide them.

"... Burn yourself completely when you're in that demon's domain," Franca continued.

But the price... is utter annihilation.

Like a candle, after intense burning, what's left is only ashes.

Saved souls may find peace and rest, but complete combustion leaves only absolute emptiness.

"..." The rodent-person pursed their lips tightly, and after a pause, gave a nod, "I understand."

After another pause, they asked, "When do we act?"

"It's still just an idea for now..."

"..." The rodent-person was silent for a moment, then added, "When it's time to act, remember to call me. I'll be here."

They turned and walked away, disappearing into the darkness.

Watching the direction in which the figure vanished, Franca's eyes flickered slightly.

Was it that the mysterious manager of Black Street saw the fervor and kindness in the bones of that demon elector that led to the rescue, or was it the act of rescue that engendered this sense of duty?

There was no way to know.

But it seemed that these characters with pure ideals were all coming together, which was a good thing.

Including the present one... the captain of the Black Street Enforcement Team.

Xu Ruoguang gripped the hilt of his longsword tightly, only then realizing the foresight of his superior.

Even a heretic could be a useful heretic to humankind.

...

Perhaps, when it comes to purging heresy, it does not need to be taken to such an extreme.

After all, even the lord himself believes in and uses these heretical powers.

It's only on the occasional fleeting thought that a certain obstinacy or prejudice, arising from an indescribable place deep within the heart, always raises a question—

... Can heresy truly be trusted?

Kicking the decayed corpse at his feet, Xu Ruoguang ordered softly, "Clean up the scene, don't let those ordinary people see."

Preventing those ordinary people from seeing what they were dealing with could breed doubts in their minds, but if they were to see these corrupt things... Those already suffering from the corruption of whispers from high-dimensional spaces would undoubtedly tread further down the path of decay.

Withholding the truth is also a form of protection.

[Power Information Change: Guard Squad—Xu Ruoguang: Heresy -99%.]

"..."

The lad is working quite hard.

Receiving the message, Bai E pressed his lips together and shook his head with a light chuckle.

As the territory developed step by step, these players were also stepping onto a larger stage.

When the small confines of Black Street could no longer satisfy their needs, nor the players' desire for exploration, it might be time to unlock a larger map for them.

The small town ruins discovered earlier could undeniably serve as a larger development platform, and the machines they lacked seemed like they could be manually crafted or stolen from the intelligences?

If they couldn't beat the forces with his help, and he couldn't beat them either... Then let be.

He would lead the way in opening up new maps for them and, by allocating tasks, guide their exploration and development in this world—a choice that seemed rather good.

Particularly in the rain, the tranquility fostered reflection, and Bai E contemplated his future plans as the vehicle sped along the muddy road, made more treacherous by the downpour.

The headlights of three off-road vehicles tore through the night's mist, speeding towards their base.

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It took almost a whole day and wasn't until dusk that the three off-road vehicles finally returned to the base.

Bai E drove the latter half of the journey, calculating that they had entered the city's area of intense radiation where no further incidents were likely to arise. He intentionally sped up to shake off the two companion vehicles behind him. After all, it was not good to let the others in the barracks know that he had returned with a hot potato in tow.

He drove directly to the vicinity of Black Forest, flung out three black burlap sacks without barely slowing down, and continued racing back to the camp.

The standard debriefing procedure played out smoothly, with the other two teams that had been slacking the whole way fully cooperating. They didn't have any thoughts of their own, and whatever Bai E said was final. Together they happily received the hefty reward for this mission.

Due to encountering the most formidable first-generation intelligence and an entire intelligence fortress, the military honors for this mission were exceptionally generous. Everyone's face bloomed with joy, foreseeing a bright future ahead.

Without pausing, Bai E immediately left the camp after completing the necessary post-return procedures.

Though the three individuals dumped in Black Forest claimed they would follow his orders to the letter, with so much time having passed, who could guarantee they would obediently wait in place?

He needed to sort out their arrangements sooner rather than later... primarily to verify their true loyalty, as Bai E never felt completely at ease.

At the same time, it wasn't early anymore, with the day nearly over.

He hadn't yet sent out the tasks for today, and while he didn't know if the players were obsessed with daily tasks, he certainly felt a bit like he would die if he didn't send out tasks.

Moreover, the plans he had designed before returning could set the players in motion, and conveniently it was evening—the busiest time for the Underground Colosseum.

After sending out tasks, he could head straight to his destination without wasting a moment.

Contemplating these thoughts, Bai E sprinted towards the edge of Black Forest.

...

"Why isn't he here yet..." Nova sat bored on a wooden stump in the tree shade, propping her chin with both hands, her gaze lost in the distance.

The stump was fresh, recently cut.

But not today.

Two subordinates squatted next to Nova, glancing toward a dark direction in the jungle, "Captain, do you feel like someone is spying on us?"

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