

48 Hours 1081

Chapter 1081: Sudden Change

Zhang Heng glanced at the room card in front of the other window and saw the woman's name on it.

—Wang Lirong.

Just like her, this was a common name. She had been admitted to the hospital after Fan Meinan. According to Fan Meinan, the original patient on the bed was a female teacher who had been discharged from the hospital almost two weeks after Fan Meinan got admitted. After that, it was Wang Lirong who had moved in.

As she was still on the wanted list of the three large guilds, Fan Meirong remained vigilant even when treating her illness. She would pay special attention to the people around her and even took the time to investigate Wang Li Rong's background.

With Wang Li Rong's age, it was impossible for her to be a player. Moreover, after Fan Meirong's investigation and probing, she also ruled out the nurse and her son she had come into contact with having the possibility of being players. Hence, Fan Meirong was completely relieved.

In addition, Wang Lirong had a good temperament. Seeing that Fan Meinan didn't have many people to visit her, they would often share the fruits and milk that her son brought. Eventually, the two of them shared a very harmonious relationship. Meanwhile, since Wang Lirong was a little hard of hearing, she didn't know that Fan Meinan had usually pulled off some neat tricks, such as sneaking out to have instant noodles in the middle of the night. He could be said to be the perfect roommate.

Consequently, Cheng Sihan suspected Wang Lirong. Fan Meinan found it hard to believe, but she also knew how good Loki's disguise was. Back then, even the gods had been fooled by Loki. Thus, although Cheng Sihan had only obtained a small portion of Loki's power, she could already fool the three guilds. Therefore, Wang Lirong, who looked normal on the surface, could really just be Loki's disguise. It wasn't impossible.

But now, there was a problem. Even if they suspected that Wang Lirong was Loki's disguise, they didn't seem to have any means to prove it.

Zhang Heng's observation, which he had always been proud of, might not be of much use this time. In terms of skill levels, Loki's disguising skill would probably be Lv5. Standing beside the real person, even if the target's own son were standing there, he probably wouldn't be able to tell the real and fake one apart.

Although Zhang Heng still had the Oath Ring on him that could detect lies, it was only an F-Grade item after all. Of course, it was effective to ordinary people, but against a god of Loki's stature, it might simply be insufficient. Loki was the god of lies and pranks, after all, an expert at manipulating lies.

As for the Oath Rings, it was an item probably from an ancient god with loyalty affixes. Even if it hadn't been forgotten, it wouldn't be in a good situation. It would be difficult for Zhang Heng to confront Loki head-on.

Zhang Heng turned to Cheng Sihan as if asking with his gaze how confident she was.

Thirty percent.

Cheng Sihan thought about what to type for a good half-minute, definitely not the best display of confidence, typing for half a minute, but considering Loki was her opponent, thirty percent confidence didn't seem that bad. However, the trouble was that with Loki's vigilance, the three probably only had one chance. If they picked the wrong person and Loki found out, apprehending him again would be very difficult.

"Do you have any other suspects?" typed Zhang as he took Cheng Sihan's phone and typed.

—Yes. The young nurse who asked us to register when we came in, the head nurse on this floor, and my sister's attending physician.

Cheng Sihan listed the three people who were the easiest to get in touch with Fan Meinan.

—How are you so sure he's in the hospital?

Fan Meinan couldn't help but ask.

—Not necessarily. Nothing is certain when it comes to Loki, but the probability of him being in the hospital is indeed the greatest because this is the best place for him to watch the show. He can observe your emotional changes every day while you're here, and it was up to you to decide if you complete his test or not. In addition, the test he gave me was to kill you. So if I wanted to complete my test, I had to come to the hospital. With his personality, he would definitely save a seat for himself at the first opportunity. Whether I kill you at the end, or the two of us realizing that we had been deceived, it would all be very interesting for him.

—There's one more person left on your list of suspects, Zhang Heng said.

—Who?"

—She's been staying by Fan Meinan's side as an escort for Wang Lirong. In addition, compared to Wang Lirong, she was more easily overlooked because of her status as an escort.

"—This significantly expands the range of choices..." Cheng Sihan frowned as she continued typing.

In fact, other than these main suspects, there were also the security guards of the hospital and the patients in the next room. Even the geckos outside the wall and the stray cats in the vicinity could have been transformed by Loki.

Regardless of which one was Loki, there would be a tough battle ahead. I need to go to the car to retrieve my weapon. You guys can stay here for now and try not to arouse his suspicion. If anything happens, feel free to contact me.

Zhang Heng finished typing the last paragraph and put away his phone. It would definitely be useless against Loki's ordinary weapons. Until now, Zhang Heng still did not know how if it was because he had killed an Apocalypse Horseman. He only guessed that it had something to do with the strange power that was awakening in his body, but he was still unable to master this power. In comparison, the weapons in his hands were more reliable, especially the few B-grade items.

Both the Hidden Scabbard and Pestilence Bone Bow should cause damage to Loki.

Before leaving, Zhang Heng hugged Fan Meinan. Seeing this, Cheng Sihan frowned and shifted her gaze elsewhere.

“I’ll give you two sisters some time to finish what you need to say, then we’ll go look for Loki.”

After saying that, he walked out of the ward, leaving only Cheng Sihan and Fan Meinan and Wang Li Rong, whose true identity was unknown, in the room.

The atmosphere became a little uncomfortable. Fan Meinan still had to cooperate with Zhang Heng to continue the act, so after a while, she asked Cheng Sihan, “Do you want something to drink? I have water and milk here.”

“Water, please.” said Cheng Sihan absent-mindedly. Her attention was on Wang Li Rong, who was sleeping soundly by her side.

Therefore, Fan Meinan turned around and walked to the bed counter. She opened the cabinet and found a disposable plastic cup inside. Then, she bent down to pick up the Thermos flask on the floor.

At that moment, something strange happened. Cheng Sihan retracted her gaze from Wang Li Rong and quietly walked behind her sister. She picked up the fruit knife that she had left on the counter earlier before she called out softly, “Handsome.”

Fan Meinan turned around and asked curiously, “What is it?”

Chapter 1082: Senior Sister

All of this happened too quickly. Having no time to dodge, and before Fan Meinan could react, the sharp pain in her chest transmitted from her nerves to her brain. Her eyes bulged wide, and her pupils filled with shock and confusion. Her lips moved, seeming as though trying to spew something out.

In the next moment, however, her vision turned black, and her body fell backward. First, she hit the table, knocking over the kettle and cup. Then, leaning against the table, she slid down bit by bit. Finally, her head tilted to one side, and she became motionless.

Blood gradually dyed her pullovers red, and her eyes completely lost their luster.

Cheng Sihan stood in front of her sister as she looked down at the lifeless body on the ground with a complex expression. Wang Lirong, who was lying on the other bed, was finally awakened by the sound of the kettle falling to the ground.

She opened her eyes and turned her head, but the sight that greeted her was a dead Fan Meinan with her eyes wide open. Shocked to the core, she asked Cheng Sihan, “Eldest daughter, what happened?!”

“I killed her,” Cheng Sihan confessed calmly. “I completed the test.”

“What test?” Wang Li Rong looked at Cheng Sihan with gripping panic, never expecting such degree of ruthlessness to come out from someone so gorgeous. Instead of running away after stabbing someone to death, she just stood there, looking as fearless as the first time they met.

Wang Lirong wanted to call for help, but she was afraid Cheng Sihan would get mad and attack her before any assistance could arrive.

"I've completed the test you gave me to kill my sister," Cheng Sihan said. "Now it's your turn to fulfill your promise."

"I asked you to kill your sister?"

Wang Lirong looked completely confused by Cheng Sihan.

"Do you still plan to continue acting at this point?" Cheng Sihan asked.

"What act could I have possibly pulled?!" Wang Lirong was getting more terrified by the second. She could see that the girl in front of her was not in her right mind. She had actually killed her sister and even wanted to push the blame on her.

"Isn't it you?"

Cheng Sihan frowned. Then, she opened the door of the ward. "Well, you're just in time to call someone. Call your escort in."

This should be something that Wang Lirong wished for. No one wanted to be in a cramped room with a murderer who had just killed her own sister, not to mention that Wang Lirong and Fan Meinan had been patients for a long time and they had developed a healthy friendship over that period. Fan Meinan's body, on the other hand, was not far away from her now.

When Cheng Sihan opened the door, however, she did not hear Wang Lirong's screams.

Half a minute later, Cheng Sihan closed the door of the ward again and slowly turned around. She found that the expression on Wang Lirong's face had changed. She no longer looked as panicked and scared as before. She blinked, and the crystal tears faded away. All that was left was cunningness.

Wang Lirong waved her hand and stopped Cheng Sihan from bowing.

"I'm not him."

Cheng Sihan was a little surprised.

"But I know you, and your sister, of course." Wang Lirong stole a glance toward Fan Meinan's corpse on the ground. "I know you've been together for a long time, but I didn't expect to meet under such circumstances. I should call you senior sister, but now it seems that I only have one senior sister left."

"Are you the agent Loki chose?" Cheng Sihan's expression changed.

"I know you're not convinced, but I still have to say that he has good taste," Wang Lirong said. "My score in the first Proxy War dungeon currently ranks second among all players, second only to the handsome guy who just came downstairs."

"You're Beta?"

"Yours truly."

"But weren't you still in the game recently?" Cheng Sihan asked, "and Wang Lirong stayed with my sister for two whole weeks... wait, the person in the hospital was really Wang Lirong. You simply replaced the

real Wang Lirong with yourself. It was why my sister found no problem with Wang Lirong after her investigation.”

“Bingo. As expected of senior sister. You guessed it right,” Beta commended. “I just came to the hospital not long ago, and to be honest, I had no time to study Wang Lirong. Fortunately, it’s not difficult to pretend to sleep.”

“Did Loki send you? Why didn’t he come himself? Isn’t he supposed to fancy incidents like this where we sisters fight each other?” Cheng Sihan asked.

“You really know him well. You know his bad taste,” Beta said with a smile. “Unfortunately, tonight is not a good time. He has other things to do, so he sent me here. Of course, my goal is different from his. I came here tonight to meet my biggest competitor, Simon, or rather, Zhang Heng. My teacher seems to be very interested in him. Although I have never seen him so interested in anyone, honestly, he has disappointed me.”

Beta paused for a moment before continuing, “I knew that Fan Meinan was no match for your sister, so I helped her find a powerful helper. I was the one who sent Zhang Heng a message to rush here, but I didn’t expect you to kill Fan Meinan right under his nose. His status as the number one player didn’t seem to live up to his name. Rumor has it that the White Rider, one of the Four Horsemen of the apocalypse, also fell to his hands. Could it be that he was strength type? But in terms of strength, he shouldn’t be as strong as Pestilence... Nevertheless, senior sister, your ruthlessness and decisiveness have indeed exceeded my expectations. I pity your bad luck to have met me.”

Cheng Sihan was unmoved when she heard this. She could only quietly look at Beta.

The latter continued, “Without me, teacher should have chosen you to be his representative. “Unfortunately, because of my existence, no matter how hard you try, there’s no point. It’s impressive that you managed to kill Fan Meinan right under Zhang Heng’s nose, but that doesn’t change anything. I thought you would understand this simple logic. The first round of the proxy war will end in a dozen hours. Even if teacher has a way to get you into the game, there’s a high chance that you won’t be able to challenge him three times in a row, let alone surpass me.”

Cheng Sihan refused to comment. All she said was, “Take me to see him.”

“And then?” Beta asked.

“I won the test he gave me. Now it’s his turn to fulfill his promise,” Wu Sihan repeated.

“Interesting. We all know that our teacher has many virtues, but keeping his promise is definitely not one of them.”

“That’s something for him to answer. Who do you think you are?” Cheng Sihan snapped coldly.

Chapter 1083: Tracking

Beta did not get angry when she heard that. She glanced at Fan Meinan, who was no longer angry, then shifted her gaze to Cheng Sihan in front of her. Then, she said slowly, “I can understand how you feel and your despair and anger, but I’m actually doing this for your own good. There’s no way to change

things. If you go to see teacher again in your current state, not only will you be unable to save your foster father, but if you offend teacher, you'll also have to suffer..."

"This is my business and is not for you to worry. What you need to do is take me to see him," Cheng Sihan interrupted Beta rudely. "Stop stalling. Zhang Heng went back to the car to retrieve his weapon, and he'll be back soon. When he sees Fan Meinan's body, will he think that one of us is the murderer?"

"As expected of senior sister. Planned to frame me before you killed him?" Beta raised her eyebrows, and her eyes lit up. "That's more like it. At least I won't be so bored this morning. Fine, I can take you to see teacher."

"Don't say I didn't warn you. Don't play any tricks on the road. When I started lying, you were still sucking on milk."

"The one who starts the race may not necessarily reach the finish line first," Beta said. She shrugged. "But I accept your warning." However, she didn't move immediately after she said that. Instead, she took out her phone and waved it in front of Cheng Sihan's face, "Before you leave, do you mind if I take a few photos as evidence for you to complete the test?"

"Do as you wish," Cheng Sihan said without a single modicum of expression.

In response, Beta switched on the camera mode and selected a few different angles to photograph the bloody murder scene. "That was a clean cut. Is this my sister's final act of Gentleness?" she sighed with a click of the tongue.

When she finished taking the picture and put away her phone, she was about to poke the corpse's eyes when Cheng Sihan, who was waiting impatiently, spoke up again, "Had enough fun yet? Did you really think that Zhang Heng relied solely on luck to get rid of Pestilence? If we don't leave now and wait for him, none of us will be leaving."

"Alright, since the picture is already taken, there's really no need for putting ourselves in danger anymore," Beta immediately stood up and said.

Cheng Sihan, on the other hand, did not look at Fan Meinan's corpse from the beginning to the end. It was as if the one lying there was not her own sister but a bag of trash.

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Just as the two of them left the ward, Zhang Heng had already brought the Pestilence Bone Bow and Hidden Scabbard to the entrance of the inpatient department. Zhang Heng, however, didn't enter the room immediately. If anyone saw the equipment he was wearing, they would definitely call security. The security guards at the hospital were definitely no match for Zhang Heng, but since he didn't want to cause any unnecessary trouble, he climbed down the drainage pipe to Fan Meinan's room.

As he climbed through the window and entered the room, he saw Fan Meinan lying in a pool of blood and the fruit knife sticking out of her chest.

However, Zhang Heng's expression didn't change, showing no sign of sadness or despair. He only looked at the time in his hand.

Ten seconds later, Fan Meinan's body and the blood on the ground disappeared. Only the fruit knife fell from the sky. At the same time, another Fan Meinan, who was hiding in the bathroom, also walked out.

Death Illusion.

This was a prop that Zhang Heng had obtained from 1810. Its purpose was to create an illusion that mimicked an actual object and lasted 15 minutes. During that time, it could not be touched, or it would lose its effect. Before leaving the ward, Zhang Heng had given this prop to Fan Meinan when he hugged her.

This plan had been agreed upon by the three of them since they couldn't determine Loki's identity in the hospital. Even the most suspicious person, Wang Lirong, Cheng Sihan, only had a 30% chance of success. Zhang Heng did not like this kind of pure gamble, so he came up with another plan.

Cheng Sihan would kill Fan Meinan using Death Illusion and complete the test to attract Loki to reveal himself. Compared to the F-grade Vow Rings, Death Illusion was a C-grade item. Even Loki wouldn't be able to see through it so easily. And even if he did, it didn't matter. According to Cheng Sihan's understanding of Loki, if he really saw through the trick created by Death Illusion, he would've probably jumped out and exposed everything.

However, neither Cheng Sihan nor Zhang Heng expected that Loki wouldn't be in the hospital tonight. Instead, Beta, his agent, had appeared in his place. The good news was that Beta's eyes couldn't see through the illusion created by Death Illusion, but the bad news was that the three of them were unable to find Loki immediately.

Fan Meinan came out of the bathroom and told Zhang Heng what had happened in the room. "My sister wants to use Beta to find Loki, but I have a feeling that Beta isn't going to be so honest."

"It doesn't matter. Your sister has already initiated a location sharing. We can follow her. If we really can't find Loki, we can still take down Beta, his agent. Unless Loki can find a new agent in such a short time and let him participate in the Agent War Dungeon, he definitely can't give up on Beta," Zhang Heng said.

After that, the two split up. Zhang Heng climbed out of the window while Fan Meinan left the building through the safe passage. Five minutes later, the two met up in a parking lot and sat back in Zhang Heng's Polo.

Zhang Heng placed his phone on the car stand.

The dot that represented Cheng Sihan was currently moving northeast. She wasn't moving very fast, probably on foot. Zhang Heng noticed that there was a subway station 500 meters away from her. It seemed that she and Beta were planning to take the subway next.

Therefore, Zhang Heng also found a map of the subway line. When Cheng Sihan started moving faster, he circled the subway line that the two were on.

However, probably because the signal in the subway wasn't very good, the information about Cheng Sihan's location started to become intermittent. Fortunately, with the map, Zhang Heng didn't follow the wrong direction. About 20 minutes later, Cheng Sihan's signal returned to normal. She had probably gotten off the subway and had started moving again on the street. In the end, she stopped moving.

However, when Zhang Heng drove to the place, he couldn't help but frown because it was actually a mobile phone repair shop. Zhang Heng got off the car and walked into the mobile phone shop with Fan Meinan. In the end, he saw a shifty-eyed man bargaining with the repair shop owner, and the phone in his hand was Cheng Sihan's phone.

Chapter 1084: The Difference

"What do you mean?"

In the subway car, Cheng Sihan looked at Beta's outstretched hand and asked.

"There are other communication devices on the phone. For now, allow me to take care of it," Beta said with a smile. "It's not just you... you should know that teacher has always been very cautious. Many people are looking for him now... not only you and your sister but some other guys, including those guys in Greek and Roman mythology. It's always good to be careful."

Cheng Sihan frowned, but she still reached out her hand from her pocket and handed over her phone after a moment. "Don't lose it. I still have a lot of important things on my phone."

"Of course," Beta promised, but after she took the phone, she held it for less than ten seconds before conveniently stuffed it into the backpack of a sneaky-looking man next to her. The man was standing next to an office worker. He sneaked his hand into the office worker's pocket and took out the latter's wallet. After he got it, he immediately moved to the car door. It seemed that he was going to get off the car and take another subway.

Cheng Sihan's eyebrows twitched, and a murderous look flashed in her eyes.

"Do you have another electronic device that can record the location or communicate with the outside world?" Beta asked with a smile.

"No." Cheng Sihan tried hard to suppress the anger in her heart.

"What about the game items?"

"No."

"Do you mind if I search your body?"

"You'd better not be too greedy." Cheng Sihan's gaze darkened.

Beta shrugged, looking very innocent.

"It won't happen again." Half a minute later, Cheng Sihan still chose to give in. She stood up straight and signaled Beta to start.

In the end, the latter walked up to her but did not immediately put her hand into her pocket and bag. Instead, she circled around her first. At the same time, she clicked her tongue and praised, "Senior sister, your figure is really good. I really envy your boyfriend."

"Are you testing my limits?"

“No, no, no. I’ll start working now.” As Beta spoke, she finally began to inspect Cheng Sihan’s personal belongings. However, her hands didn’t behave honestly. They randomly move around Cheng Sihan’s body from time to time, groping places that should not be touched.

At first, Cheng Sihan’s eyes looked like they were about to spit fire, but soon, the anger in her eyes disappeared. She regained her calm and allowed Beta to touch her body. She just watched coldly from the side.

Beta also noticed the change in Wu Sihan’s mood. Her eyes showed some appreciation, and her hands finally began to restrain themselves. She took out two magnets from Cheng Sihan’s bag, looked at them, and then took out the silver pocket watch. “Is this the Blood Oath item?” she asked with intrigue. “I’m actually quite curious. If the person who swore the blood oath is already dead, will the blood of the corpse still boil after breaking the oath?”

“If you want to know, you can try taking an oath yourself,” Cheng Sihan said indifferently.

“And then you’ll kill me to verify it?” Beta smiled sweetly, but her smile, coupled with Wang Lirong’s wrinkled face, looked indescribably awkward.

“I don’t mind helping you with this,” Cheng Sihan said.

“Unfortunately, I’m not your sister.”

“...”

Seeing Cheng Sihan remain silent, Beta seemed to be very happy, “I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have brought up your sad matter. But on the bright side, at least you’ll be able to see your teacher again. If I Were you, I’d think about how to persuade your teacher to save your foster father, or... you can choose to forget about this matter and ask for some other reward from your teacher.”

“Do you always talk so much?”

“It’s a long journey. I thought you’d like someone to talk with to relieve your boredom or something.”

“I prefer to travel with a mute person.”

“What a strange habit... but I guess you’ll miss me soon.”

The train announced that that they had arrived at Jyu Pond Station. When the doors to the car opened on both sides, the shifty-eyed man got off the subway with the other passengers. Then, a new batch of passengers got on the train.

Cheng Sihan saw an extra seat, so she sat in front of a little ghost. Then, she looked at the depressed little ghost proudly.

“Childish.” Cheng Sihan snorted.

“I’m just used to finding some random entertainment.” Beta made a face at the little ghost. In the end, the little ghost was so angry that he cried and buried his face in his mother’s thigh.

Meanwhile, his mother was still seriously lecturing him that the subway should give priority to the elderly.

But at this time, the culprit had turned his gaze back to Cheng Sihan. “Senior sister, do you know why teacher chose me instead of you?”

“Didn’t you just get second place in the first round of the proxy war? Are you going to keep bragging about it, or are you waiting for me to give you an award?” Cheng Sihan mocked.

“It’s not just because of your strength.” Beta shook her head. “Of course, since you mentioned this, I will reluctantly accept your praise. But then again, do you really not know the reason why your teacher abandoned you?”

“Tell me.”

“You are too obsessed with saving your foster father,” Beta said. “That’s why you accepted the teacher’s invitation and became his agent, right? For so long, you’ve been trying your best to imitate the teacher, learning his ability for disguise and deceit, his brutality and ruthlessness. You’ve tried your best to see and make choices from his point of view in every aspect. You’ve worked together with Seth and caused chaos in the three big guilds. You’ve done an excellent job. However, it’s not because you really want to do it, but because you think that you can win teacher’s favor. However, as far as I know, teacher didn’t praise you in the end. You are like a pug wagging its tail in front of its master, trying everything but getting nothing.”

Cheng Sihan did not speak but clenched her fists.

“So, your problem is that you didn’t really get satisfaction and happiness from the pranks and tricks. It’s just like a top student. Even if he gets first place in an exam, it’s all based on knowledge, and not a bit of his own soul. This is the biggest difference between us. You’re the most stupid and pitiful part in the teacher’s eyes. Of course, at least you’re not as hopeless as your sister. This is also the reason why the teacher sent me to the hospital tonight. If you can give up the idea of saving your foster father and devote yourself to it, enjoying the happiness brought by cheating, you can still become one of us.”

Chapter 1085: Platform

Cheng Sihan was silent for an exceptionally long time this time. Her body was shaking slightly along with the subway car. The billboard outside the wall flashed brightly as if playing a silent film.

“If I give up the idea of saving my foster father, will I be able to see Loki and regain my ability?”

“Of course,” Beta nodded. “Although the game organizing committee stipulates that the gods can only choose one agent. You know teacher. He has never taken those rules seriously.”

“Okay, then I’ll give up on saving my foster father,” Cheng Sihan said calmly.

“I knew you would say that,” Beta said with a smile. “Come with me.”

Beta stood up, and the subway train arrived at the station again, and the doors opened.

She got off the train, but she did not take Cheng Sihan to the exit, nor did she take the elevator to the train change platform. Instead, she walked to the end of the platform and waited for the train to leave before she jumped off the platform. When the staff was not paying attention, he flashed into the tunnel at the side.

Cheng Sihan hesitated for a moment before she jumped down with him.

Then, Beta hopped forward. At the same time, she did not forget to remind Cheng Sihan, who was behind him, "Be careful of your feet."

Cheng Sihan snorted and quickly followed. The two of them did not walk far before they heard the vibration of the tracks, which was getting louder and louder.

Cheng Sihan's heart tightened. "The train is here," she reminded.

"I know." Beta smiled, but she did not have any intention of dodging. Instead, she stood in the middle of the tracks with one foot and closed her eyes. After about ten seconds, a speeding train emerged from the dark and brushed past her body, flinging her hair a little.

The whole scene was thrilling but not dangerous.

Beta opened her eyes and blinked. "Look, it's the car from next door."

"You can't be so lucky every time," Cheng Sihan said coldly.

"It's not luck. Our car just passed, so I know it's definitely the train from next door," Beta said. She then grinned and added, "But this time, it's our train."

Then, she jumped off the track and leaned against the wall behind her. Cheng Sihan followed her example and leaned against the wall of the tunnel. The next moment, the train shook violently again.

Another train drove out of the darkness. Beta was right. This time, the train was from their side. The high-speed train whizzed past Cheng Sihan's ears, and the airflow in the middle made her face hurt slightly.

When the subway drove past, Cheng Sihan spoke again, her tone cold. "I asked you to take me to see Loki, not to play some train guessing game here."

"Don't worry," Beta said. "We'll reach our destination soon."

After walking for about two minutes, Beta finally stopped and pointed at an iron door on the wall in front of them. "That's it."

As she spoke, she walked to the iron door and took out an iron key from her pocket to open the lock on it. Then, she took the lead and climbed down the ladder.

Although the iron door that suddenly appeared in the tunnel looked suspicious, Cheng Sihan had no other choice since the next train was about to arrive would arrive. So she could only grit her teeth and climb down the rusty iron ladder.

Cheng Sihan was a little surprised by the scene that greeted her below.

No one had expected that there would be a platform under the subway tunnel. However, it seemed to have been abandoned for a long time or, more precisely, had never been put into use. There was a lot of construction waste inside. The dust under their feet had accumulated to an unknown depth.

Beta switched his phone to flashlight mode and looked around. "There was originally a subway line in the original plans, but that changed halfway through construction, and this line was abandoned."

"I think I've heard similar stories. I thought it was just an urban legend, but it turned out to be true." Cheng Sihan frowned.

"Well, many rumors have a source," Beta said. "But not many can find it."

"Has Loki been hiding here recently?"

"No, no, no. Teacher doesn't like this kind of dark and abandoned place. He's just here to visit a friend. I told you that he didn't see you tonight because he had other things to do. In fact, if you hadn't insisted, I wouldn't have brought you here."

"Who did he come all the way here to visit? Who would live in such a place?" Cheng Sihan asked in bewilderment.

"To be honest, I don't know and don't care," Beta shrugged. "You asked me to bring you to him, so I brought you here. I have already fulfilled our agreement, so you have to walk the rest of the way on your own."

However, Cheng Sihan didn't seem to want to let her go at all. Instead, she took out a small knife from her body and held it in her hand.

Beta was a little surprised because she didn't find the knife when she searched Cheng Sihan's body.

Cheng Sihan said calmly, "I thought about what you said on the subway and found that what you said made sense. I do like someone to talk with me to relieve my boredom, and you like to talk so much. It's perfect."

"But I've already said what I should have said tonight, and I'm a little thirsty now, so I'm in a hurry to buy some water." Beta spread her hands.

"It's okay. You won't die even if you drink a little less water," Cheng Sihan said as she moved toward Beta. However, in the next moment, Beta turned off the flashlight function of his phone, and the entire platform fell into darkness again. Only a tiny bit of light from the billboard above the iron gate was visible.

Cheng Sihan used this bit of light to see Beta jump off the platform and run toward the tunnel ahead. Without hesitation, she chased after her. However, after about 20 meters, it became darker and darker, and she could barely see the road in front of her.

Cheng Sihan didn't want to go deeper into the darkness because she instinctively felt a sense of danger. However, she might lose Beta if she stopped. She knew Zhang Heng's plan very well. If she couldn't find Loki, his agent Beta would be the best bargaining chip to lure Loki out.

Therefore, Cheng Sihan only hesitated for a moment before continuing her chase. At this time, she couldn't see anything, and she was stumbling. Fortunately, Beta's situation wasn't optimistic either, so neither of them could increase their speed. Thus, they chased each other in the darkness and were thrown about 200 meters away. Cheng Sihan was about to catch up with Beta in front, but the next moment, the sound of Beta's footsteps suddenly disappeared.

Chapter 1086: The Tunnel

In the dark and deep tunnel, only the sound of Cheng Sihan's heavy breathing could be heard.

With only silence around her, it was as if she had been abandoned at the end of the world. However, Cheng Sihan did not panic. The sound of Beta's footsteps had disappeared. She had very likely stopped moving.

If nothing untoward happened, she shouldn't have gone too far. She should be somewhere nearby.

It was only at this moment that Cheng Sihan realized Beta wanted her to hand over her phone and search her body. Not only was it to prevent her from getting help and exposing her location but to ensure that there was no light source on her body. In other words, she had been preparing for this moment for a long time.

However, if this was how she wanted to escape, she would be underestimating Cheng Sihan.

Since Cheng Sihan could hide a knife on her when she was not paying attention, she could also hide something else. In the next moment, Cheng Sihan took out a phone from her bag.

This phone was not hers. It belonged to a female high school student in the car. There was a cute cat's head hanging from it. Cheng Sihan had seen her gossiping about celebrities with her phone and memorized her password. Then, when she put the phone back into her pocket and was about to get out of the car, she stole her phone.

Of course, all of this happened after Beta finished searching her body. Cheng Sihan had used the phone to send a location message to Fan Meinan before Beta left the iron gate. However, when Cheng Sihan turned on the phone's flashlight function, she couldn't help but frown.

Unlike what she had imagined, she couldn't see Beta anywhere near her. It was as if Beta had really disappeared into thin air. Cheng Sihan raised the phone to her face and rechecked the surroundings, but she didn't find any hidden passageways or exits nearby. At the moment, she was in an abandoned tunnel with thick concrete walls on both sides.

Beta's disappearance was like a magic trick.

However, for Cheng Sihan and her world, such a thing was not impossible. Cheng Sihan had played a similar trick in front of Zhang Heng not long ago. Beta was, after all, the second-ranked player in the first round of the proxy war, and since she was also Loki's personal agent, it would be strange if she did not have any trump cards to escape.

However, Cheng Sihan couldn't understand why Beta did not use it when she was in the hospital and on the road. She had to wait until here to use it. Perhaps, the items she was carrying could only be used here? Or was it purely to bring her here? Also, were some of the words she said on the subway true or false?

Cheng Sihan looked at the seemingly endless tunnel ahead, then at the phone in her hand. Perhaps she was too deep underground that the phone had no signal, and she couldn't communicate with the outside world.

Cheng Sihan hesitated for a moment and decided to go back the same way she came. She would wait for Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan to come over and discuss what to do next.

Fortunately, she didn't go too far ahead. According to Cheng Sihan's calculations, she had only run for about four to five minutes in the dark, and since she couldn't see the road beneath her feet, she wouldn't be moving that fast. Thus, as a result, it should only take her two to three minutes to turn on the flashlight and go back.

However, Cheng Sihan walked for a full six to seven minutes, but she still couldn't find the platform she came from. What was even stranger was, this time, Cheng Sihan paid extra attention to her surroundings, and in the end, found no difference between this place and the tunnel that was in use. Additionally, there were no forks in the middle, ruling out the possibility that she had taken the wrong path when she returned from the original path.

Cheng Sihan didn't overthink when she pursued Beta, but now that she was gone, she was the only one left in the tunnel, her heart sank. At the same time, the light from her phone cast her shadow on the tunnel's walls. Warped and elongated, it looked looking abnormally strange.

The Darkness before and behind her was bottomless, leaving only her lonely figure in the tunnel.

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On the other side, Fan Meinan had also received a message from Cheng Sihan. She rushed to the subway station with Zhang Heng, but they ran into a bit of trouble when they passed the security check. Zhang Heng's equipment, whether the Hidden Scabbard or Pestilence Bone Bow, were too eye-catching. Thus, he had no choice but to find an extra-large travel bag to pack them all up. At the same time, he also managed to create a minor disturbance at the entrance, attracting the attention of two security guards not far away.

After that, he and Fan Meinan swiped their cards through the gate, walked down the stairs, and arrived at the platform.

Fan Meinan looked around, but there was no sign of Cheng Sihan or Beta, so he said, "This is the last place my sister sent me. What do you think she means? Does she want us to take the subway here?"

"It doesn't look like it. This is the subway line that we first tracked. However, your sister's phone somehow ended up on that thief's body. She changed subway lines in the middle, but your sister and Beta should still be on the tracks at that time, so they should have gotten off here instead of getting on the train. However, if they were just leaving the station, your sister wouldn't have taken the risk to send a message. Also, when they reached the platform, there's a high chance that they're still here."

"I'll go take a look in the toilet," Fan Meinan said.

"Okay, then I'll try to find a way to adjust the surveillance cameras." Zhang Heng raised his head to look at the few cameras on the wall. These cameras basically covered the entire platform. If he could find the video, he should find out what was going on here.

However, Fan Meinan was a little worried. Unlike the security guards at the gate, the people in charge of monitoring in the surveillance room would normally stay inside no matter what happened. Furthermore, there were more than one or two people in the surveillance room.

Of course, these people combined would be no match for Zhang Heng, but if he really used violent methods to get his hands on the video, it would cause quite a stir. This was, after all, the real world and not a pocket dimension.

Logically speaking, this should have been the time for her to make her move. If she still had the ability to disguise herself, she could have pretended to be the leader of the subway station and swaggered in to watch the video.

That ability had now disappeared, and even though Zhang Heng's makeup skills were good, they were not good enough to disguise himself as another person without being recognized by his friends and subordinates.

Nonetheless, Zhang Heng wasn't too concerned about this.

Fan Meinan spent less than five minutes watching the toilet. She then headed upstairs to the surveillance room.

Chapter 1087: Surveillance Room

Fan Meinan hesitated for a moment before reaching out to knock on the door of the surveillance room.

"What's the matter?" An unfamiliar male voice came from inside the room, leaving Fan Meinan surprised. She believed Zhang Heng had already taken care of everyone inside, but instead, the employee in charge of the surveillance camera was still there. Fan Meinan almost thought that Zhang Heng was no longer inside.

However, she soon heard Zhang Heng's voice. "He's okay. He's a friend of mine."

After waiting for another five seconds, the door in front of Fan Meinan opened. A slightly chubby employee wearing glasses popped his head out from inside and greeted Fan Meinan warmly. "Come in quickly."

"Ah, okay."

Fan Meinan was stunned for a moment before walking in.

He saw Zhang Heng looking up at the video on the monitor and saw Beta jumping off the platform on the screen. Cheng Sihan hesitated for a moment before she took out her phone and quickly typed a few words before jumping off as well.

The bespectacled staff member was also stunned by this. This... This lasted for a long time before he suddenly snapped back to reality. He grabbed the phone at the side as fast as he could, trying to sound the alarm, but his hand was quickly pressed down by Zhang Heng.

The bespectacled worker was taken aback.

"Leave this matter to us," Zhang Heng said. "We're here to handle this. Don't worry, we won't let you be responsible."

However, the bespectacled worker was obviously not at ease. After all, if something really happened, he would be severely punished for not reporting it.

Zhang Heng added, "This happened 25 minutes ago. If something did really happen, it would have happened a long time ago. Have there been any accidents on the trains recently?"

"Now that you mention it, I remember. Previously, a driver reported that he saw someone on the tracks next door. However, after that, he said that he didn't see anyone, so everyone thought that the driver was mistaken," the bespectacled worker said.

However, he quickly added, "But we can't just leave this matter alone, or it'll be all over if someone loses their life."

"I know, I'll take care of it," Zhang Heng reassured the guard. "You wouldn't have noticed anything if I didn't check the surveillance anyway, so just pretend that I didn't come."

"Well..." the bespectacled worker looked troubled.

Then, after a moment, he said, "You're the person Inspector Han recommended. Of course, we're willing to cooperate with Inspector Han, but we have our own rules and regulations here, so it'll be very difficult for me if I deal with you like this."

Zhang Heng didn't force the bespectacled worker. Instead, he asked, "How do you usually deal with it, then?"

"This matter has to be reported to the leader. We'll wait for the leader's instructions, and under normal circumstances, the subway on this line has to stop," the bespectacled worker said.

"Okay, then we'll do as you say," Zhang Heng said as he released his grip.

Then, he left the surveillance room with Fan Meinan. After closing the door, Fan Meinan finally asked the question she had been holding back for a long time.

"How did you convince him to let you watch the video? And who is this Superintendent Han?"

"I found a friend to help me contact the local police station," Zhang Heng said.

He had found the person through Han Lu's connections but he never expected Cheng Sihan and Beta to jump off the platform. According to the bespectacled worker, the two of them must have found a way to leave the tunnel. No driver would have seen them otherwise.

"We need to take a look at that tunnel," Zhang Heng said. "I'll make another call. Even if we can't go down alone, at least we can go with the subway company when they stop the line for inspection."

Zhang Heng didn't know how Han Lu did it. Ten minutes later, the subway really stopped running. Then, the company called in the inspection team most familiar with the tunnel. Their routine work usually started late at night. After the last train arrived at the last station, it was their turn. They would ride a trolley loaded with cranes, maintenance tools, and materials along the track to inspect the bolts along the way.

Thus, they became the ones responsible for the search this time. The patrol team's leader, a man from the northwest, named Ma Lu, found Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan. He looked like he was in his early forties. He spoke little and had that very calm look on his face.

“Are you guys coming too?”

“Yes.” Zhang Heng nodded.

“Okay, then follow me.” Ma Lu wasted no time and said directly. Then he handed Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan a flashlight.

Zhang Heng carried the large travel bag and followed the patrol team down the tunnel. Other than the road, there were two other young men. Of course, they weren't the only ones in the entire subway patrol team. It just so happened that they were on the night shift, a time where the others were still sleeping at home.

It was only one station's distance to the next station, so they had more than enough men.

Without needing instructions, the two young men had already spread out to check the tracks. For the time being, they found nothing wrong. Very soon, they arrived at the iron door.

The young man in front shone a flashlight on it, and it flashed past quickly.

But at that moment, Zhang Heng noticed something.

“Wait.”

“What's Wrong?” Ma Lu stopped in his tracks.

“Is the lock on this door usually open?” Zhang Heng asked Ma Lu.

The latter moved the flashlight to an escape door and was stunned. “Here? It's been locked since I came to work here.”

“Is that so?” Zhang Heng looked at the dust on the door. It had indeed accumulated for a long time, but not long ago, traces of it being opened and fingerprints had been left on it. If nothing went wrong, Cheng Sihan and Beta were the ones who opened the door. So Zhang Heng continued to ask, “What's down here?”

The two younger inspectors looked at each other in confusion, but Ma Lu, who had worked the job the longest among the group, knew something. “Actually, I've never been down there before, but I heard from some of the older workers that there's a subway line down there.”

“A subway line? I've taken the subway a lot, but I've never heard of it. It doesn't appear on the map either,” Fan Meinan said.

“That's because the subway line has been abandoned before it's actually built. The higher-ups apparently changed the construction plan,” Ma Lu said. He then turned to look at Zhang Heng. “Do you think they've gone down there?”

“Very likely, from the looks of it,” Zhang Heng said. “But I don't suggest you go down there. You can continue to check other places along this road. Just let us search the rest of the place. That way, you can resume your operations as soon as possible.”

However, Ma Lu was clearly a responsible person. “I'll go down with you,” h. Weresponsibleut hesitation,

Chapter 1088: Rescue

Ma Lu insisted on going down, but Zhang Heng could not find a suitable reason to refuse.

He also knew that without his own people following the subway company, there was a high chance that they would not be allowed to run around in the tunnel. Therefore, Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan looked at each other and agreed to Ma Lu's request.

After that, Ma Lu asked the other two inspectors to continue searching along the tunnel while he took the lead and climbed down the iron ladder.

The trio stepped on the rusted iron rails that creaked as it flexed, breaking the peace of the underground world below.

When he first saw the abandoned platform, Ma Lu actually had the same feelings as Cheng Sihan. Although he had worked for the subway company for twenty years and had heard some sporadic rumors during that time, this was also his first time seeing this abandoned subway line.

After landing, he turned on the flashlight in his hand and looked around carefully.

This platform looked very similar to the platforms on the serviceable lines, but upon careful inspection, there was still a difference. It made sense. To meet the increasing passenger volume and modern travel needs, the platform above had undergone several upgrades throughout its lifespan.

However, probably because of the sudden construction halt, this platform had perfectly retained its original appearance, retaining many features of a time gone by.

While Ma Lu was looking at the buildings around him, Zhang Heng observed the footprints on the ground. Because no one had been here for a long time, a thick layer of dust had settled on the platform. An observation as such might appeal to those obsessed with cleanliness, but for Zhang Heng, it was because of the very presence of the dust that he was able to record Sihan and Beta's movements perfectly.

Zhang Heng could even infer from the footprints the two of them were standing and their movement speed. Following the footprints left by the dust, Zhang Heng turned his flashlight toward the tunnel entrance not far away.

"Did they run there?" Ma Lu also noticed the footprints on the ground.

"One chased and one fled, yes," Zhang Heng said. "And there are no footprints nearby, so they either left on another platform through this tunnel, or they are still in the tunnel."

"Great! Then let's go find them quickly." Ma Lu's face lit up with joy.

However, Zhang Heng was not as relaxed as Ma Lu. Instead, he frowned slightly.

"What's wrong?" Fan Meinan noticed Zhang Heng's serious expression.

As far as she remembered, Zhang Heng was calm most of the time. A man with little expression on his face, he seemed to find a solution no matter how dangerous and harsh the environment was. This was her first time seeing Zhang Heng's face produce such an expression. "Did you sense Loki nearby?"

"I don't know," Zhang Heng said. "I just vaguely sensed that there was something in this tunnel. As for if it was Loki or someone else, I'm not sure."

Zhang Heng noticed that Ma Lu had already rushed into the tunnel, so he said to Fan Meinan, "Let's go. Your sister and Beta have already gone in. No matter what's inside, we have to go for a while."

Leader of the patrol team, no one was more familiar with the tunnel than Ma Lu was. A regular person might be a little afraid and hesitant to enter that dark tunnel expanse in front of them, but all he could feel was a sense of familiarity. So, without hesitation, he stepped into the tunnel.

As he walked, he shouted at the top of his lungs, "Is anyone there?! I'm here to get you out!"

The only response he got was echoes of his own voice. Despite the circumstances, however, Ma Lu wasn't too discouraged. It had been almost 40 minutes since the two girls had jumped off the platform, and if the two of them had walked along the tunnel, they would have already been way ahead. Hence, he strode forward, calling out to them constantly.

Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan were about two meters behind him.

Under such circumstances, it was best for the three of them to remain silent. Since they did not know what danger lay ahead, it was a bad idea to expose themselves too early.

However, just like how difficult it was to stop Ma Lu from descending, Zhang Heng also found it hard to stop Ma Lu from yelling. After all, if this was a normal search and rescue operation, Ma Lu's actions were more logical. On the other hand, Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan, who did not say a word, seemed rather inexperienced.

Despite the ineptness of his companions, Ma Lu did not complain about the two of them. In fact, he did not know who they were since the higher-ups had asked for their participation in this rescue operation. Initially, Ma Lu was a little worried that Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan were the bossy kinds that liked to give orders blindly. Fortunately, the two of them had been very cooperative throughout the entire journey. They let him organize the work, but he followed quietly behind them. He did not interrupt them much, and he even reminded him to notice the locks and footprints on the iron door.

Up until now, the rescue work had been going smoothly, even exceeding Ma Lu's expectations. Next, they only needed to find the two girls who had jumped off the platform in this tunnel, and they would be able to complete the mission successfully. Thus, Ma Lu cared little about the details, like Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan would follow him and shout.

Fan Meinan showed Zhang Heng her phone, indicating that there was no signal. This also explained why Fan Meinan did not respond when she sent a message to Cheng Sihan.

The three of them walked for about forty minutes before Ma Lu suddenly stopped and muttered, "Strange."

"What's strange?" Fan Meinan asked.

She had been paying attention to her surroundings along the way. It had to be said that this tunnel gave people a rather gloomy feeling. Perhaps it was because it had been abandoned for too long that there was no sign of life at all. Moreover, the most amazing thing was that she did not even see a rat after walking for so long. Considering that there was no food or water for rats to live by, it was the most plausible explanation.

However, this was the most annoying thing.

At least until now, Fan Meinan hadn't seen anything special or noteworthy, but the scenery along the way was a little monotonous.

"We have walked a long distance, but why haven't we seen the next platform?" Ma Lu asked with a puzzled look.

He was a subway employee and patrolled the line every day. Therefore, he was naturally more familiar with the platform-to-platform distance than the average person. The subway was originally built as a mass public transport tool to facilitate travel. Except for some special lines like the airport line, the distance between the stations wouldn't be too great. They had, however, already walked for a full 40 minutes. Logically, they should have arrived at the next platform long ago.

Chapter 1089: Subway and Rumors

"This shouldn't be an airport line either. Whether it's the old or new airport, they're not in this direction," Ma Lu muttered. "What were the designers of this line thinking? Why did they make this section so long?"

After he spoke, he turned to look at Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan behind him and apologized profusely. "I didn't expect the two stations to be so far from each other, and I didn't bring any water. If you're thirsty and tired, you can head back first. While you're at that, might as well help me inform the higher-ups about the situation here and ask them to send a couple more people down."

Zhang Heng, however, shook his head. "We're not heading back until we find the missing people."

Ma Lu was stunned. He saw that Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan had been following silently the entire time, and they showed no signs of anxiety. He thought that they didn't have much to do with the missing people, or at least weren't relatives or friends. However, for some reason, he had no choice but to join them in the search.

Thus, Ma Lu kindly suggested that the two of them go back. The main reason was that they had been gone for so long, and there was no cell connection down there. Hence, contacting the higher-ups was necessary, thus making it a win-win situation. He never expected Zhang Heng to reject it.

After that, he heard Zhang Heng continue, "I think you should go back. You've been shouting for so long, and you're starting to sound a little hoarse. You need some water to rest."

"I'll be fine." Ma Lu shook his head. "The sooner we find the two missing girls, the sooner we can be at peace."

After that, he saw that Zhang Heng and Fan Meinan had no intention of leaving, so he raised his flashlight and continued forward. However, Zhang Heng was right. Ma Lu had been shouting for 40 minutes, and his mouth was getting dry. He stopped shouting after they left.

The three of them walked forward silently.

After about five minutes, Zhang Heng spoke again. "Master Ma, you've worked for the subway company for quite some time, right? How much do you know about this line?"

"This is my first time here. In fact, I don't think anyone from the company has been here before," Ma Lu explained. "Construction here stopped before this place was completed, so it was never handed over to the subway company. I don't know its length, direction, and its number of platforms. To be honest, I didn't even expect this tunnel to be so long. In fact, this section is basically completed. The construction materials seem fine, too. It's a pity they just abandoned it like this."

"Hmm... What about the rumors?"

"What?" Ma Lu thought he had misheard Zhang Heng's question.

"I remember you mentioning something about this place in the past. Could you tell us about it?"

"Now? You want to hear about the rumors now?"

"Is there anything inconvenient about it?" Zhang Heng asked.

"Well, because most of the rumors are ridiculous, and we happen to be in this tunnel right now. Even though I'm not superstitious, there are things that we should avoid."

"Yes, but we have nothing to do now," Zhang Heng said. "After walking for so long, everyone should be a little tired. Chatting eases the fatigue a little."

Ma Lu glanced at Fan Meinan, who was standing beside him. He realized that the skinny girl didn't show any fear, so he nodded. "Okay, where do you want to start?"

"Why don't we talk about why this subway line was abandoned," Fan Meinan began.

"The official story is that a change in administrative planning caused this line to become obsolete, so they stopped the project completely."

"But in reality?"

"No one knows the actual situation," Ma Lu said. "But when I first entered the company, I did hear some old employees saying that the real reason this line was abandoned was that none of their workers were willing to continue work. From the construction of the project to the remaining third of the place, people began to fall gravely ill. In the beginning, no one paid too much attention to it, though, thinking that it must be the workers themselves."

"At that time, machinery and equipment weren't that advanced, and work was very labor-intensive. It was not uncommon that these workers usually suffered health problems. Typically, they would just recuperate for a while. But soon, when a second person fell ill... and then the third, the construction company began to pay attention. They reduced the labor intensity and increased ventilation in the

tunnel. They even went as far as to change the cooks at the construction site, but it was no use. More and more people kept falling ill. At this time, the diagnosis report of the first person who got sent to the hospital was also out.

“It turned out that it was not possible to find out the cause of the illness from routine examinations. His body functions were normal, but he showed signs of severe weakness, memory decline, and even developed cognitive impairment. Not only him, but several workers who were sent to the hospital later also showed similar symptoms to varying degrees, completely ruling out the possibility of a genetic disease.

“The report did nothing to dispel the workers’ doubts and worries. Moreover, as the number of ill increased, the rest of the workers would start to panic one day. In the end, under the leadership of a few leaders, they went on strike together and were unwilling to continue work. The construction company had no choice but to transfer teams from other places to replace the workers who went on strike. In addition, they even found experts to conduct inspections.

“The experts stayed here for two weeks, but unfortunately, found nothing. Eventually, they took some samples and left. Fortunately, there was a new batch of workers, and the project could finally continue. The good times didn’t last long, though. About half a month later, another worker fell ill, and the symptoms were the same as the previous batch of workers.

“Moreover, this batch found out about the previous batch of workers from god knows where. Furious that the construction company hid the actual situation from them, they too went on strike after that.

“What’s worse was that this matter gradually spread among the workers. It wasn’t long before the construction company couldn’t find any workers who were willing to continue construction. At the same time, this matter had also alerted the higher-ups. After some research, they finally decided to abandon the railway completely,” Ma Lu sighed.

“What about the sick workers? What happened to them after that?” Zhang Heng asked.

“I don’t know. There are no more rumors about them,” Ma Lu replied. After a pause, he added, “But it’s said that this wasn’t the only thing that happened during the construction. Before the first worker fell ill, there were already workers who had gone missing.”

Chapter 1090: Unsolved Case

“Missing?” Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows.

“Yes. It is said that the last time a worker saw the missing person, it was around 2 am. He sat up from his bed and muttered a few words. Then, he put on his clothes, got up, and walked out of the room. At that time, his roommates thought that he had just gone out to use the toilet. They never expected him not to return.

“Later, the construction company gathered people to look for him. Only then did they find his hard hat and wallet in the half-built tunnel. However, they were unable to find him. It was as if he had disappeared into thin air. This incident also caused a small riot because the subway tunnel they were building did not have any forks. The end was also a dead end. No one could think of where to hide him.”

Ma Lu hesitated for a moment before continuing, "It's because our city has been regarded as the dynasty's capital for the past few centuries. At that time, there was a rumor circulating in the construction team that this subway line had destroyed the underground dragon vein. The disappearance of that worker was a warning. This rumor became more and more popular after more and more people fell ill for no reason. However, the management of the construction company was more inclined to the idea that the missing person had actually been killed by the enemy. The safety helmet and wallet in the tunnel were just a trap set up by the murderer. As for why no one was found alive or dead, the murderer threw the body into the blender and mixed it with the concrete.

"A speculation of this sort is indeed more realistic, especially since the missing person had an emotional dispute with another worker on his team. The two happened to be from the same village, and the suspect liked a girl from there. The dowry was originally agreed upon, but the missing person interfered and added 30,000 yuan to the dowry. As a result, the two became enemies, and the suspect had a credible motive for murder. Later, the police conducted an investigation, but perhaps due to outdated testing at that time, they were unable to find any substantial evidence and had no choice but to release the suspect."

Zhang Heng nodded. "Do you know what the missing person said before he left the house?"

"The worker who lived with him didn't hear it clearly because he was half-asleep. He said that he only heard one sentence, something that sounded like the water was a little cold."

"The water was a little cold?"

"It was quite strange because it was summer at the time. It hadn't rained for a few days, and there weren't many lakes and rivers nearby. Perhaps he dreamt of his hometown while he was sleeping." He didn't really believe in such things, though, and usually only heard it in casual chats after dinner.

But as he had said, the three were now in this subway tunnel, and they hadn't seen the next platform even after walking for so long. Combined with the rumors he had heard, Ma Lu couldn't help but shudder, no matter how big he was.

However, the culprit that caused all of this didn't seem to have much of a reaction.

Furthermore, to Ma Lu's surprise, Zhang Heng opened his mouth and said, "I'm close to understanding what happened to the missing worker."

Ma Lu was stunned when he heard that. After a moment, he said, "What?" "What are you saying? That's just a legend. Furthermore, it's been so long since we were at the scene that night. The police at that time were unable to investigate the matter, so how do you know what happened?"

"It's simple. Because we're experiencing the very thing that's happened to him," Zhang Heng said calmly.

His words seemed to have caused the temperature in the tunnel to drop by a few degrees.

Ma Lu's heart turned cold, and he forced a smile. "Now is not a good time to joke around."

"Indeed," Zhang Heng admitted. "Unfortunately, I'm not joking around."

As he spoke, he stopped and picked up a coin from the ground in front of him. "I dropped this coin 30 minutes ago."

"What do you mean?" Ma Lu was a little confused.

"It means we're going in a circle," Zhang Heng said.

"How is that possible?" Ma Lu's eyes widened, "There are no forks in this tunnel, and we haven't turned back. We've been walking in one direction. Even if we did go in a circle unknowingly, we should have seen the platform we came from."

"Logically speaking, yes," Zhang Heng said. "But the situation we're facing now can not be explained by common sense."

"My friend, have you gotten too engrossed in the story I told you earlier?" Ma Lu smiled bitterly. He turned his gaze to Fan Meinan, hoping to get some support from him; however, Fan Meinan's face showed that he had completely accepted Zhang Heng's explanation. After that, he asked with a serious expression, "Did you find anything else?"

"Time is still ticking." Zhang Heng compared the starfish on his wrist to the time on his phone, and he found that the timing was the same.

Even though the starfish watch was a birthday present from Zhang Heng's parents, it had a lot to do with the old man. Whether it was in the pocket dimension or the real world, its speed remained the same. Therefore, as long as it was compared to the phone, it was easy to see a problem with the time.

In addition, Zhang Heng was also keeping an eye on his physiological condition. Up until now, at least, his metabolism had remained at a normal level. In other words, what they were facing now was not a problem similar to a time loop, more like someone had unwittingly picked out a section of the tunnel from the beginning and connected it to the end, forming a closed loop.

Was It Loki's doing?

It sure sounded like his style but combined with the story before this. Zhang Heng didn't think it was Loki's doing, or at least it wasn't to deal with them. This had, after all, happened more than 50 years ago when the subway line had just been built. If nothing went wrong, the missing worker had been trapped in this tunnel with no exit or entrance.

However, the other party was different from them. He seemed to have been summoned to enter the tunnel. Before he left, he mentioned water, which should be a key information point. However, the scope was too wide, so Zhang Heng didn't have any leads at the moment.

"So, is this a hallucination?" Fan Meinan asked as she reached out to touch the wall. The feeling on her fingertips was extremely real. She could even clearly feel the roughness and coldness of the stone wall. Then, Fan Meinan picked up a small stone and threw it on the other side of the stone wall. It bounced off and did not pass through the wall.