

Ad Infinitum 631

Chapter 631: Them

The eyes behind the sunglasses were one big, one small...?Upon hearing Genava's words, Oudick's ravings echoed in Long Yuehong's mind: "A person on the left, a person on the right, with a small picture frame in the middle! One of your eyes is big, and the other is small. You're not a good person. I'll help you dig them all out!"

The black-robed man in the sunglasses was the person Oudick saw in his 'nightmare' before he went crazy? Did he come out of the building we previously rented because he was sent by the nightmare to search for clues??These thoughts exploded in Long Yuehong's heart like muffled thunder, making him dizzy and tense.

If it were just a person with one big eye and one small eye, Long Yuehong would've most likely written it off as a coincidence. After all, although there weren't many people with similar appearances and flaws, there wouldn't be just one or two. The probability of encountering one by chance wasn't low.

However, it seemed too much of a coincidence that this person appeared at the Old Task Force's former rented apartment.

Too many coincidences often meant that something was wrong!

The True Self Church just said that the nightmare has subsided and that there is no need to worry, but we encountered someone suspected to be the person Oudick saw in his dream??Long Yuehong gapped his mouth and realized that his team leader, Bai Chen, and Shang Jianyao were silent.

As if sensing his gaze, Jiang Baimian—who was in the passenger seat—turned around and glanced at him before looking at Shang Jianyao. "Cool it."

Her voice was calm and gentle, calming the tumultuous waves in Long Yuehong's heart.

The jeep maintained its original speed and drove toward the Red Wolf Zone. Jiang Baimian casually glanced at the rearview mirror.

The golden-brown-haired man in sunglasses and trench coat had long disappeared from the street.

After the jeep entered the Red Wolf Zone and circled around to the Senate, Jiang Baimian asked Genava, “Old Ge, where did the target go?”

“After he left the building of our previous rented apartment, he entered the alley diagonally opposite us,” Genava replied truthfully.

He couldn’t see any further. After all, he was only a smart bot. He didn’t have a satellite companion or the corresponding auxiliary equipment, nor had he Awakened Heavenly Eyes and Heavenly Ears.

Jiang Baimian nodded. “He might be living nearby.”

Long Yuehong finally couldn’t help but ask for confirmation. “Team Leader, is this the person Oudick mentioned—the one with one big eye and one small eye?”

Clap! Clap! Clap!

Shang Jianyao clapped. “Congratulations, you got it right!”

He was very excited, and he was filled with the urge to try something.

Jiang Baimian nodded slightly and said, “Highly suspected to be so. First, he coincidentally appeared at the entrance of our former rental. Second, he wore sunglasses. He clearly wanted to hide the characteristics of him having one big and one small eye. With double the coincidence, it’s most likely not one. I suspect that he’s the nightmare’s accomplice and contributed to Oudick’s madness.”

Shang Jianyao clapped his hands and smiled. “A person on the left, a person on the right, a small picture frame in the middle. I wonder if he’s the one on the left or the one on the right...”

“In short, he isn’t the middle one.” Bai Chen voiced her opinion.

“That small picture frame represents the nightmare?” Long Yuehong made an inference.

Jiang Baimian made a terse grunt. “Maybe.”

She then explained, “I told you to cool it mainly because I was worried that the area would be under the nightmare’s watch. Once we overreact, we might very well be exposed.”

“Yes.” Long Yuehong nodded in understanding. He even felt that his team leader had done the right thing. He then asked, “What should we do next?”

Jiang Baimian fell silent for a moment. “We still have to rely on the True Self Church. On the one hand, we don’t know enough about nightmares. On the other hand, we are restrained in First City. There’s too much danger. In addition, contact Oudick’s fellow parishioner—a believer of Dawn’s Morning Star—through Mrs. Laurice. We need to be prepared on both ends.”

She wasn’t too sure that the True Self Church would pursue the investigation.

“Sure, sure.” Shang Jianyao—who was sitting on the left in the backseat—raised his hands and feet.

...

Apart from hiring someone to deliver a message to Mrs. Laurice midway, getting the reply, and arranging a meeting place, the Old Task Force didn’t do anything out of caution.

It was only in the afternoon that they slowly drove from their rented apartment to the Green Olive Zone.

They passed by Ugo Hotel again.

Long Yuehong turned his head and saw a calm, white-haired elder standing at the front desk right at the end of the lobby.

This hotel had a new boss.

Long Yuehong silently retracted his gaze.

The Old Task Force’s jeep circled around the hotel, crossed the street, and arrived at the True Self Church’s stronghold.

They successfully met Dreambreaker Cliff in the innermost room on the first floor of the apartment.

Cliff—who was wearing an old robe—asked in confusion, “Is there anything else?”

Jiang Baimian took a step forward and said in a deep voice, “We have new clues to the nightmare and discovered one of its goons. I wonder if your Church is interested in cooperating?”

Cliff fell silent.

Jiang Baimian deliberately said agitatedly, “Boss Ugo is an Awakened. Even in your Church, such a person should be equivalent to a bishop. No religion will be indifferent to a bishop’s death.”

Cliff fell silent for a while before letting out a long sigh. “The nightmare has already subsided. If we provoke it again, we will definitely suffer an intense counterattack. This might very well trigger an extremely terrifying change. It wasn’t easy for peace to be restored in this area. Unless we have the confidence to completely eliminate the nightmare, we won’t take the initiative to start a dispute. I think Ugo—who has returned to the Kalendaria’s embrace—can understand our decision.”

He spoke very tactfully, but his attitude was very clear.

Jiang Baimian looked at Shang Jianyao, who didn’t hide his disappointment. She lowered her head and laughed self-deprecatingly. “We were letting it get to our head. Sorry.”

...

In an apartment in the Red Wolf Zone.

The Old Task Force—who had come here according to the agreement—knocked on the room on the left on the seventh floor.

It was Laurice who opened the door. Compared to the last time they met, she looked much better and was in a rather good mood.

“Welcome,” said the brown-haired, green-eyed lady with a smile.

Jiang Baimian was stunned for a moment before she blurted out, “Is this your and Oudick’s home?”

“That’s right.” Laurice looked confused. “What kind of strange question is that?”

Jiang Baimian asked, “So Oudick fell sick here previously?”

“Yes.” Laurice didn’t know why she was asking.

Jiang Baimian fell silent for a few seconds before turning to criticize Shang Jianyao and the others. “Seriously, how can you block someone else’s door? That’s too rude!”

Laurice smiled as well. “Come in.”

Not far behind her, Oudick stood there and smiled at the Old Task Force members before waving his hand.

“Let’s chat in the study.” He pointed at a room to the side.

As he was at home, he didn’t wear the thick, dark coat. Instead, he wore a floral plush shirt and black pants.

While Oudick walked to the study, Jiang Baimian suppressed her voice and asked Laurice in concern, “How was he after he returned?”

“Pretty good.” Laurice smiled. “He will occasionally be irritable and mutter to himself, but he will deliberately avoid me, secretly slap the table, and shout with his voice lowered. Therefore, he still has to go to a mental hospital to receive treatment once a week and for medicine purchases.”

Amidst her worry, unconcealed happiness surfaced on her face.

Relieved, Long Yuehong sized up Oudick and Laurice’s home.

It was an ordinary three-bedroom apartment that was relatively spacious.

The study room wasn't big. Other than the bookshelf was a desk, a short sofa, and a few chairs.

"Have a seat." Oudick pointed at the short sofa and the three chairs beside it. "Sorry, it'll be a little cramped."

"You're too polite," Shang Jianyao replied politely.

As Jiang Baimian sat down, she asked, "How long until your parishioner arrives?"

"In ten minutes," Oudick replied calmly.

After they sat down, Shang Jianyao asked, "Is it far to the Golden Waters from here?"

"Very," Oudick said as he recalled. "You have to pass through half of First City. There's a large no-man's-land between United Industries and the Gold Coast..."

Upon seeing that Oudick and Shang Jianyao's questions and answers were reasonable and natural, Long Yuehong couldn't believe that this person had been a lunatic not long ago.

After a while, Laurice brought a lady over.

This lady wore a dark hunting suit and was about the same age as Oudick. She had blond hair, blue eyes, and rough skin. She was the typical example of the Red River ethnicity.

"Julia." She briefly introduced herself.

After Jiang Baimian and the others finished introducing themselves, the lady smiled politely. "Thank you for your 'treatment' of Oudick. Otherwise, I wouldn't have dared to meet Laurice."

She emphasized the word 'treatment.'

"It's only right." Shang Jianyao had a matter-of-fact expression.

Julia's expression turned serious as she asked, "How long can this last?"

Shang Jianyao smiled and replied, "As long as he's such a person, nobody can truly overturn this point. It can last forever."

After exchanging a few pleasantries, Jiang Baimian took the initiative to say, "We've discovered clues to the nightmare. I wonder if you're interested in cooperating?"

Julia glanced at Oudick and said, "The matter is in the past, and the dreams returned to normal last night. Without absolute confidence, we don't want to take the risk. There's no need for you to continue investigating. Fighting such nightmares is a long-term matter. There's not much meaning to chance upon clues."

Jiang Baimian chose to remain silent.

After chatting for a while, the Old Task Force bade farewell.

Oudick walked them to the door.

As the door closed, Long Yuehong saw Oudick's warped smile from the corner of his eye.

The latter shouted in confusion, "A person on the left, a person on the right, with a small picture frame in the middle! One of your eyes is big, and the other is small. You're not a good person. I'll help you dig them all out!"

Long Yuehong slowly retracted his gaze.

After returning to the car, everyone fell silent.

After a while, Long Yuehong indignantly said, "They don't care that their fellow parishioners were killed or harmed!"

Jiang Baimian, Bai Chen, and Genava didn't know how to respond.

At this moment, Shang Jianyao suddenly sat up straight and slowly but firmly said, “They might not care, but I’ll care!”

Chapter 632: Encouragement

Jiang Baimian turned around and glanced at Shang Jianyao. She didn’t rebuke him for being out of his league or what he had to do, nor did she ask how he was going about doing it. Instead, she calmly said, “We’ll discuss it when we get back.”

Shang Jianyao nodded and didn’t retort.

At this moment, Long Yuehong reacted. His first thought was: “This fellow is acting up again.

However, he always likes to use ‘us’ when he acts up. Why did he only say ‘I’ this time...? Long Yuehong was confused, but he vaguely understood why Shang Jianyao only emphasized ‘I.’

He thinks this is a private act. He doesn’t plan on implicating us and wants to deal with it himself?? Long Yuehong silently exhaled and maintained his silence like Bai Chen.

Genava looked around and chose to remain silent.

After returning to their rented place in the Red Wolf Zone, Jiang Baimian slowly took out her waterskin and took a sip. She then looked at Shang Jianyao and said, “At a time like this, you mustn’t forget that we have a background and a large faction backing us. What we need to do now is report today’s discovery to the company and raise the idea of taking action against the man in the sunglasses. We want to see how the company replies and if they will send any form of aid.

“I think the board of directors and the big shots in the New World above should know better than us how dangerous such nightmares are and how high the chances of success are if we forcefully interfere. If they agree with us, it means that there’s some hope.”

“Alright,” Long Yuehong replied before Shang Jianyao could.

Shang Jianyao didn't object.

At the appointed time, Jiang Baimian switched on the radio transceiver, but she didn't receive any telegrams.

She quickly sent out a telegram she had previously drafted and turned around. “The directors probably won't work overtime. We'll see if there's a reply tomorrow. Uh... I know you're anxious. In any case, there are still 45 minutes until the scheduled time ends. Let's wait.”

Jiang Baimian's last sentence was directed at Shang Jianyao—who was sometimes aloof with the mantra ‘everything is but a dream; why so serious’ and sometimes rashly pacing back and forth.

She kept the receiver on as she took out the information provided by the True Self Church and seriously studied the intelligence regarding the garrisons around Wasteland Ruin 13.

Long Yuehong, Bai Chen, and the others found something to do. Shang Jianyao tried to use the small speaker, but Jiang Baimian glared at him.

As time passed, a telegram suddenly came in.

“The company actually replied? That efficient?” Jiang Baimian was a little surprised. Her first reaction was that this might be a reply to her previous telegram—the one reporting her encounter with the ‘nightmare.’

But it was impossible upon careful thought.

If that were the case, a telegram would've come in from the beginning! The board of directors would definitely approve a reply during the day and not wait until nighttime.

Shang Jianyao had a gratified expression when he heard that. “The directors do work overtime!”

“It might not be overtime. They have a rotational duty system.” Jiang Baimian was rather familiar with the system.

The rotation system didn't mean that the directors had to stay up all night like employees. Instead, a board member had to be on call if there was an emergency at night.

As she spoke, Jiang Baimian finished copying the code and began translating them into words: "You can give it a try..."

At this point, Jiang Baimian said in surprise, "The directors actually agreed to let us take action against the man in the sunglasses!"

This meant that the director on duty and the directors he had communicated with today believed that the Old Task Force had a chance of completing this mission and obtaining precious information despite the nightmare's threat.

At the very least, Jiang Baimian didn't think that they would be so easily abandoned by the board of directors with Shang Jianyao's level and the Old Task Force's strength.

Jiang Baimian kept something to herself: After Eidolon Nun's second gaze and the anomaly in Iron Mountain City's Second Food Company's illusion, she felt that a certain or a few Kalendarium were looking forward to their development. They wouldn't be abandoned so easily before they were drained of their value.

Upon seeing Shang Jianyao's joy, Long Yuehong couldn't help but snub, "Could it be a hasty decision made by some director?"

"Who knows?" Jiang Baimian casually replied.

In fact, with her understanding of the board of directors and the higher-ups, this possibility was rather low. This was because the night duty telegraph operator would make copies of the documents and send an email to all the directors before reporting the 'urgent matter.'

Unless the director on duty insisted on going their own way and was willing to take on the subsequent blame, he wouldn't make a decision easily. There would definitely be a collective discussion.

Of course, it was another story if the matter was extremely urgent. However, this was clearly not the case.

Jiang Baimian continued translating the rest of the telegram. “This matter is extremely risky. You need to constantly evaluate your condition and be prepared to cease operations at any moment. If you fall in danger, Life Angel necklace.”

The latter sentence came out of nowhere. Long Yuehong frowned and blurted out, “Huh?”

Jiang Baimian laughed. “The company isn’t providing us any additional resources and only mentioned the Life Angel necklace?”

Isn’t this too stingy?

Bai Chen quietly listened and recalled something. “I remember Hey’s Life Angel necklace was modified by the company.”

“Yes.” The rash Shang Jianyao smiled. “They say that the external aura in my Sea of Origins has worsened. When an accident is triggered, transferring the aura in the necklace into the Sea of Origins can allow him to deal with those outsiders.”

“Pui, that’s clearly just a guess on your part!” retorted the honest Shang Jianyao.

The company didn’t say anything.

Jiang Baimian laughed as well. “From the looks of it, it’s at least an aura of someone who has ventured deep into the Mind Corridor. It might even be a powerhouse from the New World. Otherwise, the company wouldn’t say that we can rely on the Life Angel necklace when we’re in danger.”

Is that so...? Long Yuehong heaved a sigh of relief.

“When are we taking action?” Shang Jianyao couldn’t wait.

The honest Genova replied, “We have to at least wait until dawn.”

“Why can’t we take advantage of the night?” the honest Shang Jianyao asked.

Jiang Baimian made a terse grunt. “We’ll rent a car tomorrow and split into two teams. We’ll disguise ourselves and go to the alley the target entered to investigate his whereabouts and find where he lives. Along the way, we’ll gather all kinds of information and strive to grasp the target’s uniqueness in advance.”

At this point, Jiang Baimian chuckled. “Actually, it’s not that the True Self Church and Dawn’s Morning Star don’t want to carry out further investigations on the nightmare. However, they hope to have sufficient confidence. Let’s try to create such a situation and get them to join in. Don’t be resistant. The more friends you have, the weaker the enemy will be!

“If things don’t work out, we definitely won’t put on a brave front. This is because you aren’t the only one who will die. There’s a high chance that it will include the thousands of innocent people in the Green Olive Zone and us.”

Jiang Baimian’s last sentence was directed at Shang Jianyao.

Shang Jianyao fell silent for a moment. “Alright.”

Another Shang Jianyao then added, “If it doesn’t work this time, I’ll try again when I grow stronger!”

...

The next morning, in the Green Olive Zone.

Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao—who had changed their disguises—drove a common old car into the alley where the man in black sunglasses had disappeared into.

There were many houses on both sides of the street, and the road only allowed one car passage.

Bai Chen, Long Yuehong, and Genava drove the Old Task Force's jeep and circled the area, secretly observing if Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao's tracking would bring about any abnormalities and the origins of the abnormality if any.

After driving for a while, Jiang Baimian stopped the car and got Shang Jianyao to ask the boss of a provision shop by the roadside.

Shang Jianyao walked over with his sunglasses on and seriously said, "Give me a pack of salt."

In the Green Olive Zone—where supplies were scarce—although it was called a provision shop, it didn't sell many things. Salt was the most eye-catching one.

After handing over the money and receiving the item, Shang Jianyao smiled. "Look, I just patronized your business. I didn't bargain. So..."

As a Red Coaster, the boss immediately suppressed his voice suspiciously. "What do you want?"

"Have you seen such a person?" Shang Jianyao described the person before taking out Genava's portrait of the target.

The boss only took a glance before answering, "I've seen him. He's the only one I've seen wearing sunglasses at night! He always walks to the end of the alley and turns right."

Shang Jianyao—who had gained something—returned to the car and repeated the boss's words.

Jiang Baimian wasn't focused on the target's whereabouts but on something else. She muttered to herself in confusion, "Wearing sunglasses even at night? Then, what's the point of him wearing sunglasses to hide the disparity in his eyes?"

Different-sized eyes and sunglasses at night were characteristics, but the latter was even more obvious!

Shang Jianyao stroked his chin. "If it were me, I would choose to wear a pair of brown-tinted glasses. This way, others won't pay too much attention to my different-sized eyes."

Nobody would find it problematic to wear glasses at night.

After he said that, the honest Shang Jianyao scoffed. “Can’t others have low intelligence?”

Chapter 633: Exhaustive

Jiang Baimian was speechless and could only point ahead. “Carry on.”

She drove the rented car to the end of the alley and found someone for Shang Jianyao to ask.

After asking, they confirmed that the man in sunglasses had appeared in this alley in the past few days. He always turned right at the end of the alley.

Jiang Baimian turned the steering wheel to the right after Shang Jianyao returned to the car.

But after the car entered another street, she was in no rush to continue forward. Instead, she slowed down until she found a place to park.

Jiang Baimian picked up the walkie-talkie after waiting for a while. “Did the two people Hey previously questioned show any abnormalities?”

“No.” Long Yuehong’s voice sounded over the walkie-talkie. “They’re all normal and doing their own things. They didn’t try to send a message.”

“Excellent. Don’t we still have some cameras? Find a place to install them and get them to monitor these two targets in your stead.”

After putting down the walkie-talkie, she started the car again and continued down the street to track their target.

On the way, Shang Jianyao alighted from the car many times to inquire. Although he returned a blank most of the time, they still managed to lock onto the man’s whereabouts by relying on a few useful ‘witnesses.’

Meanwhile, the small team formed by Long Yuehong, Bai Chen, and Genava secretly observed the people in the area, including but not limited to those who had been questioned by Shang Jianyao. They included those who could hear the conversation and see the scene.

After about an hour, the small car rented by the Old Task Force stopped near an old six-story building.

Jiang Baimian—who was sitting in the driver’s seat—looked over and recalled if she had misjudged the direction along the way. After confirming that there were no errors, she pointed at the old building commonly seen in the Green Olive Zone and said, “From the information gathered, the target lives here. We still have to further investigate which floor and room it is.”

Shang Jianyao fell silent for a moment before asking, “You really didn’t get lost.”

Jiang Baimian wanted to retort, but she couldn’t find the right words.

Shang Jianyao cast his gaze at the side window and suggested, “I’ll ask when someone comes out.”

Jiang Baimian didn’t answer immediately. After a while, she said, “There’s no rush.”

She turned to look at Shang Jianyao. “Don’t you find it too easy?”

Before the operation today, she had always believed that she would only gain something and find some clues. Who knew that the circumstances allowed them to lock onto the target’s residence?

The honest Shang Jianyao smiled. “Maybe he doesn’t know that Oudick will repeat what he saw in the nightmare even after going mad. He doesn’t know that Old Ge can ‘detect’ his different-sized eyes through the sunglasses. Without these two premises, we won’t find anything wrong with him even if he appears in front of us. In such a situation, who would go through all the trouble to cover their tracks?”

I will...? Jiang Baimian replied inwardly and then helplessly said, “The basic anti-tracking still needs to be done.”

“You have to tell him that.” Shang Jianyao shrugged.

Jiang Baimian glared at him. “In short, we can’t go up so rashly. Yes... Let’s observe the periphery for a while.”

She picked up the walkie-talkie again. “Old Ge, install the remaining cameras around the target building and monitor the situation here. Little Red, Little White, find another rental beyond 300 meters from here and is within signal range. The surveillance will last for three days.”

After issuing the order, Jiang Baimian looked at Shang Jianyao again. “Why aren’t you objecting?”

Shang Jianyao stroked his chin and smiled. “This is the most reasonable and careful way of handling things. Why should I object? The one who suggested it has already been subdued by the other me.”

The rash one is under control??Jiang Baimian was glad, but she also found the Shang Jianyaos’ interactions astonishing.

After Geneva and the others secretly busied themselves, the Old Task Force set up high-tech products to carry out surveillance of the target building. They then retreated into a rented apartment 900 meters away.

Within this range, Geneva could act as a temporary base station and wirelessly review the surveillance footage in a timely fashion.

After settling down, Jiang Baimian asked Geneva, “Any development?”

Geneva replied like a machine, “The signal transmission is normal. There’s no scene worth paying attention to at the moment.”

“It just consumes a little electricity,” the honest Shang Jianyao added.

“Yes.” Geneva placed a depleted high-performance battery into the charger.

As Long Yuehong watched him do this, he hesitantly said, “Surveillance will take three days? Isn’t this too... too careful?”

Jiang Baimian shook her head and smiled. “It’s not too much to be careful when facing the nightmare.”

She then looked around and restrained her smile. “Do you remember the two questions I asked Laurice when we went to Oudick’s house?”

“You asked if that’s her and Oudick’s house and if Oudick went crazy there...” Bai Chen suddenly fell silent as if she had realized something.

Jiang Baimian nodded at her and said, “Oudick’s house is in the Red Wolf Zone, and it’s not near the Green Olive Zone. The straight-line distance from there to the rented apartment we previously had the nightmare at is more than five kilometers.

“What does this mean? It means that when the nightmare attacked us and killed Ugo, it affected Oudick from five kilometers away or even further, causing him to go crazy. This means that the nightmare’s range is at least five kilometers!”

What kind of terrifying influence was that!

Long Yuehong had never thought about this question before. After Jiang Baimian pointed it out, he took a deep breath and took more than ten seconds to digest the situation.

He worriedly said, “Does the company really think we can give it a try?”

The strongest in the team, Shang Jianyao, had a range of less than 200 meters!

A smile appeared on Jiang Baimian’s face again. “No, you should think of it this way: Such a terrifying nightmare actually needs to send a person to the place we rented to search for clues instead of using a more concealed method a few kilometers away. This means that it might very well be under considerable restrictions.”

“That’s true...” Long Yuehong came to a realization.

This also meant that the Old Task Force was more likely up against the nightmare's minions instead of itself.

Clap! Clap! Clap!?

Shang Jianyao clapped.

Bai Chen raised another question. "Since the nightmare can make Oudick in the Red Wolf Zone go crazy, why are the residents of the Green Olive Zone the only ones who experienced the collective dream? It doesn't include the people near the Red Wolf Zone?"

Jiang Baimian guessed, "Maybe Dawn's Morning Star's dream defense line is over there? We can confirm this with them later."

"Yes, yes." Long Yuehong felt that this was indeed the most reasonable explanation.

Jiang Baimian flipped her wrist and looked at her electronic watch. She looked around and said, "Let's make some plans while we have time."

"Alright," Bai Chen and Long Yuehong quickly replied.

This was the standard operating procedure for the Old Task Force's daily operations. As long as there was time and time, they would make plans for various developments. Of course, due to their limited energy, manpower, resources, and the contradictions between the different plans, they could only make preparations for the most likely developments. They couldn't come up with perfect plans that covered everything.

Shang Jianyao took out the pen he carried with him and sniffed it as a pipe. He looked at Jiang Baimian and said in thought, "Even if we treat the discovered target's residence as a trap and make a targeted plan, we lack sufficient information to narrow it down."

That's right, that's right...? Long Yuehong agreed inwardly.

Jiang Baimian chuckled. “We’ll discuss this later. Let’s first assume that the nightmare’s accomplice—the man in the black sunglasses—is a relatively powerful Awakened. He’s at least at the Mind Corridor level.”

“There’s no need to assume that. I think that’s the case.” Long Yuehong voiced his opinion.

He believed that since the other party could become the nightmare’s minion and had appeared in the dream, his level definitely wasn’t too low.

“The probability is more than 90%.” Genava found a mathematical model and gave the results of the calculation.

Jiang Baimian smiled and asked, “Then, which domain is he from?”

Upon seeing Bai Chen and the others reveal thoughtful expressions, Jiang Baimian shook her head and said, “It’s very difficult to make an effective guess because we have almost zero intelligence. Why don’t we do this? Everyone, work a little harder. Use an exhaustive method to analyze the other party’s actions and choose a plan that suits the current situation or is most likely a threat to us.

“For example, if he were a Mind Corridor-level Awakened in January’s Subhuti domain, how would he handle the mission given by the nightmare? How would he find our whereabouts, and where might he show a price?”

Shang Jianyao stroked his chin with the pen and said, “In such matters, people with the powers Destiny Connection, Heavenly Eyes, Heavenly Ears, and Mind Connection will all make different choices.”

Long Yuehong nodded and echoed, “If that person has Destiny Connection, they are equivalent to an Awakened in the Last Man domain who can read memories. These two situations can be handled together. If I had such abilities, I definitely wouldn’t let go of the surrounding residents when investigating the whereabouts of someone. I would definitely review their memories and search for the corresponding ‘images.’

“Back then, the disguise we did was different from what we have now. However, the jeep didn’t get a new paint job. We can’t rule out the possibility that someone had seen us coming out of the jeep.

“As for memories related to the tracking of this jeep... Yes, we didn’t deliberately circle to an empty street midway. Then, then...” At this point, Long Yuehong paused and suppressed his voice in horror. “He should be able to find the room we rented in the Red Wolf Zone! If he follows the clues and persists, there’s a high chance that he will track us all the way here!”

Here!

Just as Long Yuehong said that, he suddenly felt the silence outside the room terrifying.

Nobody seemed to pass through the streets illuminated by the afternoon sun.

Chapter 634: Another Visit

Long Yuehong felt his thoughts freeze that very moment, and he seemed to be in a different world from his companions. He watched their mouths open and close from a distance, but he couldn’t hear anything.

The next second, he realized that Shang Jianyao had taken out the Six Senses Beads at some point in time and was holding it in his left hand.

Long Yuehong heard his team leader’s voice almost at the same time. This seemed to come from the sky, breaking the frozen silence.

“What did you do to Little Red?” Jiang Baimian asked Shang Jianyao in exasperation and amusement.

Shang Jianyao sincerely replied, “In order for the environment to match his words and create the most suitable atmosphere, I temporarily deprived him of his hearing.”

“...” The five fingers on Long Yuehong’s right knuckle emitted cracking sounds.

“Pay attention to the situation!” Jiang Baimian reprimanded and then helplessly said to Long Yuehong, “Continue.”

Long Yuehong calmed down and glanced at Bai Chen. “In short, if the target is an Awakened in the Subhuti domain with Destiny Connection or a Last Man-domain Awakened who can read other people’s memories, it’s completely possible that he will keep tracking us until our safe house in the Red Wolf Zone, all the way to this room. The probability is not low.”

Jiang Baimian nodded. “This is indeed a situation that requires vigilance, but there’s no need to be too nervous. It’s obvious that the nightmare is rather afraid of Teacher Du Heng or Xiaochong. Otherwise, it wouldn’t have sent its subordinate to search for us after a full day.

“The safe house we rented in the Red Wolf Zone is very close to where Xiaochong used to live, and Teacher Du Heng has also appeared in that block. If the nightmare is really as powerful and terrifying as we analyzed, it should be able to sense something. In that case, its minion definitely won’t dare to be rash after reaching the area. He will definitely probe and repeatedly observe to confirm that there’s really no problem before continuing.”

Back when she chose the safe house in that block, Jiang Baimian had considered using Xiaochong and Du Heng—who had been active nearby—to intimidate any possible transgressors to a certain extent.

Genava agreed with Jiang Baimian. “The target began searching for us yesterday morning. If he has Destiny Connection or can read other people’s memories, he should’ve been able to lock onto us before dusk yesterday if no accidents happened along the way. He could’ve launched an attack during the night, but that didn’t happen. Therefore, either he doesn’t have one of the two abilities, or the nightmare behind him is indeed worried that Xiaochong or Du Heng are still hiding in that area.”

Clap! Clap! Clap!?

Shang Jianyao applauded Genava.

“Why didn’t you strip him of his hearing, uh—no, interfere with the electromagnetic signals he receives?” Long Yuehong said indignantly.

Shang Jianyao replied righteously, “It’s not like Old Ge will be nervous or afraid.”

As expected, you just wanted to scare Little Red...?Jiang Baimian scoffed inwardly.

“I can simulate such emotions,” Geneva emphasized.

Without giving the Shang Jianyaos a chance to discuss smart bot emotions, Jiang Baimian cast her gaze at Long Yuehong.

Long Yuehong organized his words and continued his analysis. “When covering his tracks, the target should’ve been able to vaguely sense that we would lock onto his residence since he possesses Destiny Connection and Clairvoyance. Therefore, he took the opportunity to set up a trap and deliberately expose their tracks.

“If the target can make some modifications while flipping through other people’s memories, the people Shang Jianyao interrogated will sincerely believe that they are the target’s accomplices and find an opportunity to report the situation after the matter is over. Otherwise, their corresponding memories have already been unconsciously modified. The situation they describe to Shang Jianyao doesn’t match the actual situation. Via repeated guidance, we will head to the other party’s designated spot, where there’s a high chance that it’s a trap.

“From our current observations, we can basically rule out the possibility of them reporting the situation subsequently. Yes... If the target doesn’t have the abilities I mentioned, we can only surmise that he has never considered the problem of exposure. Hence, he didn’t hide himself.”

Clap! Clap! Clap!?

Jiang Baimian clapped this time. She smiled and praised, “Not bad. It’s a clear train of thought unfolded layer by layer without missing anything.”

With that said, Jiang Baimian concluded seriously, “These are two situations that require careful precautions. Alright, the next domain to analyze is February’s Dawn.”

Bai Chen took the initiative to speak. “The dream influence of the Dawn domain can allow one to recall the scenes they previously saw in a dream. Oudick did so. This is similar to Destiny Connection and Memory Reading, but it’s also limited by the environment and situation. It can be treated as a weakened version...”

“From Boss Ugo’s abilities, they can also enhance their sense of smell. This is also a tool for tracking.” Jiang Baimian helped add a little. “However, we made it a point to change our disguises.”

This was done through the help of expired perfume, mosquito repellent, and some strong-smelling plants, insects, and animals.

The Old Task Force carried out analyses of January's Subhuti to July's Double Sun.

Shang Jianyao stroked his chin. "From the abnormality in the target's eyes, there's a high chance that he's in the Double Sun domain or the Arbiter of Fate domain. Dawn's one is also considered one."

The Double Sun domain included 'eyes' and 'vision,' and the Dawn domain had visual abnormalities.

Shang Jianyao had previously encountered an Awakened in the Arbiter of Fate domain, who paid the price of not being able to move his eyes.

Long Yuehong frowned and said, "Doesn't seem like it. If the price is simply different-sized eyes, it's impossible for them to only be at this level when one reaches the Mind Corridor level."

From his point of view, it should reach a point of not being able to open one eye while the other couldn't be closed. Only then could it match the Mind Corridor level.

"No." Shang Jianyao shook his head and smiled. "I'm referring to the abnormality of always wearing sunglasses."

"Isn't it supposed to hide different-sized eyes?" Bai Chen asked in Long Yuehong's stead.

Long Yuehong's mood instantly improved.

"Wouldn't wearing tinted glasses be a better choice if he just wants to hide his different-sized eyes? At least it wouldn't be so eye-catching at night." Shang Jianyao raised the Six Senses Beads in front of him and pretended that they were half-glasses.

Jiang Baimian nodded slightly and said, "This does explain why the target is still wearing sunglasses at night. The price he paid might be his fear of sunlight. When he enters the Mind Corridor, this changes to the point of him being afraid of ordinary lights."

Therefore, he had to keep wearing sunglasses unless he entered an area without street lamps.

Jiang Baimian then said, “But the problem is that Awakened in the Double Sun domain don’t seem to have any tracking abilities. Yes, this might be because we’ve encountered too few of them. Maybe some of them can see things that can’t be seen under normal circumstances and follow the clues to find us.”

“This is another situation that requires key precautions,” Geneva—who was once Tarnan’s mayor—concluded.

Long Yuehong stated, “It’s unlikely for him to be in the Arbiter of Fate domain. The abilities they show seem to be only related to life support instincts like respiration, heartbeats, and so on.”

Nobody objected to this.

After discussing November’s Shattered Mirror, the Old Task Force finally completed the marathon-like brainstorm. They highlighted the few situations that most suited the present situation or could threaten them and made certain plans.

Jiang Baimian exhaled and looked out the window. “There’s something else we can’t ignore: Oudick saw two people. One on the left and one on the right. There might be more than one nightmare minion we need to deal with.”

This was under the assumption that the ‘photo frame’ in the middle was the ‘nightmare.’

“But we have no clues about that person at all.” Geneva was helpless even with his analytical abilities.

You can’t make bricks without straw!

Jiang Baimian nodded. “Therefore, I plan on visiting Oudick again.”

“Oudick only repeats those two sentences...” Long Yuehong didn’t believe they could dig up anything else.

Jiang Baimian smiled. "Inquiries won't provide us anything, but you can't say the same regarding observations. Apart from the thoughts that Hey implanted in him, I want to see if he does anything different from before. People who go crazy in nightmares might unconsciously imitate what they sensed back then or be infected by the corresponding madness and leave behind traces."

"That's a direction..." Long Yuehong was convinced.

Jiang Baimian immediately made an arrangement. "Hey and I will go. Little Red, Little White, find an empty room to hide around here and secretly monitor for any commotion. Be careful and avoid everyone along the way. Old Ge, stay here and control those cameras. Be prepared to be attacked."

The Old Task Force members quickly replied, "Yes, Team Leader!"

...

Red Wolf Zone, Oudick's house.

Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao met Laurice again.

"Where's Oudick?" Shang Jianyao asked in concern.

Jiang Baimian smiled and added, "We came here to do a follow-up visit and see if the treatment's effects have weakened or if we need to strengthen or improve anything."

"I understand." Laurice was very grateful. "Oudick went to the Hunter's Guild to see if there are any relatively safe missions he can take on. He should be back soon."

"Then, why didn't you go out?" Shang Jianyao was very curious.

Although Oudick was an Advanced Hunter, a large portion of his income was used to help parishioners in hardship. It was unlikely that he could afford Laurice to be a full-time housewife like a noble lady.

Laurice glanced at Shang Jianyao. "It's Sunday. I'm a teacher at a public school."

“Oh...” Shang Jianyao came to a realization.

Jiang Baimian tried her best to get the conversation back on track. “Mrs. Laurice, we want to know if Oudick has shown any abnormalities in the past few days. Uh, it might not be abnormal. It might also be some behavior or habit.”

“Apart from occasionally repeating those words and becoming irritable and excited...” Laurice muttered to herself as she recalled. After a few seconds, she pointed at the coffee table, cabinets, and various items in the living room. “He also likes to tidy up more than before.. He has to arrange everything neatly and symmetrically.”

Chapter 635: More Abnormalities

“Neat and symmetrical?” Jiang Baimian asked in confirmation.

Laurice pointed at the coffee table with certainty. “Yes. Look...”

Uh, if Little Red were here and heard these words, he would suffer from PTSD again...?This thought flashed across Jiang Baimian’s mind.

It was naturally impossible for Laurice to hear her musing, and she continued, “There should’ve been a flower vase, a wooden box for tissues, and two cups for drinking water here, but he said that they have to be removed because the flower vases and wooden boxes can’t be symmetrical.”

As Laurice spoke, Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao cast their gazes at the coffee table and realized that there were only four porcelain cups meant for drinking left. Two of them had been added because of their visit.

Symmetry OCD??As Jiang Baimian retracted her gaze, she glanced at Shang Jianyao.

Shang Jianyao nodded at her.

However, Jiang Baimian couldn’t understand why he was nodding.?Do you agree with Laurice, or did you hear my thoughts?

Laurice didn't sense their silent interaction and sighed. "It actually isn't too bad; it's just tiring. I have to pay attention to how items are placed, as well as my clothes and hairstyle. Oh, Oudick won't be angry because of this. He just quietly fiddles with these things until they meet his requirements. He's very persistent."

This reminded Jiang Baimian of the saying: 'one eye is big, and the other is small. You're not a good person. I'll help you dig them all out.'

It was also a manifestation of symmetry OCD, but it was more violent and crazy.

Shang Jianyao stroked his chin. "Apart from this, what else is there?"

"Nothing." Laurice slowly shook her head as if she were still recalling the various details she noticed while spending time with Oudick over the past two days. She then fell silent for a moment before hesitantly saying, "There's something else. I wonder if it counts..."

"Go ahead and say it. Whether it counts will be determined by the therapist," said Shang Jianyao—who loved novelty and acting—as though he was a senior psychiatrist.

Laurice was very grateful that he had preliminarily cured Oudick and also trusted his medical skills. She didn't hesitate when she heard that.

"He seems more timid and weaker than before. Before going to the Hunter's Guild today, he looked in the mirror and muttered to himself for a while before mustering his courage."

Dr. Shang Jianyao nodded. "This is a kind of post-traumatic stress disorder. To put it simply, the tragic outcome of resisting the nightmare left a psychological trauma in him. He's no longer as confident as before, and he's prone to being afraid of taking certain risks. It's easy for him to appear weak in front of the strong. This requires long-term therapy, but it's not a big problem. There's no need to worry too much."

"I understand." Laurice heaved a sigh of relief. "It's no wonder he agreed to my insistent request that he stay at home and not meet the parishioners for the past two days. That would've been impossible in the past. Yes, apart from being very persistent when it comes to cleaning and object placement, he chooses to listen to me about everything else."

Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao asked a few more questions before finally confirming that Oudick didn't have any other abnormalities.

Worried that something would happen to Bai Chen, Long Yuehong, and Genava, they didn't wait for Oudick to return. They took the initiative to bid farewell, went down to the first floor, and got back into the rented car.

In order not to implicate Oudick and his family, they drove the car into a few empty alleys around them. They then made several turns before embarking on the correct path back to the Green Olive Zone.

After more citizens joined the army, First City became increasingly quiet during the day. Many secluded non-store places would typically take up to 20 minutes to see people passing by them.

In the passenger seat, Jiang Baimian summarized the gains from their visit. "From the looks of it, Oudick has four additional abnormalities: mania, symmetry OCD, feeling timid and weak, as well as delirium."

"How tragic..." The benevolent Zen Master Redemption sighed sincerely.

Anyone with just one of the stated problems would have their normal lives affected; Oudick had obtained four at once.

Before Zen Master Redemption could finish his sentence, the Shang Jianyao that abhorred evil added, "Therefore, we can't just let this matter go!"

The Shang Jianyao that valued relationships said, "If we can resolve the nightmare's minion and find clues to deal with it, it might help Oudick recover."

As the Shang Jianyaos spoke one after another, Jiang Baimian found it difficult to interject.

After the echoing voices in the car calmed down, she exhaled and said, "Will there be so many problems if one goes crazy because of a nightmare?"

From what she knew, there should only be delirium or mania.

Although symmetry OCD could be considered a mental illness once the severity reached a certain extent, it often wasn't associated with madness.

Being timid and weak couldn't even be considered a mental illness.

Furthermore, there was no necessary connection between the four abnormalities. In the field of mental disorders, only mania and delirium often appeared together.

Jiang Baimian preliminarily suspected that being timid and weak was indeed as Shang Jianyao had said—it was a psychological trauma left behind when Oudick met the nightmare.

At this moment, Shang Jianyao had already calmed down. “From the looks of it, Little White's guess was right. One big eye and one small eye were things Oudick saw in the nightmare. ‘You're not a good person; I'll help you dig them all out’ is something Oudick added after he contracted symmetry OCD.”

Upon hearing these two sentences, Jiang Baimian muttered to herself, “Appear...”

She fell silent for a moment before suddenly turning to look at Shang Jianyao. “Why can't it be an infection? Before we set off to visit Oudick and Laurice, didn't we guess that the additional abnormalities on Oudick might come from him mimicking what he sensed back then or that it was a mark left behind after he was infected by madness?”

Shang Jianyao slowed down the car and removed his right hand from the steering wheel to stroke his chin. “If it's an infection or imitation, there must be a source or reference target.”

“A person on the left, a person on the right, with a small picture frame in the middle. This itself is very symmetrical; I said so back then.” Jiang Baimian's thoughts turned active, and her expression was staid.

Shang Jianyao thought for a moment and said, “You mean that the photo frame or the other person has symmetry OCD? Through the nightmare, they ‘infected’ Oudick with this problem?”

“Maybe...” Jiang Baimian replied with uncertainty before suddenly sitting up straight. “If that's the case, the reason the target we're tracking keeps wearing sunglasses isn't that he's afraid of the light

or wants to hide his appearance but that his companion has symmetry OCD. If he doesn't do so, it will definitely trigger internal strife! When he asked for directions at night, his companion was hiding around him!"

...

Green Olive Zone.

Genava sat in the room. While paying attention to the need to switch high-performance batteries that needed charging, he would use all the cameras as his 'eyes' to carry out real-time monitoring since he had nothing to do.

Diagonally across the corridor of the rented apartment, in a room near the stairwell, Bai Chen and Long Yuehong were quietly lurking.

Nobody lived here; there was obvious dust on the tables and chairs. Bai Chen and Long Yuehong had previously unlocked the door and hid in the quiet corridor when nobody passed by.

Here, they could see the situation around the stairwell through the keyhole and peephole. With the help of the hidden cameras, they could observe if there was anything abnormal in Genava's rented apartment.

Long Yuehong repeated the few situations he had previously listed in his mind to prevent himself from forgetting the corresponding plans.

Bai Chen consoled Long Yuehong as she looked out through the peephole. "There's no need to be too nervous. The more nervous you are, the easier it is for you to forget the details and make mistakes that you shouldn't have made."

That's right. I can't be nervous. I have to make Little White think that I'm steady and reliable...? Long Yuehong took a deep breath and slowly exhaled to calm himself.

After an unknown period of time, Bai Chen suddenly suppressed her voice and said, "Someone's coming up."

Long Yuehong subconsciously leaned against the door.

Bai Chen looked back at him and lowered her voice. “Watch using the computer. We shouldn’t be squeezed at the door together. That will appear very suspicious to the Awakened.”

“Alright...” Long Yuehong quietly retreated to the table he had cleared.

Bai Chen’s laptop was constantly switched on. With Genova as a temporary base station as a signal source, it displayed the scene captured by the surveillance cameras at the door.

Long Yuehong looked at the screen and saw a man in ordinary clothes enter the building and turn right.

It was noon, and many people not far from their workplaces would choose to return home for lunch. Thus, it wasn’t surprising that someone would appear.

However, the man stopped at the rented apartment where Genova was. He reached out and slammed the door, his voice so loud that it reached Bai Chen and Long Yuehong. “Open up! I’m back!”

He slammed the door for a few seconds before attempting to remove the key at his waist.

At this moment, a human’s voice deliberately mimicked by Genova sounded from behind the door. “Who are you?”

“Who are you?” The man was surprised. He then looked around and slapped his forehead. “F*ck! I went to the wrong floor!”

He didn’t apologize. He just turned around and quickly walked to the stairwell as if he wanted to escape this embarrassing scene.

This seemed to be a coincidence.

However, Bai Chen didn’t let her guard down and muttered to herself, “His memories were affected?”

“If that’s the case...” Long Yuehong habitually echoed. He was then shocked. “As neighbors on the same floor as the target, could our memories be secretly flipped?”

Chapter 636: Phone Call

In the rented car, Shang Jianyao became excited when he heard Jiang Baimian’s deduction. “Which domain would the price of symmetry OCD come under?”

Jiang Baimian thought for a moment and said, “As the name implies, I guess it’s June’s Golden Scale. This Kalendaria emphasizes balance, and this is often reflected in symmetry. The corresponding price of symmetry OCD is very reasonable.”

“June’s Golden Scale mainly affects the body, including the ability to induce paralysis. Oh right, some Awakened in this domain can also block premonitions, hide their bodies, and carry out stealth assassinations.” Shang Jianyao recalled the information provided by the company and the information his team had gathered elsewhere.

Jiang Baimian’s heart palpitated. “The sunglasses man’s companion—the person on the other side of the photo frame—might very well have the ability to hide his body and block premonitions. Therefore, the sunglasses man may seem to be moving alone, but there’s actually another person secretly following him! This is also the reason why he doesn’t dare to take off his sunglasses even at night.”

If his companion with symmetry OCD saw his eyes, he might very well be erased.

Shang Jianyao nodded before curling his lips honestly. “That’s unlikely. An Awakened with symmetry OCD at the Mind Corridor level can’t move normally. There are asymmetrical things everywhere in the Ashlands, and it’s even more so in the Green Olive Zone. If I were him, I would be angry when seeing this and have the urge to destroy it. I’ll end up blowing up everything wherever I go or die from anger.”

The houses in the Green Olive Zone were originally built very symmetrically. But over the years, many houses were built haphazardly. Some had encroached into the streets, and the electric wires were stretched like damaged spiderwebs. People with severe symmetry OCD would probably suffer an immediate brain hemorrhage.

In such discussions, Jiang Baimian never cared about being right and only cared about facts. She nodded slightly and said, “Indeed.”

She then raised a new idea. “Could a certain method be used to reduce the severity of symmetry OCD or control his urge to destroy?”

“That’s possible, but this can at most be considered a temporary strategy. It can’t be maintained for long. You should know very well that relying on external forces to reduce the influence of the price is often counterproductive. Even if it’s relatively simple and effective, it will take a long time for one to adapt to its effects,” Shang Jianyao said truthfully.

I don’t know...? Jiang Baimian tried her best to forget how she had gotten lost in the past. She looked out the window beside her and said, “You mean that the one with symmetry OCD usually doesn’t come out and lives in a small world that’s sufficiently symmetrical? That person will only suppress their price and take action only at critical moments or when moving is required?”

“I think so,” Zen Master Redemption replied calmly.

“Since that person isn’t hiding by the target’s side, why does he still wear sunglasses at night? Could my previous guess be wrong? Does he really fear the light?” Jiang Baimian followed her train of thought.

After a brief pause, her eyes lit up without Shang Jianyao needing to answer. “Timid and weak—yes, timid and weak! The price the man in the sunglasses paid might very well be cowardice and weakness!”

This was one of the additional abnormalities reflected in Oudick.

Shang Jianyao—who was in charge of driving—stroked his chin with one hand. “He doesn’t take off his sunglasses because his companion or the nightmare represented by the photo frame had once warned him. The timid and weak him doesn’t dare to violate this warning even if he’s out of his companion or the nightmare’s line of sight?”

This was timidity at the Mind Corridor level.

Jiang Baimian suddenly became excited.

“Yes! Do you still remember that sentence? One eye is big, and the other is small. You’re not a good person. I’ll help you dig them all out! This might be a warning from his companion or the nightmare represented by the photo frame. It appeared in a dream in a certain way, not something Oudick added himself!”

This made sense!

Shang Jianyao was also excited. “Cowardice and weakness infected the man in sunglasses; the symmetry OCD comes from his companion or the nightmare. The mania and delirium stem from the target’s companion or the nightmare represented by a photo frame. The rest are mental disorders that arise from shock or trauma?”

Wait, why am I as excited as this fellow...?Jiang Baimian tried her best to control her emotions and continued, “Cowards are often careful; they will always consider all kinds of dangers. Therefore, the man in the sunglasses has yet to track us. It’s not that he can’t do it but that he has too many concerns and too many possible accidents that he needs to eliminate. He doesn’t have the courage to make bold attempts in the block where Xiaochong and Teacher Du Heng once appeared. Instead, he chose a more roundabout and more time-wasting method?”

This matched the current situation and was one of the steps of bold hypotheses and careful verification.

Shang Jianyao touched the newly bought phone in his pocket that was connected to First City’s communications network and said with interest, “Then, which domain’s price is cowardice and weakness?”

Jiang Baimian frowned slightly. “This isn’t as obvious as symmetry OCD...”

...

In the room where Long Yuehong and Bai Chen hid in the Green Olive Zone.

“As neighbors on the same floor as the target, could we already have our memories secretly flipped?” Long Yuehong asked in horror.

Bai Chen retracted her gaze from the peephole, turned around, and deliberated before saying, “It’s unlikely. According to the plan, we will try our best to distance ourselves from Old Ge’s room when we choose the area we secretly monitor to avoid the danger of the target secretly flipping through our memories. We observe the area through the cameras installed in the nearby hidden spots.

“We are at the other end of the corridor, and it’s not directly opposite the stairwell. There’s a certain degree of dislocation, so it’s unlikely that we will see strangers coming and going. The probability of our memories being flipped is very low. Unless the target is very careful and would rather be safe than sorry, they probably won’t waste their time on us.”

If it weren’t for the fact that it was very easy for others to see them if they headed to another floor or left this apartment, thereby leaving behind the corresponding clues, Bai Chen definitely would’ve chosen to hide further away.

Long Yuehong was almost convinced, but considering that Bai Chen was also here, it wouldn’t be excessive to guard against any accidents. Thus, he changed his mind. “I think we should consider the possibility that the other party is very careful. Think about it—the real Father and his pile of fake Fathers actually have similar inclinations. It’s very normal for Awakened like them who play with memories to do similar things.”

Bai Chen slowly nodded. “Then, activate the contingency plan. We can’t have our memories unknowingly modified.”

She had a deep impression of the real Father tampering with her memories.

Long Yuehong jumped in fright and quickly reached into his pocket to take out a stack of paper.

In order to deal with the situation that the target might be a Mind Corridor-level Awakened in the Last Man domain, they wrote down some key memories in a simplified manner, just like how they had previously guarded against the real Father. It made it convenient for them to compare their memories often to see if their memories had been secretly modified, unknowingly becoming strangers to themselves.

As Long Yuehong flipped through the notes, Bai Chen walked to her laptop.

After some work, she pulled up some software, which was written by Geneva. It was originally software used by the Old World to dial cell phones and landlines via the Internet.

Bai Chen inputted a number and chose to connect.

This was naturally not the mysterious number stored in the dangerous phone of Oray's granddaughter, Avia. The outcome would be unpredictable once the call was made.

It wasn't the time to risk it yet.

Bai Chen inputted the number of Shang Jianyao's new phone.

Since they had a few plans that assumed a relatively stronger enemy, the Old Task Force definitely wouldn't forget to make some preparations before splitting up. For this reason, Shang Jianyao specially implanted the idea of 'buying a phone on his behalf and getting it connected' into a passerby. He also gave the passerby enough money.

After receiving the phone and confirming that the number was valid, he and Jiang Baimian left and went to the Red Wolf Zone to visit Oudick and his family.

As for the network Bai Chen was using, the signal came from Genava, who had long hacked into the nearby phone base station.

Ring... Ring... Ring...

On the computer screen, the software interface displayed the word 'Connecting.'

After a few seconds, the word became 'Connected.'

Shang Jianyao's voice sounded. "Hello, this is the Zen and Motorcycle Repair Radio Station. I'm the radio host, Zen Master Redemption."

"Be serious!" Jiang Baimian's voice sounded beside him, accompanied by a smack.

Shang Jianyao's voice immediately became serious. "You discovered something abnormal?"

“Yes.” Bai Chen quickly recounted the matter of someone walking to the wrong floor and her and Long Yuehong’s guess.

On the other end of the line, Jiang Baimian quickly ordered, “Stop the car by the roadside and change seats. Focus on maintaining the call.”

“Alright.” Shang Jianyao didn’t waste any time.

He soon said to Bai Chen and Long Yuehong, “Switch it to a video call.”

Bai Chen quickly clicked a few times and completed the corresponding actions.

She and Long Yuehong then saw Shang Jianyao’s face.

Shang Jianyao leaned back in the passenger seat and smiled.. “Hide this window now and pretend that nothing happened.”

Chapter 637: Shang Jianyao’s Solution

Long Yuehong was especially confused by Shang Jianyao’s solution and asked in confusion, “Your ability seems to only work when a conversation is completed. If we hide the window, you won’t be able to see or sense anything. How can you resist the hidden enemy?”

Furthermore, among Shang Jianyao’s abilities, only Thought Guidance could be enhanced with electromagnetic signals. Literary Hipster and Limbs Immobility didn’t seem to work yet.

Shang Jianyao laughed. “I can also interfere with electromagnetism.”

As he spoke, the unlit lights in the room lit up with a pale glow. Amidst the static, Shang Jianyao’s figure in the video window warped.

All of this quickly subsided.

Shang Jianyao leaned back in his chair in a relaxed posture and smiled. “You don’t have to worry about how it’s exactly done. I have an ace up my sleeve.”

Isn't that what Team Leader likes to say?? Just as this thought flashed through Long Yuehong's mind, he saw Shang Jianyao turn his head and look to the side.

"Big White, you're going in the wrong direction!"

With the sound of static, Shang Jianyao's figure in the video window seemed to distort to a certain extent.

Bai Chen and Long Yuehong looked at each other and chose to believe Shang Jianyao. After all, Jiang Baimian was beside him.

"Alright." Bai Chen nodded and hid the video call window. This way, only the surveillance cameras and some icons remained on the computer screen.

"We have to be careful ourselves." Bai Chen turned her body and reminded Long Yuehong, "Read the records every five minutes and examine our memories to prevent ourselves from not realizing that the key memories have been modified."

Long Yuehong nodded hard. "Yes, yes!"

Before long, the sun was covered by drifting clouds, and the light dimmed significantly.

An intangible 'shadow' entered the room and split into two before burrowing into Bai Chen and Long Yuehong's heads. In their mind worlds and subconscious, scenes from the past appeared again.

Suddenly, the 'shadow' noticed the conversation between the two of them and Shang Jianyao. This was the latest memory, something the shadow paid the most attention to.

Hide the chat window and pretend that nothing happened? In a situation where one can use electromagnetic signals to enhance their range of influence, one can clearly only rely on conversation to use their abilities, but he deliberately hid the window... I have an ace up my sleeve?? Questions flashed through the shadow's mind as if he smelled danger.

He suspected that the other party had other methods to monitor his companions' memories or sense if anyone was exerting influence in the room. If he continued reading the memories and making modifications, it would be equivalent to walking into a trap!

No! I can't take the risk! The shadow evacuated Bai Chen and Long Yuehong's heads without hesitation. It was as if the 'monster' in the distance had suddenly retracted two invisible tentacles that had stabbed into the target's head.

The 'tentacles' retracted into a rented apartment dozens of meters away.

They belonged to a man wearing sunglasses and a black trench coat with golden-brown hair that was parted in the middle.

To read other people's memories on a large scale and make the corresponding modifications, he had to narrow the distance between himself and the target to the current level.

The man didn't dare to stay at the 'scene.' He quickly walked out of the room and left.

During this process, he looked back and muttered to himself, "I'll have to get Lan to take action."

...

Not long after noon, Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao returned to the Green Olive Zone. They didn't immediately go to Geneva and instead entered the room where Bai Chen and Long Yuehong were hiding.

"How was it? Did you feel as though your memories were modified?" Jiang Baimian asked in concern.

Bai Chen shook her head. "No."

As she spoke, she took out the stack of notes on her. "At the very least, these related matters have never been modified. My understanding of my companions remains normal."

“I’ll help you see if there are any missing pieces of paper.” Jiang Baimian reached out to take the stack of paper and compared it to the content stored in her auxiliary chip. This was to prevent the enemy from destroying the corresponding notes after altering Bai Chen’s memories.

It wouldn’t be excessive to be careful when facing a Mind Corridor-level Awakened suspected to be in the Last Man domain. Therefore, Jiang Baimian designed multiple verifications.

Meanwhile, Shang Jianyao also took out his laptop from his tactical backpack and checked the key memories Long Yuehong had written down.

He suddenly waved at Long Yuehong.

“What for?” Long Yuehong approached cautiously.

Shang Jianyao suppressed his voice and said, “There’s a problem.”

“What?” Long Yuehong was alarmed. But considering how Shang Jianyao liked to play pranks, he felt that he should calm down.

He bent down and cast his gaze at Shang Jianyao’s laptop screen.

Shang Jianyao came close to his ear and whispered, “You are lacking some key content. Not only is the paper slip missing, but so is the backup on my computer.”

“No way?” Long Yuehong was shocked and confused. “This doesn’t make sense! Could it be that everyone was affected before Hey and Team Leader left?”

Otherwise, there wouldn’t be a missing copy on Shang Jianyao’s computer.

Shang Jianyao sincerely said, “We lack your opinion and feelings for Little White...”

“Stop!” Long Yuehong’s face suddenly flushed red. “I only wrote something simple; it’s not that detailed. Yes, nothing is missing.”

“Is that so?” Shang Jianyao glanced at him suspiciously. “Do you still remember that you like Little White?”

Long Yuehong’s mind buzzed as he felt his face heat up, and smoke seemed to be emitting from his head. The next second, he quickly turned his head and looked at Bai Chen and Jiang Baimian.

He then realized that the two ladies didn’t hear him because Shang Jianyao had kept his voice very low the entire time, almost to a whisper. Therefore, they didn’t pay attention to the commotion.

Long Yuehong heaved a sigh of relief and prepared to glare angrily at Shang Jianyao. But he was afraid that the other party would take the opportunity to expose the matter, so he could only change his attitude and beg softly, “D-don’t say anything.”

“Got... it...” Shang Jianyao opened his mouth and replied very softly, but he enunciated the words very clearly. “I’m relieved that you didn’t forget.”

He looked gratified.

Is that some kind thought of yours??Long Yuehong couldn’t tell if it was the Shang Jianyao that liked to joke, the absolutely honest one, or the one who valued relationships.

After a series of confirmations, Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao confirmed that Long Yuehong and Bai Chen’s memories hadn’t been tampered with.

As for whether they had been flipped through, there were no clues.

“Could it be that the target isn’t a Mind Corridor-level Awakened in the Last Man domain and can’t flip through the memories of others to make the corresponding modifications? Did the person who walked to the wrong floor really walk to the wrong floor?” Long Yuehong asked in confusion.

Bai Chen was still relatively persistent. “It shouldn’t be that coincidental.”

Jiang Baimian nodded. “I’m actually more inclined to believe that the target is really a Mind Corridor-level Awakened in the Last Man domain.”

“Why?” Long Yuehong blurted out a question. He then looked at Shang Jianyao. “Could it be that our memories weren’t modified and that your solution played a role?”

“From the looks of it.” Shang Jianyao nodded in relief.

“What’s your solution?” Long Yuehong was curious.

Shang Jianyao laughed. “An empty fort strategy.”

“...” Long Yuehong’s mouth fell open, and he almost forgot to close it.

“In other words, the hidden chat window was actually meaningless?” Bai Chen was a little stunned.

Shang Jianyao smiled brightly. “It has meaning.”

He immediately added, “It scared him!”

Upon seeing the confused Bai Chen and Long Yuehong, Jiang Baimian helped explain. “Shang Jianyao only pretended that he had a solution. This might not work for others, but it’s a targeted solution for that person. A timid and weak person is definitely suspicious and careful. Upon flipping to Shang Jianyao’s words, there’s a more than 99% chance of him suspecting that he has a solution and had set up a trap. He would rather be safe than sorry without advancing rashly.”

Bai Chen thought for a moment and asked, “Timid and weak?”

Jiang Baimian tersely acknowledged her words and recounted her and Shang Jianyao’s gains and speculations at Oudick’s house.

She then smiled and said, “Doesn’t the meaning of Last Man in the Old World include lowly, muddle-headed, mediocre, and slave-like? Among these words, lowly and slave-like can point to cowardice and weakness to a certain extent. Therefore, the price is that the timid and weak one is most likely in the Last Man domain.

“Oudick—who has been infected with this negative influence—looks irritable and fierce, but he doesn’t dare to use his abilities on others. It’s not that he doesn’t want to, but he doesn’t dare!”

This resolved Jiang Baimian's first puzzlement when she heard about Oudick's condition in the mental hospital.

Long Yuehong ran through the entire matter and nodded slightly. "This does string everything together, giving them a reasonable explanation."

Jiang Baimian then looked out the window. "We have to move as soon as possible and consider setting up traps."

"Why?" Long Yuehong subconsciously asked.

"What will a timid and weak person do when they discover a problem with the target?" Shang Jianyao asked with a smile.

Long Yuehong was just about to speak when Bai Chen replied, "Find helpers and companions!"

...

In an old building.

The man in sunglasses pushed open a door.

Before he could observe the situation in the room, he heard his companion's cold voice. "Go straighten your hair—it's not symmetrical enough. You should know very well that I don't ask for much precision. If you can't do it, I don't mind making you bald."

As the man in sunglasses walked to the full-body mirror on his left, he said, "Target spotted."

Behind him was a similar full-body mirror.

In the room, a female voice sounded again in an empty area. "I'll inform Doctor now."

"Oh?" The man in the sunglasses asked in confusion.

His companion replied erratically, “Even a lion uses its full strength when hunting a rabbit.”

Chapter 638: Assignment

The man in sunglasses combed his short, golden-brown hair and finally obtained permission to enter the room.

As he walked, he grumbled, “Lan, in the entire Ashlands, who will meticulously tidy their hair neatly like me? Uh, except you. You actually still find this asymmetrical?”

The female voice sounded again, no longer as cold. “Welf, remember not to take off your sunglasses. Otherwise, I’ll definitely dig them out. It’s unbelievable that the effects of genetic enhancement are so bad on you. You’re simply a defective product.”

As she spoke, her figure appeared in the living room. She wore a white shirt, a blue cowboy coat, the same pair of pants, and a wide felt hat.

All the details were symmetrical. This included her oval face, willowy eyebrows, long black hair, and bright eyes.

Normally speaking, it was impossible for a human’s face or body to be perfectly symmetrical. There would always be a slight flaw, but not for Xu Lan. She was like the work of a master artist. She could be folded along the middle and overlap perfectly, no more or less.

This made her appear less natural and show traces of artificial modification.

Welf—who had been labeled defective—was angry, but he didn’t dare to show it. He could only mutter, “Lan, I actually don’t quite understand why you keep adjusting your body slightly. After all, you can’t see yourself and won’t be controlled by your damn OCD.”

“Do you want me to never look in the mirror? How cruel is that for a lady?” Even though Xu Lan was smiling, she was well-trained. The corners of her mouth curled up, perfectly symmetrical.

Welf didn't dare retort and said, "But there's no need to spend so much time adjusting your clothes and hairstyle. It will definitely be asymmetrical if you head out for a walk or from a single fight."

Xu Lan scoffed. "Foolish logic. You shit out everything you eat every day, so you don't have to eat?"

As she spoke, she cast her gaze at the glass coffee table not far away.

On each side of the coffee table were an identical cup and the same red jewelry box that mirrored the other side. In the middle was a tablet computer propped up by a support frame.

A dark-red line hung down from the tablet computer's camera, perfectly splitting the entire camera.

Welf felt indignant and decided not to partner with this woman with that cursed OCD for the next mission.

Amidst the silent curse, he thought of his other colleagues; each of them was truly despicable beyond words.

A timid and weak person would always make the people around him want to bully him.

Welf composed himself and watched Xu Lan light up the screen and unlock it. The lady that required absolute symmetry then opened a telegram simulation software and inputted a string of numbers.

While the tablet computer's corresponding icons indicated that there was no network connection, Xu Lan directly chose 'Connect.'

The LCD screen suddenly darkened as if it had instantly lost all its power.

Before long, the scene lit up again, and a blurry figure appeared.

The figure stood in front of a floor-to-ceiling window. The lights outside were bright as if the galaxy had touched ground.

Further away, a tall tower loomed into the clouds.

“Have you discovered the target?” Amidst the static, a figure asked.

Xu Lan lowered her head and replied rather respectfully, “Yes, Doctor.”

On the one hand, she did this to express her respect and fear. On the other hand, she didn’t want to see the scene that made her blood boil—Doctor wasn’t standing in the middle of the floor-to-ceiling window but a little to the left!

Welf didn’t lower his head and said with the same respectful attitude, “I’ve already found the target’s hiding spot, but they seem to have noticed this.”

“So you retreated?” The blurry figure clearly knew Welf’s style.

His tone became serious. “Lan, immediately bring this tablet computer and go to the target’s hiding spot with Welf. We have to lock onto them!”

“Yes, Doctor!” Xu Lan replied without hesitation.

Amidst the static, she picked up a red jewelry box on the coffee table and snapped it open. Inside was an ancient golden ring.

...

Shang Jianyao led Jiang Baimian, Long Yuehong, and Bai Chen back to Geneva’s rented apartment.

“Did you discover anything?” Jiang Baimian spoke a little faster than normal.

Geneva moved his metal neck from side to side. “No, everything was normal there.”

Jiang Baimian nodded slightly and said, “It seems like it was indeed a trap over there. The information we obtained was from modified memories.”

Without waiting for Genova's response, she directly ordered, "The target and his companions have locked onto us. We need to evacuate immediately. We'll talk about the details in the car."

The Old Task Force quickly retrieved some of the cameras and got in their jeep and the rented car.

Genava was following Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao this time. He heard them talk about their gains at Oudick's house, their corresponding guesses, and Bai Chen and Long Yuehong's encounter.

"One is an Awakened in the Last Man domain, and the price makes him timid and weak. His ability allows him to read memories and modify memories on a large scale. The other is an Awakened in the Golden Scale domain. The price is symmetry OCD with temporarily unknown abilities... Your inference can indeed explain all the current problems." As the red glow in Genova's eyes flickered many times, he injected all the details into a corresponding model and did a complete analysis. "Our previous whereabouts have been exposed. It's best to move while we are unaware when the enemy will make a comeback or attack."

When facing such a dangerous enemy, they had to seize the initiative.

Jiang Baimian looked at the alley where the car had turned into and smiled. "Therefore, we have to circle around more deserted streets."

This was to avoid the tracking done by flipping through memories.

The red light in Genova's eyes flickered a few times. "The exits on these streets and alleys are actually relatively fixed, and there are only a few. If the other party doesn't mind expanding their range and scans every human near every exit, they will definitely be able to track us. It's best if we disguise ourselves to a certain extent in a deserted area. We can then leave when we sense no consciousness outside, leaving no witnesses in the greater vicinity. Unfortunately, Hey's Thought Guidance doesn't involve memories. It only interferes with logical abilities and thoughts."

From Genova's point of view, the current plan could only delay the enemy for a while and buy more time for the team to prepare.

Jiang Baimian turned her head to glance at Shang Jianyao and smiled. "There's no need to go through so much trouble."

The red light in Genova's eyes flickered again, but he didn't say anything else.

After circling from the Green Olive Zone to the Red Wolf Zone, the Old Task Force circled back to the Green Olive Zone.

Shang Jianyao followed Jiang Baimian's instructions and parked the car in front of an ordinary apartment building that was only five stories tall.

This was the True Self Church's stronghold!

Long Yuehong—who was in the jeep behind—widened his eyes in confusion.

At this moment, Jiang Baimian pushed open the door and alighted. She muttered to herself, "Let's rent a room here tonight."

Ah... As expected of you...? Long Yuehong roughly understood Jiang Baimian's intentions.

Very few people knew of the True Self Church's stronghold, which was disguised as an apartment available for rent. Therefore, it was reasonable to rent an apartment here.

When the time came, the True Self Church would definitely interfere, having seen hope, once the Old Task Force gained the upper hand.

Of course, the premise was that the True Self Church would tacitly agree to the Old Task Force's actions and allow them to rent a room here.

Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao walked to the apartment block first. As expected, they were stopped by the True Self Church members disguised as guards.

"We want to rent a room." Jiang Baimian was very direct.

The guard was stunned for a moment before saying, "Wait here. I'll ask the apartment owner."

He turned around and hurriedly searched for someone who could call the shots.

About seven to eight minutes later, he returned to the door and expressionlessly said to the Old Task Force members, "Please come in. A room on the top floor happened to be vacated recently."

He didn't mention how much the rent was.

Jiang Baimian smiled beautifully. "Thank you."

The Old Task Force found a place to park their vehicles.

After entering the room on the top floor, Shang Jianyao swung his tactical backpack in front of him. Following this, he unzipped his pants and took out the Life Angel necklace.

For this, he had to stand on one foot.

Shang Jianyao then threw the silver necklace to Jiang Baimian.

"Oh?" As Jiang Baimian stretched out her left hand to catch it, her right arm hung limply.

This was an item that the company had indicated could be used to resist danger. She felt that it could only be of greatest use in the hands of the team's strongest person.

Shang Jianyao smiled at her. "I'm afraid that the target and his companions will use the nightmare's power. With this necklace, you can resist such risks to a certain extent."

The logic is right, but...? Jiang Baimian asked, "What about you?"

Shang Jianyao didn't answer immediately and took out the Six Senses Beads from his tactical backpack.

He threw it to Long Yuehong. "Hold it."

"It's not like I can use it." Long Yuehong's eyes reddened when he caught it.

As an ordinary person, he could only suffer negative effects.

“It has fused with some strange auras from Buddhism’s Holy Lands, so it has a chance of helping you reduce the nightmare’s influence. Therefore, you have to wear it all the time. You can’t take it off even when resting,” Shang Jianyao said very seriously.

With that said, he—who had switched to an unknown personality—smiled and said, “When the time comes, your dream will be all over the place. Even the nightmare might not be able to bear to look at it.”

“Alright...” Long Yuehong agreed hesitantly.

At this moment, the honest Genova worriedly said, “Will this cause ischemic priapism?”

The atmosphere in the room immediately became a little embarrassing.

Fortunately, Shang Jianyao wasn’t an ordinary person. He took out the small jade Buddha from his pocket with a normal expression and threw it to Bai Chen. “It also has its own uniqueness.”

Bai Chen thought for a moment before saying, “Why don’t I exchange items with Little Red? I’ve experienced that kind of suffering before. I can get used to it and can tolerate it.”

This time, she spoke frankly about her past encounter. There was no change in her expression.

“That works too.” Shang Jianyao readily agreed.

After Bai Chen and Long Yuehong exchanged their items, Jiang Baimian looked at Shang Jianyao in confusion and concern. “Now that you’ve shared all the special items with us, what about you?”

Shang Jianyao looked around and smiled. “I have Teacher Du Heng and Xiaochong’s help.”

He emphasized the word ‘Xiaochong.’

Jiang Baimian immediately understood what he meant—there was still Xiaochong’s aura in his Sea of Origins!

Chapter 639: ‘Memory’

Upon seeing Jiang Baimian remain silent, Shang Jianyao looked at Genova. “Old Ge, there’s one for you too.”

As he spoke, he took out the new phone he had bought and threw it to Genova.

Genava expressed his thoughts as he accurately caught it. “I don’t need it. I won’t be affected by the nightmare.”

“Every companion needs to be protected.” Shang Jianyao had a look of fairness.

The red glow in Genova’s eyes flickered for a moment, in agreement with the reason.

Shang Jianyao added, “Besides, this is our last hope.”

Jiang Baimian already understood what Shang Jianyao meant and helped him explain. “Old Ge, write a program and simulate the random code that we copied from Avia. Think of a way to get it into the phone. Once we are in an extremely dangerous situation and you sense it, don’t hesitate to call that number and see what will happen.”

The mysterious code copied from Avia involved a lot of secrets. It was evaluated by the former First City emperor, Oray, as abnormally terrifying and dangerous.

Normally, it couldn’t be entered into a phone—the corresponding symbols were missing. However, the Old Task Force had Genova. He could even code a brand-new phone operating system that allowed such a situation.

As a smart bot, it was clearly impossible for him to dream. This also meant that he wouldn’t be affected by the nightmare. He could observe the other four team members’ conditions as a bystander and pay attention to any abnormalities that happened to them.

When the time came, Genova could choose to push them awake, electrocute them, sound an alarm, or dial the mysterious number based on the severity of the situation.

Every time she encountered such a scene, Jiang Baimian always wanted to heap praises upon the smart bot.

Upon seeing that every member had been assigned special items, Long Yuehong deeply realized for the first time that his team had a very deep background.

Regardless of whether these items could be used by them, it was better than nothing!

Of course, Shang Jianyao was missing one item, but there was something special about his Sea of Origins.

“Alright, what we need to do now is wait patiently.” Jiang Baimian clapped her hands and signaled for everyone to find a seat.

Bai Chen pursed her lips and didn’t say a word as if she were enduring something. She only used her actions to show her compliance with her team leader’s orders.

Shang Jianyao lay on the tattered sofa first and smiled. “I have to make some preparations too.”

He then raised his right hand and massaged his temples.

...

In the Mind Corridor, Shang Jianyao appeared in his Room 131.

This time, he didn’t push open the door and leave. Instead, he turned around and entered the cramped room along the aisle.

On one of the walls of the small room was an LCD television. It was broadcasting a thinly-misted sea and indistinct islands.

This was Shang Jianyao's manifestation of the Sea of Origins.

Shang Jianyao stretched out his right hand and pressed it on the LCD screen.

His entire body turned illusory as he fused into it.

In the Sea of Origins.

Shang Jianyao's figure appeared in midair. He looked up and cast his gaze at the sizable rift above.

It was like a scar in this world, an incurable scar.

On the other side of the rift, a large number of glimmers flickered as countless shadows overlapped.

"Xiaochong! Xiaochong!" Shang Jianyao conjured a blue and white loudspeaker and shouted at the gap.

He shouted for three minutes, filled with passion and anticipation. Unfortunately, nobody bothered with him from the other end of the rift.

"The soundproofing is too good?" Shang Jianyao muttered to himself. He then split out the honest Shang Jianyao and the rash Shang Jianyao, allowing them to extend out from his back.

Just like that, Shang Jianyao obtained a pair of wings.

He flapped the honest Shang Jianyao and the rash Shang Jianyao as he flew toward the rift and reached its surface.

"Xiaochong! Xiaochong!" The Shang Jianyao that valued relationships and wore childhood clothes shouted at the dark rift.

His voice reached the other end, but it was like a rock sinking into the sea. It didn't cause so much as a stir, nor did it bring about any subsequent developments.

Shang Jianyao then changed his shouting. “Teacher Du Heng is here! Teacher Du Heng is here!”

The rift remained silent.

“This won’t work!” The rash Shang Jianyao immediately swapped positions with the Shang Jianyao that valued relationships.

He exerted strength with his hands, attempting to widen the gap before burrowing in to visit Xiaochong. “If Xiaochong doesn’t come to me, I’ll go to him!”

The next second, many selves hung from Shang Jianyao’s body. With all their might, the other seven Shang Jianyaos either hugged his thigh, dragged his arm, wrapped their arms around his waist, or gripped his head to stop this rash fellow.

Nobody knew the situation opposite them. Nobody knew what Xiaochong was like in the mind world!

Once the other party—who was suspected to be the King of the Heartless—showed his true side, the rash Shang Jianyao might directly become a Heartless and implicate the other nine for no reason.

“Awigh’ ... I... giv... up...” The rash Shang Jianyao—who had his mouth covered—pleaded.

The other Shang Jianyaos quickly fused with him, leaving only the two who took on the role as wings.

Looking at the widening gap, Shang Jianyao stroked his chin and muttered to himself, “Actually, we can make it bigger. This is my mind world, and it’s equivalent to my memory warehouse...”

After a fair and just vote by the Shang Jianyao Democratic Association, this motion was finally accepted.

The Shang Jianyaos worked together to double the gap’s size.

On the other side of the rift, countless overlapping shadows surged over and blocked the opening. The shimmering light transformed into rich darkness that seeped into Shang Jianyao's Sea of Origins, dyeing the sky around the rift as if it were covered in shadows.

Shang Jianyao flapped the honest Shang Jianyao and the rash Shang Jianyao as he retreated a distance away and observed the various changes in the rift.

Finally, the situation stabilized, and the darkness didn't spread any further.

Shang Jianyao shouted at the overlapping shadows stuck at the exit again. "Xiaochong! Xiaochong!"

Nobody replied, nor were there any anomalies.

After a moment of silence, Shang Jianyao sighed. "If I can figure out Xiaochong's situation, I can be bolder now."

With that said, he exhaled and said, "Unfortunately, there's no Destiny Connection. We can only use clumsy methods next and do it bit by bit."

Shang Jianyao cast his gaze at the shimmering illusory sea below and began recalling his interactions with Xiaochong.

If he had Destiny Connection, he could directly summon all the relevant memories, including those he couldn't remember. But now, he could only act like an ordinary person and recall them bit by bit to complete the 'stirring.'

As Shang Jianyao recalled, a faint glow flew up from the illusory sea and circled the rift.

It was filled with scenes related to Xiaochong.

When the light reached a certain intensity, Shang Jianyao clapped his hands and made them envelop the rift from all directions.

...

In the evening, the Green Olive Zone became noisy, crowded, and chaotic.

On the street dozens of meters away from the True Self Church's stronghold, an ordinary small truck stopped by the side of the road.

Welf sat in the driver's seat with 'nobody' beside him.

He looked at the tablet placed on the central console and slowly closed his eyes. Almost at the same time, his consciousness seemed to transform into an invisible tentacle. It crossed a considerable distance and extended toward the room where the targets lived.

After entering his destination, Welf split the 'tentacles' into four according to the human consciousnesses he sensed and made them burrow into the different targets.

After confirming that one belonged to the other party's Mind Corridor-level Awakened, the 'tentacle' chose to hold back. The other three carefully flipped through the corresponding memories in an attempt to figure out what the enemy was relying on before he officially attacked.

Due to his previous 'experience,' he didn't plan on altering Jiang Baimian, Long Yuehong, and Bai Chen's memories either—which would make them 'betray' each other in the subsequent battle.

He had a nagging feeling that the man named Shang Jianyao wasn't scaring him but had a way to sense if his companion's memories had been modified.

The Life Angel necklace that Pangu Biology believes can resist danger?

The Six Senses Beads that have fused with the Buddhist Holy Land's abnormality?

A small jade Buddha taken out of a Buddhist Holy Land?

A very dangerous and terrifying mysterious number?

Xiaochong and Teacher Du Heng's help?

Welf quickly learned what the Old Task Force's contingency plans were. However, he couldn't understand what was going on with the so-called help from Xiaochong and Teacher Du Heng.

He had repeatedly confirmed that these two weren't in First City at the moment.

After hesitating for a moment, Welf—who felt that only the right answer lay with Shang Jianyao—activated the 'tentacle' that had been holding back. It searched the other party's brain bit by bit for related memories.

Is this his usual interaction with Xiaochong??Welf quickly discovered something.

As he flipped through the pages, a very cracked rift suddenly appeared in front of him.

Chapter 640: Close Shave

On the other side of the rift, countless shadows overlapped and appeared to be squeezing outward. They looked to penetrate the barrier and extend over as a large number of glimmers flickered in the rift, 'liberating' the darkness.

Just as Welf's intangible tentacle reached this instance in Shang Jianyao's memories, it froze as if a creature had encountered its nemesis, like a human having a gun pressed at their temple.

The intangible tentacle began to tremble. In the small truck dozens of meters away, Welf's face instantly turned pale, and his mouth produced a stutter.

A brief moment later, it crescented into an involuntary scream. "No! Spare me!"

He suddenly retracted the four 'tentacles' that extended out, wanting to escape the abnormally terrifying rift.

This reaction was so loud and intense that Welf couldn't conceal his actions of flipping through Shang Jianyao's memories.

In the True Self Church's stronghold, Shang Jianyao—who was eating oatmeal bread—stopped. He found his mind in a mess as if someone was screaming.

Once Awakened had such a substantial interaction with each other, their existence was no longer a secret mutually.

In the blink of an eye, Shang Jianyao captured the source of the anomaly—it was a human consciousness dozens of meters away!

As Shang Jianyao threw the oatmeal bread back on the table, he turned his head and shouted at Bai Chen, "Give me the Six Senses Beads!"

At the same time, he locked onto the human consciousness and used Literary Hipster on him. He preliminarily determined that this was the weak and timid Mind Corridor-level Awakened in the Last Man domain.

In the small truck, Welf—who had just calmed down and planned on starting the car to leave the block—suddenly became depressed. He felt very defeated and couldn't help but mutter to himself, "I am so sorry to be born..."

As Welf wallowed in self-misery, Bai Chen heard Shang Jianyao's shout.

She didn't hesitate and threw the Six Senses Beads out. After doing this, she heaved a long sigh of relief as if she had finally escaped some unpleasant experience.

The reason Shang Jianyao wanted the Six Senses Beads and not the Life Angel necklace was due to distance.

The Life Angel necklace could directly cause the target's heart to stop and strip them of their life, but it only had a range of 40 meters. The Six Senses Beads had a range of 120 meters.

The target Shang Jianyao had locked onto was between 60 to 80 meters away!

In other words, the Six Senses Beads' direct Consciousness Deprivation wasn't much worse than Cardiac Arrest. It could also break down an enemy's combat abilities in one blow. The only problem was that it could only be used thrice, but Shang Jianyao didn't care.

After catching the Six Senses Beads with his left hand, Shang Jianyao spun the string of prayer beads without hesitation.

Unlike in the past—where the user was required to say the corresponding ability's name for it to be effective—the current Six Senses Beads had fused with the abnormal aura of Iron Mountain City's Second Food Company, a Buddhist Holy Land. It could be used just by thinking and feeling it, making it much simpler.

At the critical moment, an unknown Shang Jianyao thought of a question. If we separately think of Visual Deprivation, Auditory Deprivation, Olfactory Deprivation, Touch Deprivation, Taste Deprivation, and Consciousness Deprivation in our minds and quickly feel the prayer beads, which ability will be activated in the end?

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao quickly suppressed the twitchy thought and prepared to voice Consciousness Deprivation from the bottom of his heart.

He suddenly felt the Six Senses Beads in his hand turn cold.

It no longer looked like a string of prayer beads made of wood. It looked more like a glazed glass bead forged in a crucible.

A green light surfaced in front of Shang Jianyao's eyes, and scenes appeared in the light.

In those scenes, Shang Jianyao successfully used the Six Senses Beads and deprived the target of his consciousness. He then took the Life Angel necklace from Jiang Baimian, flipped out the window, and headed straight for the enemy.

As the Awakened in the Last Man domain had been struck unconscious, there was a certain level of chaos. The Golden Scale Awakened—who was good at hiding—revealed herself.

Shang Jianyao—who had entered a 40-meter range—locked onto the woman and directly activated the Life Angel necklace's ability.

As expected, the target suffered a cardiac arrest and collapsed.

Shang Jianyao smiled, drew his pistol, and pulled the trigger at the two Awakened's goons.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The enemies lost their lives one after another.

These scenes shattered in the blink of an eye, condensing into a new scene.

In the scene, Shang Jianyao opened his eyes.

Around him, Jiang Baimian died from Cardiac Arrest. Long Yuehong was deprived of his consciousness and was shot to death. Bai Chen was shot several times and was already on her deathbed. The red glow in Genava's eyes froze as if he didn't sense anything.

This is...?The calm and rational Shang Jianyao raised his right hand and slapped himself hard.

Bam!

He felt a sharp pain in his face, and his head spun for a few seconds before returning to normal. At this moment, he realized that although he was holding the Six Senses Beads, the human consciousness he had locked onto wasn't the enemy dozens of meters away but Long Yuehong—who was inches away!

Jiang Baimian, Long Yuehong, and Bai Chen's eyes were half-closed and unfocused. At some point in time, they had pulled out the United 202 they carried with them and looked like they were prepared to aim at Shang Jianyao.

"Sleepwalking!" Shang Jianyao instantly understood the real reason for Ugo's death.

After the latter was affected by the nightmare, he entered a sleepwalking state and suffocated himself to death with a plastic bag!

On the other side, the red glow in Genava's eyes paused as if he were in another world. He didn't receive the abnormal electromagnetic signals around him.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Shang Jianyao ducked and dodged his three companions' shots.

The bullets struck the table, penetrated it, drilled into the ground, or ricocheted, almost injuring the people in the room.

Amidst the unsilenced gunshots, Jiang Baimian and the others snapped to their senses, their expressions a little blank.

Shang Jianyao couldn't be bothered to explain and could only shout, "Sleepwalking!"

As his voice echoed, he extended his consciousness dozens of meters out, attempting to lock onto the Mind Corridor-level Awakened in the Last Man domain again.

However, the other party had already moved elsewhere and concealed his consciousness again.

Sleepwalking??Jiang Baimian's eyes darted around slightly as she recalled Ugo's encounter and quickly understood what had happened.

They had unknowingly been affected by the nightmare and had fallen asleep. They then began sleepwalking and attacked each other under the corresponding dream's guidance!

If not for Shang Jianyao waking up in time, apart from Genova, probably none of the Old Task Force members would be complete.

What shocked Jiang Baimian the most was that she had clearly gotten the auxiliary chip to monitor her physical condition. Once it sensed that she was sleeping, it would jolt her awake with her biological prosthetic limb's high-voltage electric current. However, it didn't work this time.

Although her physical condition was still a little different from normal when sleepwalking, it was clearly different from sleeping. Therefore, the relatively simple auxiliary chip couldn't detect the difference.

This made Jiang Baimian wonder if it was necessary to get an advanced auxiliary chip from Mechanical Paradise to enhance the biological prosthetic limb's performance.

As these thoughts raced through her mind, she shouted in a deep voice, "Make yourself asymmetrical before monitoring the activity around each other!"

As she spoke, Jiang Baimian—who had her right arm 'paralyzed'—maintained her left-hand grip on the gun and aimed it ahead.

She was forcing out the enemy with symmetry OCD. Otherwise, the other party—who might be very good at hiding—could easily find an opportunity to complete the assassination as long as they had patience.

Jiang Baimian—who had never interacted with Awakened in this aspect—wasn't sure if her bioelectric signals would be blocked.

Long Yuehong rolled up his right sleeve, revealing a large patch of iron-black. To him, this allowed him to use the mechanical arm's various functions better.

In the eyes of patients with symmetry OCD, having a human arm on one side and a mechanical creation on the other was an unforgivable crime.

Bai Chen also rolled up her sleeves and secretly used the Merfolk biological prosthetic limb to release an intangible subsonic sound at the door and window.

On the one hand, she wanted to use the sound waves' feedback to find hidden enemies like a crude form of sonar. On the other hand, she hoped that the other party would unknowingly suffer subsonic damage when they sneaked in through the window or door.

After the gunshots, Genova returned to normal. As he used various methods to investigate his surroundings, he spoke in a slightly synthetic male voice. "They can also distort the electromagnetic signals in the environment with the help of the nightmare's power!"

This included light.

“How careful. I used all my strength from the beginning. Fortunately, the Six Senses Beads had a hidden characteristic that showed me a bad future.” Shang Jianyao stood up, held the prayer beads in one hand, and took out a white strap with the other.

He had yet to find the human consciousness he had previously locked onto. However, this didn't stop him from wrapping the left half of his head.

What they wanted was asymmetry!