

Ad Infinitum 761

Chapter 761: Good News and Bad News

On the 647th floor, Room 14.

Jiang Baimian—who had specially stayed behind to work overtime—sat up straight and cast her gaze at the door.

Bai Chen—who was also waiting for news in the office—sensed the commotion and also changed her sitting posture.

After a while, they heard footsteps.

Shang Jianyao and Long Yuehong quickly appeared at the door.

Jiang Baimian sensed the corridor and confirmed that nobody else was passing by before asking, “How was it?”

Shang Jianyao spread his arms slightly and smiled. “Good news and bad news. Which one do you want to hear first?”

There’s good news?? Long Yuehong—who was beside him—was the first to be confused.

After Mu Qingqing said that her father had died from a myocardial infarction five years ago, Shang Jianyao consoled her as if he could empathize. He then changed the topic and stopped talking about such matters.

After the Babymaker talisman was done, they directly went to the Rec Center to find an electronic device and completed the contribution point transaction. The entire process went by uneventfully.

Therefore, where did the good news come from?

“Let’s hear the good news first.” Bai Chen examined Shang Jianyao’s face for a few seconds but didn’t find any signs of ‘something serious’ or ‘something major.’

Jiang Baimian nodded in agreement.

Shang Jianyao maintained his smile and said, “The good news is that Little Red’s parents, grandparents, siblings, and uncles have nothing to do with strange religions. The talisman drawer, Mu Qingqing, is also fine.”

That’s right! This is indeed good news! Long Yuehong snapped back to reality from the shock of Mu Qingqing’s father dying of a myocardial infarction. As he came to a realization, he felt happy.

He found his original intention in dealing with this matter: It was to keep his family away from trouble!

Since the trouble itself didn’t exist, his goal had definitely been achieved.

“Yes, pretty good.” Jiang Baimian cast a look of congratulations at Long Yuehong.

Bai Chen didn’t hide her joy either.

“What about the bad news?” Jiang Baimian felt that the good news didn’t seem to contain any bad news.

Shang Jianyao’s expression turned serious. “Mu Qingqing’s father—the person who taught her how to draw those symbols—died from a myocardial infarction five years ago.”

“Myocardial infarction?” Jiang Baimian’s expression turned solemn.

Heart problems always reminded her of the Kalendaria, Arbiter of Fate. One of the organizations that worshiped the Arbiter of Fate was the Life Ritual parish.

They had once caused many cardiac arrests in Pangu Biology and killed many people. Furthermore, they seemed to be capable of directing the spread of the Heartless disease. This made Jiang Baimian

—who increasingly knew about the Heartless disease—suspect that this parish had a powerhouse at the New World level!

Bai Chen pursed her lips and said, “Could it be a simple accident?”

Myocardial infarctions happened every year, and it was somewhat different from cardiac arrests.

“That requires further investigation.” Long Yuehong didn’t dare to be careless. After all, Mu Qingqing lived on the same floor as his grandparents.

Shang Jianyao smiled. “Mu Qingqing’s father knows how to draw a real Babymaker talisman.”

“What do you mean by ‘real Babymaker talisman?’” Jiang Baimian asked in confusion.

Shang Jianyao recounted how Mu Qingqing wasn’t serious when she was learning talismans back then and could only make them up now. Finally, he said in pain, “This story tells us that one who misspends his youth will grieve in vain in old age!”

Jiang Baimian wanted to laugh, but she felt that she shouldn’t. “I was wondering why it was so simple and direct after I deconstructed the pattern.”

It turned out that it was only fabricated based on impression. It was limited by Mu Qingqing’s knowledge and imagination!

If this were handed to Shang Jianyao, he might be able to draw some creative and corruptive talisman with his knowledge of the Old World’s entertainment and train of thought.

Jiang Baimian then recalled the Blessings from all Kalendarium and wavered in her thoughts.

At this moment, Shang Jianyao took out the newly obtained talisman and sighed. “Unfortunately, this isn’t the real one.”

“And the real one will work?” Jiang Baimian asked in amusement.

She had also found many items related to the Old World's folklore over the years, but she didn't discover any that were truly magical. In comparison, things that involved the Kalendarium were more or less a little special.

"Who knows?" Shang Jianyao walked to the sofa and sat down. "Maybe it's because people of the same trade seldom agree. The Babymaker talisman is indeed effective; that's why Mu Qingqing's father was killed by the Life Ritual parish."

Long Yuehong didn't agree with this guess. "If it really worked, they wouldn't have waited until five years ago."

Mu Qingqing's ancestors were in this line of work, starting with her great-grandfather. It wasn't like her father had only started drawing talismans for people five years ago.

Shang Jianyao replied confidently, "Maybe the Life Ritual faith was introduced to the company five to six years ago."

"Yes, although the matter regarding the Life Ritual parish has been resolved, I have a nagging feeling that it hasn't really ended. There should still be many of them lurking in the company." Long Yuehong recalled the past.

Back then, a supervisor of the surveillance department pleaded guilty by committing suicide, severing all the clues. The Security Department's deputy minister, Xenny, was worried that the Old Task Force would subsequently suffer revenge, so she also specially arranged for them to go out on missions to avoid the most dangerous period.

After the Old Task Force returned, there were no further developments.

Of course, the higher-ups claimed that it had been resolved. As for how it was resolved, the Old Task Force had no way of knowing without the corresponding clearance.

Shang Jianyao scoffed at Long Yuehong. "The Awakened who wiped away a portion of my memories hasn't been captured yet. It definitely isn't over!"

Without waiting for Jiang Baimian and the others to join in the discussion, he continued, "Back when I was in the Life Ritual parish, they didn't give anything like the Babymaker talisman. They

only said during the sermon that a couple should have feelings for one another, have sufficient preparation, bodies and minds reconciled...

“Eh, I wonder if the Arbiter of Fate has the ability to help people get pregnant. When the time comes, just drawing a talisman and fusing one’s aura into it before carrying it around will lead to a side effect of pregnancy. Be it men or women, they will get pregnant regardless of their corresponding actions...”

“Stop, stop, stop!” Jiang Baimian stopped his wild imagination.

Long Yuehong and Bai Chen looked like they had been tainted.

Jiang Baimian exhaled and pulled the topic back on track. “I’ll go home later to investigate Mu Qingqing’s father’s death.”

Bai Chen frowned. “Will this be dangerous? After what happened last time, will the Life Ritual parish recruit a batch of believers to the Internet Surveillance Department?”

As someone who could only use the Internet in the office, she didn’t know which department was in charge of such matters.

“If the Life Ritual parish really has a New World powerhouse in the company, they can control electromagnetism and directly hack into the network.” Shang Jianyao revealed an expression that was usually used to threaten Long Yuehong. “Wu Meng can do it.”

Jiang Baimian replied in amusement, “The company still has a certain level of network security. Even if Wu Meng comes, he won’t be able to hack into it easily unless he has hacking knowledge and abilities. Besides, how can New World powerhouses stay in reality and monitor the company’s network all the time?”

With that said, Jiang Baimian nodded slightly. “However, we do need to pay attention. The Life Ritual parish used to control cameras, so they might be able to monitor the Internet now.”

She then laughed. “Don’t worry. The last time we investigated the Life Ritual parish, the relevant departments pulled out a list of people who had died from cardiac causes in the past decade and did a certain level of investigation. I later got a copy on my home computer using my connections.

“Although I’m not sure why they don’t think there’s anything wrong with Mu Qingqing’s father’s death, this doesn’t stop me from doing another check. Heh heh, I’ll disconnect my Internet when reading.”

“Be careful.” Bai Chen nodded.

Just as she said that, Shang Jianyao slapped his thigh. “I forgot something!”

“What?” Everyone became nervous, wondering if Shang Jianyao had previously discovered a more direct clue. However, they didn’t think in the direction of the Life Ritual parish.

Shang Jianyao sighed. “Didn’t Director Su get me to organize information on the newly explored rooms? I forgot.”

Impressive. You don’t even take a director’s words seriously...? Long Yuehong didn’t know whether to give Shang Jianyao a thumbs up or shun him.

“Then, organize it later.” Jiang Baimian was accustomed to Shang Jianyao’s jumpy train of thought.

Shang Jianyao nodded. “I’ll request the reward after submission to be the installation of a phone in my room.”

“Why do you want to install a phone?” Jiang Baimian asked in confusion.

Long Yuehong and Bai Chen were confused.

Shang Jianyao seriously answered Jiang Baimian’s question. “This way, you can call me when you are disconnected from the Internet to read the information. I’ll use my electromagnetic interference to help you guard against any accidents.”

You... came back to the topic?? Jiang Baimian was a little stunned.

Long Yuehong thought for a moment and said to Shang Jianyao, “I think the company might directly switch you to a room with a telephone.”

Shang Jianyao was important enough.

“No!” Shang Jianyao firmly rejected it. “We haven’t succeeded in saving all of humanity. How can we switch for a better room?”

The office fell silent.

After a few seconds, Jiang Baimian pinched her cheek. “Actually, there’s no need to go through so much trouble. We have a phone in our office; you can stay here until lights out.”

“That’s right!” Shang Jianyao had a ‘you’re really smart’ expression.

At this moment, Long Yuehong thought for a moment and said, “Why don’t we report it directly?”

Jiang Baimian exhaled silently. “There might be people from the Life Ritual parish hiding above. If we can’t ‘determine’ the clues in advance, it’s very likely that they will destroy them, just like the Surveillance Department’s PIC—who committed suicide previously.”

“Okay.” Long Yuehong and Bai Chen nodded.

Jiang Baimian then said, “Oh right, the rewards should be distributed tomorrow.”

Shang Jianyao, Long Yuehong, and Bai Chen’s eyes more or less lit up.

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Jiang Baimian returned home on the 349th floor, Zone C, Room 12. After greeting her parents, she slipped into the study.

She switched on the computer, entered the corresponding drive, and disconnected from the Internet.. After hesitating for a moment, she picked up the phone in the room and dialed a number

Ding ring ring!

The telephone in Room 14 on the 647th floor rang.

At this moment, Shang Jianyao was sitting on Jiang Baimian's high-back chair without any reservation. He fidgeted around or spun in the chair at random.

He reached out to pick up the receiver, brought it to his ear, and said eloquently, "Hello, this is the Security Department's Room 14 on the 647th floor. Exact operation teams are confidential. Is there anything?"

On the other end of the line, Jiang Baimian cursed in exasperation and amusement. "You're just making it obvious that you are hiding something!"

"That's right, that's right. You're right." Shang Jianyao readily agreed.

Jiang Baimian didn't waste her breath and restrained her expression. "Then, I'll get to work."

Due to the fact that phones could also be monitored, Jiang Baimian had repeatedly reminded Shang Jianyao not to chat or mention that they were investigating the death of Mu Qingqing's father when they discussed it face-to-face in the office. When he heard the word 'work,' he needed to provide help based on the original agreement.

"Alright." Shang Jianyao focused and spread his psyche. With the phone's structure and electromagnetic spread, he affected the environment around Jiang Baimian.

Of course, this influence was very weak; it was only effective if the nearby targets simultaneously heard Shang Jianyao's words. This was how Thought Guidance could be used in its state. On the other hand, Corny Person, Literary Hipster, and Limbs Immobility couldn't be used.

With this weak influence, Shang Jianyao could still sense human consciousness up to a certain range. If anything happened to Jiang Baimian, he could provide help immediately.

After an intense discussion by the Shang Jianyao Democratic Association, they had already thought of a way to help: It was to beg for mercy loudly and sincerely on Jiang Baimian's behalf.

"I was wrong. I won't do it again. Spare me!"

If it were anyone else, such an apology would definitely be useless and would instead waste the precious time they had to save Jiang Baimian. However, Shang Jianyao was different. Under Thought Guidance, the enemy would sincerely accept the apology and believe that they would never dare to do so again. The other party would believe that they had accomplished the same silencing effect and not pursue the matter.

Jiang Baimian's evaluation when she heard of this solution was: Although this was a little ridiculous, comical, and funny, it was fine as long as it was useful!

Of course, 'begging' was a backup plan. It was closer to a joke because a timely solution was to shout simple words like 'stop.'

Shang Jianyao would only consider 'begging' unless Thought Guidance—which lacked the prerequisites—wasn't effective.

Jiang Baimian held the receiver in one hand and listened to Shang Jianyao's breathing. She didn't miss any warning that might be transmitted as she controlled the mouse with the other hand and clicked open the saved document.

This was a list of people who had died from cardiac complications in Pangu Biology over the past decade. Behind each person was a preliminary report and investigation conclusion.

There were relatively few people with the surname 'Mu.' Among those with the surname 'Mu,' there were even fewer people who had a heart problem and couldn't be resuscitated in the past decade. There was only one person, and Jiang Baimian easily found the target by scanning with her finger: Mu Renjie.

This person's age and the year of the death matched Mu Qingqing's father's identity.

Jiang Baimian clicked on the corresponding preliminary report and investigation results.

The preliminary report showed that on September 30, five years ago, Mu Renjie—who lived in Zone A on the 417th floor—woke up in the middle of the night and headed to the nearest public bathroom. On the way, he suddenly fell to the ground and shouted for help to no avail.

It was late at night, and nobody sensed this. By the time the other neighbors passed by en route to the public bathroom, they found Mu Renjie already dead.

After an autopsy, the cause of death was confirmed to be myocardial infarction.

The preliminary report also mentioned that the Order Supervisory Department had sent people to investigate the surveillance cameras back then and didn't discover any attack on Mu Renjie.

Nobody passed by the surrounding area when he fainted.

This preliminary report was written more than five years ago, and the surveillance footage in Pangu Biology was stored for only three years. The last investigation was nearly two years ago. Therefore, there was footage to be reviewed. They could only determine that there was nothing wrong with the report, the subsequent summary of social connections, and the cardiac problems on the corresponding floor.

The summary of the social connections during the last investigation was that Mu Renjie didn't have any major conflicts with anyone when he was alive. Apart from Mu Renjie, nobody on the 417th floor died from a cardiac disease that year.

After Jiang Baimian finished reading it, she held the receiver and muttered to herself, "There aren't any problems."

If one only looked at the preliminary report and the investigation results, Mu Renjie's death was purely an accident or a result of fate.

"The biggest problem is that there's nothing wrong," Shang Jianyao replied seriously on the other end of the line.

Jiang Baimian chuckled. "What's the reason?"

"There's no reason." Shang Jianyao spoke firmly despite being very unconvincing.

After answering, he lowered his voice and weakly said, "I just find it a little coincidental."

"Why don't you say that he suffered such a fate because he didn't have a good name, a sad life, or had done something that involves fate?" Jiang Baimian deliberately changed the topic, planning to have a detailed chat in the office tomorrow in the event the phone was being monitored.

Smack!?

Shang Jianyao slapped his thigh. "That's indeed a possibility!"

Jiang Baimian didn't give him a chance to think before saying, "Are you still going to explore Room 506's psychological trauma tonight?"

"I'll take a break for one day. My head hurts a little," Shang Jianyao replied honestly.

He had previously been injured by an explosion in the psychological trauma and needed to recover from the mental damage. However, it wasn't serious. A day or two of good sleep could resolve it.

Jiang Baimian tersely acknowledged it. "Tell me more about the psychological trauma. Let's figure out where the key lies."

"Alright." Shang Jianyao readily agreed.

After he recounted his experience in the psychological trauma in detail and she gave him some guesses, Jiang Baimian pondered for a moment and said, "You're right about one thing. The room owner should've lived in the Fourth Research Institute's residential area for a long time. This resulted in him interacting with most of the people there and chatting about all kinds of things."

It was only in this way that Shang Jianyao and the others would appear very real when chatting with those people. They could ask and answer questions. Once they exceeded a certain range, they became incongruous; they wouldn't even know what they were saying.

"That's right, that's right." Shang Jianyao agreed.

Jiang Baimian continued, “Besides, this psychological trauma has a very calm, peaceful, and peaceful surface. As long as you don’t approach the door, you won’t be attacked. Coupled with our previous guess, can we believe that the room owner has feelings for the Fourth Research Institute’s residential area?”

“No wonder I feel like I’m home.” Shang Jianyao stroked his chin.

“That’s... pretty direct.” Jiang Baimian couldn’t help but laugh. She then exhaled and asked, “Then, what’s your greatest fear for your home?”

“Losing it,” Shang Jianyao replied without hesitation.

Jiang Baimian held the receiver and nodded slightly. “When you rushed through the main entrance, the expressions of the people in the Fourth Research Institute’s residential area changed. Their cold and merciless attitude after the explosion gave me a guess: The psychological trauma of the room owner is that he did something, lost his hometown, and was unanimously abandoned by the people who formed his hometown. Charging out the door is a symbol of such an action. Therefore, the explosion is sudden, chaotic, and filled with destructive tendencies.”

Clap! Clap! Clap!?

Shang Jianyao clapped by slamming the desk. He then seriously asked, “How should I clear such a psychological trauma? I’m afraid that facing danger with courage won’t do.”

Jiang Baimian deliberated for a moment and said, “Try having the courage to face painful memories? This matches the personality displayed by the room owner in other psychological traumas.”

“I understand.” Shang Jianyao wasn’t excited. Instead, he was filled with emotion. “Some things can only be resolved by tearing open that wound and looking at the bloody situation directly, cleaning up the pus inside.”

How philosophical...? Jiang Baimian was just about to elaborate when she suddenly heard a knock on the door.

“Who is it?” she asked as she turned her body.

“Who do you think it is? There are only a few people at home!” Jiang Baimian’s mother, Xue Sumei, pushed open the door. “I sliced you some apples.”

She held a small plate with sliced apples and a small fork.

I didn’t say I wanted to eat it...? Jiang Baimian muttered inwardly and smiled. “A mother knows her daughter best. How did you know that I happened to want to eat fruits?”

“Do you think I don’t understand you?” After Xue Sumei put down the plate, she casually asked, “Who were you on the call with? And for so long?”

Jiang Baimian frankly replied, “A colleague; I was asking about something.”

“Oh.” Xue Sumei didn’t ask any further. She turned around and walked out of the study.

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The next morning, Jiang Baimian—who was the last to arrive at the office despite setting off early—recounted what she had found out last night and asked, “Any thoughts?”

“I think we can bring the matter to a close.” Bai Chen pursed her lips and said, “Since it doesn’t involve Little Red’s grandparents, we’ll pretend that nothing happened. On the one hand, this might very well be a coincidence. On the other hand, even if it really involves the Life Ritual parish, it won’t affect us if we hide away and don’t involve ourselves. If they really wanted revenge, they would’ve long taken action.”

“With a precedent, it’s quite difficult for such a secret religion to expand under the company’s nose,” echoed Long Yuehong.

Shang Jianyao laughed and didn’t comment.. He stroked his chin and said, “I’m wondering where the murderer would’ve been if Mu Qingqing’s father’s death was really artificial.”

Chapter 763: Rewards

Jiang Baimian didn't answer Shang Jianyao's question. Instead, she looked at Long Yuehong and gave him the opportunity to analyze the situation.

Long Yuehong thought for a moment before saying, "Excluding the possibility that the surveillance footage back then was faked, the murderer should be hiding in a room around that route. If he's only at the Sea of Origins level, just searching the rooms on both sides of the route would suffice. If he had entered the Mind Corridor, we'd have to include the rooms on the other nearby streets in our search range."

The route referred to the route Mu Qingqing's father—Mu Renjie—took from home to the nearest public bathroom. It started with his house and ended at the spot where he fell to the ground.

"Why must we eliminate the possibility that the surveillance footage is faked?" Shang Jianyao asked in an unconventional manner.

Long Yuehong frowned. "The risk of being discovered while doing so is too high. The Life Ritual parish didn't do so back when they executed their divine punishment either. From a path dependence perspective, if they had used this method to modify the surveillance footage and it was effective, they would've done the same back then."

Clap! Clap! Clap!

Shang Jianyao clapped

Bai Chen smiled with a nod.

This inflated Long Yuehong's confidence, and he quickly added, "Besides, the surveillance footage has been deleted. There's no way to confirm its authenticity. The original surveillance department's PIC also hanged himself because it involved the Life Ritual parish. The dead can't testify, so there's no way to investigate. We can only temporarily treat the surveillance footage as real."

"Then, why don't you include the rooms on the same route on the floors above and below?" Shang Jianyao asked. "The range of Awakened abilities isn't solely two-dimensional."

Long Yuehong organized his words and said, “I just think that the probability of a precise lock is unlikely when there’s a floor in between them, resulting in vision obstruction. Due to the same reason, the probability of the murderer hiding in other rooms on other streets isn’t high either. What if it was Mu Renjie’s wife who went to the public bathroom that night?”

“Then, she might be the one dying.” Shang Jianyao sneered.

Hiss...

A few words suddenly appeared in Long Yuehong’s mind: indiscriminate killing!

“Wait!” He suddenly snapped to his senses. “We associate Mu Renjie’s death with the Life Ritual parish because he died of myocardial infarction. Furthermore, he had inherited the Old World’s talisman tradition and had drawn many Babymaker talismans. His wife doesn’t meet the conditions at all.”

If it was indiscriminate killing, all the Old Task Force’s previous inferences would be wrong. They wouldn’t be able to connect it to the Life Ritual parish at all.

Jiang Baimian nodded slightly. Just as she was about to comment, Shang Jianyao raised another possibility. “Maybe someone implanted the corresponding thoughts in Mu Renjie in advance, so he will definitely go to the public bathroom at that time. That way, it will be very easy to lock onto him. It’s impossible that his wife happened to go to the public bathroom at the same time, right?”

“Isn’t this too complicated?” Long Yuehong expressed his doubts.

It wasn’t like Mu Renjie was a powerful character.

“It’s not complicated.” Shang Jianyao laughed. “When you lived in Little White’s room that day, you woke up at three in the morning and went to the public bathroom. It was because I implanted the corresponding thoughts in you.”

The one—who liked to joke and prank—appeared smug.

“...” Long Yuehong gaped. “So it’s you! Didn’t you say that you couldn’t be bothered to use your Awakened abilities on me?”

Shang Jianyao shrugged. “We definitely won’t do anything when it’s something serious, but it’s fine for pulling your leg.”

Bai Chen joined the discussion. “I think you’re wrong. If one can implant a certain thought into Mu Renjie in advance, there are more and better ways to make him die silently without creating any suspicion.”

“Yes, it can be completely done. For example, he might accidentally electrocute himself to death while fixing the light bulb at home,” Shang Jianyao replied without stuttering as if he wasn’t the one who had suggested the possibility of Thought Implantation.

Long Yuehong was confused. “Then, why did you say that Mu Renjie might’ve had the corresponding thoughts implanted in him in advance?”

“Isn’t this to lure out the fact that I once implanted a thought in you so that you can go to the bathroom in the middle of the night?” Shang Jianyao replied righteously. “It would be boring if the target didn’t know that I had pulled a prank!”

The Hey that is cheerful and likes to joke is essentially a nasty fellow... Jiang Baimian commented. She then concluded, “As long as letting the target die from a heart problem isn’t a ritual insisted by the Life Ritual parish, the problem is that the rooms on both sides of the corresponding route are most likely the problem.

“This involves dozens to a hundred people. Some of them later changed rooms and went to other floors because of their marriage. It’s very difficult to investigate them one by one. It needs to be done in concert with the company.”

Once they reported it to the company, the hidden Life Ritual parish members might intercept the information in advance and eliminate any clues.

Shang Jianyao thought for a moment before his eyes suddenly lit up. “Why don’t I invade the radio station, disguise myself as Hou Yi, and implant Thought Guidance in a piece of news? I can currently affect more than 100 targets at the same time. It’s just enough to investigate everyone along that route.”

The corners of Jiang Baimian’s mouth twitched. “How much do you want to invade the radio station?”

How many times has this been suggested!?

She then doused Shang Jianyao's enthusiasm. "Also, how do you disguise yourself as Hou Yi?"

Shang Jianyao was stunned for a few seconds before sighing. "It would be good if Old Ge were here. We can get him to handcraft a voice changer."

Can Old Ge's handcrafted work really be considered handcrafted? Long Yuehong suddenly had this question.

Jiang Baimian exhaled and said, "The easiest solution is to request a meeting with Director Su when you submit the report and have a chat with him about Mu Renjie so that he can organize the subsequent investigations. If the Board of Directors really has Life Ritual parishioners, we don't have to put in any more effort. Let's just baptize ourselves and wait to believe in the Arbiter of Fate."

Shang Jianyao nodded, stretched out his hands, and gently rocked a baby in his arms. He then said loudly, "The End will belong to the Arbiter of Fate!"

Jiang Baimian rolled her eyes at him before asking in amusement, "I remember you saying that the End will belong to the Arbiter of Fate when life passes on. Isn't this inauspicious?"

"Don't mind such details." Shang Jianyao quickly changed the topic. "I'll begin writing the report when the computers are back."

As he temporarily didn't have to get a phone installed in his room, he slacked off again.

In the afternoon, the items that the Old Task Force had previously obtained completed the review and were distributed. They also received their rewards.

Jiang Baimian remained a D9 and had yet to enter management. However, the higher-ups hinted that she would be promoted to M1 when she finished exploring the last Buddhist Holy Land, found the Eighth Research Institute's true location, or the whereabouts of Shang Jianyao's father's Old Task Force. She would then be on the same level as her father, Jiang Wenfeng.

Shang Jianyao and Long Yuehong both reached D8, and Bai Chen was D7.

In addition to the promotion of their rank and their field allowance, each of them received a reward of 30,000 contribution points.

My basic salary now is 5,300 points a month, and my allowance is 1,300 points. Little White's basic salary is 4,800 points, and her allowance is 1,100 points. Together, we can receive 12,500 contribution points a month... Long Yuehong instinctively calculated in his heart.

This income was about seven times that of when he first started working. It was enough to support a family of four that had meat every meal with frequent opportunities to eat fruits and snacks.

Coupled with the large room that was definitely assigned to him and Bai Chen based on their ranks, Long Yuehong couldn't help but curl the corners of his mouth when he thought of the future.

Upon seeing this, Jiang Baimian smiled and teased, "It's Sunday in two days. Do you want to practice the parent-meeting session in advance?"

"That's right, that's right!" Shang Jianyao was excited.

"Uh..." Although Long Yuehong didn't think it required practice, he still wasn't confident. After all, this was the first time he brought his future wife home.

"Alright," Bai Chen replied very seriously.

Jiang Baimian smiled. "There's no need for practice, but I can tell you of things to take note of."

"Okay, okay." Bai Chen didn't refuse.

Shang Jianyao immediately had a look of disappointment and regret.

"What's with that expression?" Jiang Baimian glared at him.

Shang Jianyao sighed. “If we really want to practice, we definitely have to find someone to act as Little Red’s father.”

Long Yuehong suddenly felt like he had escaped disaster.

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495th floor, Zone B, Room 196.

Shang Jianyao returned home. Upon seeing that it was still early, he lay on the bed and entered the Mind Corridor.

He pushed open Room 506’s door and walked in.

The Fourth Research Institute’s residential area surfaced in front of him.

There were many buildings here, and trees were everywhere. Most of the people coming and going knew each other and often stopped to chat. The atmosphere was serene and peaceful.

Shang Jianyao casually walked and realized that this psychological trauma had returned to the state he was in when he first entered. This was the most normal situation, an extremely special example like the cruise ship trauma.

After circling around and meeting many people, Shang Jianyao stroked his chin and muttered to himself, “How should I face painful memories?”

“It’s very simple. Fall out with the people here first!” The rash Shang Jianyao suggested.

After a round of ‘discussion,’ the Shang Jianyaos decided to give it a try first.

He slowly walked to the main gates, just a meter away from the spot where he had been injured from the explosion. Shang Jianyao then conjured a military exoskeleton and prepared himself.

He jumped into the danger zone and suddenly jumped back as though swinging himself on the edge of the 'cliff.'

A dull boom instantly sounded.

This time, it wasn't an explosion. The entire ground cracked, and crimson magma surged out.

Shang Jianyao barely dodged it and rolled back to safety. He then shouted excitedly, "The room owner has seen a volcanic eruption before!"

At this moment, the expressions of the people in the residential area turned cold like emotionless corpses.

Shang Jianyao straightened his body and walked over with a smile.

He wanted to see how the painful memories affected him!

Chapter 764: Heartbreaking

Shang Jianyao looked at the residents in the Fourth Research Institute's residential area with stiff and cold expressions that left one apprehensive. He then strode over.

Behind him, thick smoke spewed out, and redness flowed. The entire entrance had become an abnormally active volcanic crater, but it didn't affect any plants or trees in the residential area.

The two seemed to be in different worlds.

Shang Jianyao's first target was the white-haired old lady sitting under the tree, who he had previously chatted with.

Just as he approached and before he could speak, the old lady stood up with a cold and slightly abhorrent expression and took two steps back.

Bang!

A puncture wound suddenly appeared on Shang Jianyao's chest!

This came from a shot, but he didn't detect its source. The military exoskeleton's comprehensive warning system didn't react at all. The bullet seemed to have appeared out of thin air, and it originated from the rules. It was destined to hit and couldn't be dodged.

Shang Jianyao slowly lowered his head and looked at his chest.

It was gushing red amid mangled flesh. He could vaguely see his expanding and contracting heart.

This shot made Shang Jianyao feel intense pain from his heart, but miraculously, the injury wasn't fatal despite being very serious.

The honest Shang Jianyao muttered, "Can you make any sense? I'm wearing a military exoskeleton and have bulletproof armor protecting my chest. How can I be penetrated by a single shot and collapse so easily? Even a Gauss rifle can't do it that easily!"

He then stroked his chin. "Could this be the so-called 'heart-breaking' strike?"

The Shang Jianyao that sought novelty popped his head from the side and came to a realization. "This is because we are acting as the room owner and are hated by the old lady in front of us. It's as if the corresponding memories were evoked after they saw an unwelcome stranger, and the hidden psychological trauma surged out. Therefore, the feelings of being sad essentially manifested as a heart-breaking gunshot to the heart. Emotional trauma is something that a military exoskeleton can't block. Furthermore, there are no warning signs. Once it happens, there will be an immediate reaction."

This was a psychological trauma. Many things didn't follow logic, and many things that happened were more symbolic.

The ruthless Shang Jianyao immediately scoffed. "Isn't the room owner's mental fortitude too weak? He got heart-broken just like that?"

He opened a mouth on the forehead.

The honest Shang Jianyao couldn't seize control of the body and could only respond from his other shoulder. "Otherwise, why would it evolve into a psychological trauma?"

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao nodded thoughtfully. "If that's the case, Big White's guess is right. This psychological trauma is actually the room owner's painful memories of being abandoned, hated, and ostracized by all his acquaintances and even some of his family."

"Let's confirm it again. I think we can still withstand two to three more 'heart-breaks.'" Shang Jianyao—who sought novelty—eagerly cast his gaze at the middle-aged man in gold-rimmed glasses.

The other Shang Jianyaos shrank back to avoid scaring the target and affecting the experiment's effects.

The Shang Jianyao that sought novelty walked to the middle-aged man in gold-rimmed glasses. He pushed up his visor and smiled.

The middle-aged man's cold and emotionless face suddenly warped as he shouted hysterically, "F*ck off!"

With a sizzling sound, Shang Jianyao's abdomen—which was protected by the military exoskeleton—was sliced open. His armor and flesh were sliced open, and his bloody guts gushed out. Some of them were already in pieces.

Zen Master Redemption replaced the Shang Jianyao who sought novelty and sighed. "Namo Annutara-Samyak-Subhuti. This is 'gut-wrenching.'"

"Ah, I won't complain even if it's gut-wrenching..." The Shang Jianyao who sought novelty and loved singing and dancing seized the initiative.

The ruthless but timid Shang Jianyao finally couldn't help but make a mouh on his forehead again and urged, "Can you guys treat the wounds? Doesn't it hurt?"

Heart-breaking and gut-wrenching were high on the pain scale.

“Then, I’ll leave it to you!” The Shang Jianyao who sought novelty gave up control over the body immediately.

After treating his wound, Shang Jianyao stroked his chin and muttered to himself, “We can now basically confirm that this psychological trauma is essentially the room owner’s painful memories of being abandoned. But facing the pain directly seems dangerous. There’s a high chance we’ll die here if we take another two more times of damage equivalent to ‘heart-breaks’ and ‘gut-wrenching.’”

In reality, he would become a vegetable.

“Let’s try something else first.” The timid Shang Jianyao didn’t want to suffer another ‘heartbreaking’ or ‘gut-wrenching’ damage.

“That’s right, that’s right.” The Shang Jianyao who always echoed agreed immediately.

The Shang Jianyao that valued relationships but was still a child mentally was more afraid of pain. He also felt that they couldn’t rashly endure the pain.

After a round of communication, they suppressed Zen Master Redemption—who had a self-sacrificial spirit—and the rash Shang Jianyao. They decided to think of another way.

The Shang Jianyao that liked to joke chuckled and said, “Since the room owner’s psychological trauma was of him being abandoned, hated, and ostracized by the people here, can’t we just let him be accepted again? This is what we’re good at!”

“Let’s give it a try.” The calm and rational Shang Jianyao agreed with this plan.

They pressed their palms together and used the loudspeaker attached to the military exoskeleton to shout at the middle-aged man in gold-rimmed glasses and the other 100-plus people not far away. “We’ve been together for so many years; shouldn’t there be some feelings for one another? I know you guys have your difficulties, and I don’t blame you. I can accept it. I hope you can also abandon those unpleasant memories and allow us to return to the past...”

He directly used Thought Implantation.

In order to allow Thought Implantation to produce sufficient effects, he played the emotional card of them knowing each other for so long.

The middle-aged man in gold-rimmed glasses and the nearby 100-plus people gradually smiled.

Shang Jianyao quickly said the same words to the other 100 people to prevent them from destroying the effects of Thought Implantation.

He could only affect so many people at once, so he had to do it repeatedly. Furthermore, he had to be constantly careful not to arouse suspicion.

If it were in the real world, others would see a 180-degree turn in their colleagues and neighbors' attitudes. In the beginning, they might think that Shang Jianyao's playing of the emotion card had taken effect. But after two to three times, they would definitely sense something abnormal and attempt to shake the affected people to their senses, wasting all of Shang Jianyao's previous efforts in Thought Implantation.

However, this was a psychological trauma. The room owner might not have had such an interaction with the people here, so she probably lacked the corresponding experience. Therefore, Shang Jianyao could 'persuade' a specific group over and over again under the watch of hundreds to thousands of people without suffering any backlash. It was as smooth as a speech.

Finally, Shang Jianyao completed the 'Thought Implantation' of all human consciousnesses in the Fourth Research Institute's residential area.

He saw everyone's smiling faces again, felt the amiable attitude of most people, and received enthusiastic treatment.

Everything returned to before the change happened, but this psychological trauma didn't collapse. The problem hadn't been resolved at its core.

Shang Jianyao stroked his chin and muttered to himself silently, "Could it be that the room owner's subconscious can determine that such understanding and acceptance are fake, and he is unwilling to believe it?"

Suddenly, his heart palpitated as he repeated, "Unwilling to believe it..."

“In a psychological trauma, it’s like I’m acting as the room owner. I clearly know that the amiable enthusiasm in front of me is fake and that it’s brought about by Thought Implantation...

“I don’t believe it, so will the room owner not believe it?”

“So I’m the one who slipped through the cracks!” The honest Shang Jianyao clenched his right fist and punched his left palm.

In order not to let any Shang Jianyao slip through the cracks, they didn’t use the method of Shang Jianyao using Thought Implantation on Shang Jianyao. Instead, they returned to the beginning and used the military exoskeleton’s visor as a mirror to persuade themselves. “Look, being here is like returning to the company. Everyone smiles sincerely and speaks nicely. So...”

The Shang Jianyaos came to a realization. “Isn’t this home?”

He chatted with people everywhere and slowly organized groups of people to dance. One group sang, and another group dutifully played the role of the Rec Center’s PIC.

The joyous atmosphere gradually enveloped the Fourth Research Institute’s residential area.

...

Tarnan, Serene Dream Hotel.

The lady boss, Aynor, sat at the front desk. She propped her chin up with one hand and watched an Old World drama serial with a distracted expression.

Suddenly, she shivered.

She vaguely recalled some of the past buried deep in her heart and recalled the originally amiable, cold, and stiff faces.

She had actually gotten over it when she cleared the island of fear, but her heart still ached when the corresponding scenes occasionally flashed across her mind.

Unlike the past, the scene that flashed through her mind was: Everyone suddenly smiled at her and sang and danced enthusiastically!

“This is even more terrifying, alright...” Aynor muttered to herself.

She said this because she knew very well: the people in the residential area were already dead.

The dead wouldn't change their expressions and smile. Due to this, Aynor suspected that someone had infiltrated her Mind Room and was exploring her corresponding traumas.

After a while, she shrank her body and muttered, “I'll just keep watching dramas. He will leave after he's done exploring.”

The price she paid was ‘avoiding reality.’

...

It was only when his mind was almost exhausted and he had no choice but to leave Room 506 that Shang Jianyao escaped the effects of Thought Implantation and found the corresponding judgment.

He stroked his chin and muttered to himself in confusion, “It didn't work even when we believed it...”

“What should we do?”

At this moment, in Room 12 of the 349th floor's Zone C, Jiang Baimian was also thinking about Room 506's psychological trauma.

As her thoughts wandered, questions suddenly flashed across her mind. The owner of Room 506 should be a resident of the Fourth Research Institute's Residential Zone or someone who has lived there for a long time. He's familiar with almost everyone and has a certain level of affection for them.

Then, why was he unanimously ostracized by the people in the Fourth Research Institute's residential area? Why was he treated coldly and with hatred?

What did he do? What trouble did he cause? Or what secret did he discover—one that he shouldn't have discovered?

Chapter 765: Back then

Jiang Baimian was rather curious about the encounter of Room 506's owner. From her point of view, the other party's relationship with the Fourth Research Institute was like the Old Task Force's relationship with Pangu Biology. At present, she couldn't imagine how they would leave Pangu Biology and be hated, vilified, and treated coldly by their families, relatives, neighbors, and fellow familiar employees.

Jiang Baimian couldn't help but wonder if the owner of Room 506 had done something wrong back then, causing the Fourth Research Institute to be wiped out. Only then could the situation in the psychological trauma be explained.

Of course, this was only a guess based on the situation Shang Jianyao had come into contact with and the details he had learned. Once a clue pointed to another possibility, they had to throw away everything and start over.

This hypothesis also had certain problems. The two psychological traumas in Room 506 that Pangu Biology currently knew and the third place that Shang Jianyao had entered didn't involve scenes like guilt, shame, or being guilty-conscience.

Jiang Baimian didn't believe that a person who missed their hometown would accept the huge mistake they had made with a clear conscience while treating this as a painful memory.

Even if they instinctively deceived and hypnotized themselves, the truth would still reflect in their subconscious—unless they really didn't think that it was a mistake. In hindsight, they still insisted that they had carried out the most correct choice. However, they couldn't understand why their family, relatives, friends, and neighbors would view and treat them that way.

From this angle, Jiang Baimian had to believe that perhaps the problem was with the Fourth Research Institute. Coupled with the mutated corpses Shang Jianyao had seen in the first psychological trauma, she felt that this guess was reasonable.

Phew...

Jiang Baimian exhaled and retracted her thoughts. She planned on asking Shang Jianyao tomorrow if he had cleared Room 506's psychological trauma and how he had cleared it.

At this moment, the radio in the corridor outside sounded.

"Good evening, everyone. I'm Newspoint broadcaster, Hou Yi. It's 8 p.m. now..."

...

"Good evening, everyone. I'm Newspoint broadcaster, Hou Yi. It's 8 p.m. now..."

Long Yuehong sat by Bai Chen's bed and listened to the familiar, slightly childlike voice echo. He couldn't help but laugh. "I heard that Hou Yi is actually one of the special cases in which genetic enhancement failed. She's less than 1.6 meters tall, but she's cheerful and born with a good voice. She never gave up on herself, and she ended up becoming the most popular broadcaster among the company's employees in the past seven years."

"She's quite young then. She can't be more than 30 years old." Bai Chen nodded. "I thought she was a broadcaster you listened to growing up and that she's already in her forties or fifties."

"How can a person in their forties or fifties have such a voice?" Long Yuehong replied in amusement. He then retorted himself, "Not necessarily. Hou Yi is already in her late twenties, and her voice hasn't changed much."

"Some people are born with a childlike voice. It doesn't change until they are over 60 years old." Bai Chen had encountered such people in the past.

It was during her time in First City.

After chatting for a while, Long Yuehong stood up and said, "I have to go back."

He had been promoted today and received a bonus. He couldn't wait to share it with his family.

He was now a D8 employee. Once he had an internal transfer and left the Security Department, he could directly be promoted to D9.

This was the highest status an ordinary employee could pursue. As for management positions, they could only be chanced upon.

In addition, Long Yuehong chose to return today because he and Bai Chen had yet to register their marriage. It wasn't good to stay over all the time.

"I'll walk you out." Bai Chen stood up as well.

Long Yuehong's heart warmed, and he didn't refuse.

After leaving the room and arriving at the corridor, Long Yuehong still held Bai Chen's hand and slowly walked toward the elevator.

Bai Chen fell silent for a moment before asking, "What should I take note of when going to your house?"

Long Yuehong thought for a moment before saying, "There's nothing to take note of. Just be normal and polite like Team Leader said."

Frankly speaking, he didn't have much experience and could only trust Jiang Baimian.

As for Jiang Baimian not having the corresponding experience either, Long Yuehong didn't mind because Jiang Baimian told him and Bai Chen that she had always been invited to someone else's house since she was young. She was the child who was praised by everyone and used as a model example for comparison.

Back then, the honest Shang Jianyao said in a hushed tone, "Maybe it's not because you're polite and know how to read people but because your father is in management."

Jiang Baimian used actions to bring across the idea to Long Yuehong and Bai Chen what the consequences of being rude and not being observant would be.

“Okay.” Bai Chen recalled the core things her team leader had taught her—listen more, talk less; praise more, complain less; and smile more, move less.

Long Yuehong was just about to say something when he suddenly saw a person walking over.

The person had tanned skin, and his face was pockmarked. His eyes were bloodshot, and his looks were average. It was obvious that he hadn’t undergone genetic enhancement.

Long Yuehong knew this person—he was the foreign employee he had previously encountered in this floor’s public bathroom in the middle of the night.

The other party in the grayish-green camouflage uniform walked in a hurry and quickly brushed past them.

Bai Chen turned her head to glance at Long Yuehong. “You seem to know him?”

“When Hey played the prank, I went to the public bathroom and encountered him smoking inside,” Long Yuehong said truthfully.

Bai Chen tersely acknowledged it. “His name is Wang Xi. He just joined the company last year. I heard that he’s relatively short-tempered and often quarrels with others. If not for the company’s Order Supervisory Department, they might’ve fought.”

“Is that so? He has a pretty good temper.” Long Yuehong indicated that the other party had been rather polite during his short interaction with Wang Xi. Although he had been too rash back then, causing the situation to be relatively awkward, and Wang Xi had flown into a rage out of humiliation, he didn’t say anything nasty.

Bai Chen glanced at Long Yuehong’s mechanical arm and said, “It’s impossible for former wilderness nomads to always be irritable. Such people can’t live to this age.”

She paused and recalled something. “He seems to go to the public bathroom in the middle of the night often. Several neighbors encountered him.”

“That’s normal. He probably made it a habit,” Long Yuehong said casually.

At this moment, the two of them had already arrived at the elevator. He waved goodbye reluctantly and pressed the button representing the 495th floor.

Before returning home, Long Yuehong went to the Supplies Allocation Market and specially bought some fruits and snacks.

“Wow, there’s delicious food again!” Long Aihong ran over and took the bag from her brother the moment she saw him walk into the house.

Gu Hong grumbled with a smile, “Why are you buying these again? We just finished the previous batch!”

Long Yuehong took the opportunity to say, “The rewards for our mission have been distributed. I received 30,000 contribution points.”

“Another 30,000!” Although Long Aihong was already used to her brother receiving large bonuses every time he returned, she couldn’t hide her joy.

Long Dayong was gratified, but he sighed.

The smile on Gu Hong’s face widened as she suppressed her voice and asked, “Any promotions?”

Long Aihong immediately pricked up her ears.

“D8.” Long Yuehong was becoming more and more able to reveal his promotion frankly. He no longer needed Shang Jianyao’s help in publicizing his promotions.

“Ah, it’s really a blessing from the heavens.” Gu Hong clasped her hands and casually shook them.

Long Aihong said in anticipation, “Bro, you definitely won’t have a problem reaching D9. If you can enter management one day, I can be assigned a good job in the future! My classmates are so envious of me. Many of them want to be my sister-in-law!”

“What are you thinking about? You want to implicate your brother? It’s a taboo to interfere with job allocations!” Gu Hong reprimanded her daughter. “What I know is that they don’t do a thing during the job assignment, but they’ll find an excuse to transfer them after a year or two.”

“It’s still not confirmed,” Long Dayong muttered softly before saying to Long Yuehong, “Look at them. Sigh...”

Long Yuehong smiled and didn’t say a word.

As long as they were happy.

In any case, he had never thought of reaching management.

...

The next morning, Room 14 on the 647th floor.

Shang Jianyao recounted his encounter in the Fourth Research Institute’s Residential Zone with great detail about ‘heart-breaking’ and ‘gut-wrenching.’

He then said in confusion, “What’s the problem? Why was I unable to clear it despite making everyone treat me with their original attitude? Even I believed that it was real!”

Jiang Baimian, Long Yuehong, and Bai Chen fell silent as they searched for a possible reason.

One guess after another was raised before they were denied.

Jiang Baimian suddenly had an idea and recalled something Shang Jianyao had mentioned: “You previously said that when those people looked at you after the explosion, their expressions were cold. The muscles on their faces were stiff like emotionless corpses.”

“Yes.” Shang Jianyao nodded.

Jiang Baimian fell into thought. “Maybe those people did become corpses. After the accident in the Fourth Research Institute’s residential area, those people might’ve died. What the room owner can’t shake off is their attitude toward him before they died; he also knows that this will never change. Therefore, this became a psychological trauma for him. No matter how you change those people’s attitudes, he subconsciously knows that it’s fake.”

“That’s possible.” Shang Jianyao stroked his chin. “Then, how did the room owner defeat the corresponding island and reconcile with himself?”

Jiang Baimian thought for a moment and said, “This might have to depend on why those people changed their attitude toward the room owner. Only by figuring this out can there be a basis for reconciliation.”

Jiang Baimian then talked about her guess last night: The room owner had made a mistake or discovered a secret that resulted in the Fourth Research Institute being wiped out. The people there had unanimously changed their attitude toward her.

Long Yuehong’s heart palpitated. “I really can’t imagine anyone betraying the place they were born and raised in.”

This was the same as how he couldn’t imagine leaving Pangu Biology. He felt that he might commit suicide if such a thing happened to him.

Shang Jianyao suddenly sang, “We lived like this for 30 years until the building?collapsed1...”

Jiang Baimian rolled her eyes at him. She was just about to say something when the phone in the office rang.

Su Yu had received Shang Jianyao’s report and agreed to his request to meet him.

Chapter 766: Beating About the Bush

In the sofa area of Su Yu's office on the fifth floor of the underground building.

Shang Jianyao met the board member again.

"Why do you suddenly have something to tell me?" Su Yu picked up the porcelain cup and gulped down two large mouthfuls.

Shang Jianyao—who was Zen Master Redemption—didn't answer immediately and asked in concern, "Director Su, the report I submitted was alright, right?"

Su Yu took out a tissue and wiped the water from the corners of his mouth and the sweat on his forehead. "It was excellent, especially that cruise trauma. None of us have experienced something similar before. It's too special; it actually manages to 'save' the exploration progress. Furthermore, time jumps upon each entry.

"The fact that you can find the key and clear such a trauma is enough to indicate that your observation, inference, and judgment are outstanding."

Clap! Clap! Clap!?

Shang Jianyao clapped—the honest him wasn't modest at all. "I think so too."

Su Yu was already accustomed to his behavior and smiled. "Such special psychological trauma involves the New World, and it has a certain value as a reference for the company's powerhouses. We will reward you well. Is there anything you want?"

Shang Jianyao replied without hesitation, "Install a phone in my room!"

"..." Su Yu was stunned for a moment. "That's it?"

"Yes." Shang Jianyao nodded solemnly.

The Su Yu, who followed strict military doctrine, thought for a few seconds and said, "That's not fair. Why don't we get you a three-bedroom room that has a telephone installed?"

“There’s no need. We can’t decide on changing rooms ourselves,” Shang Jianyao explained in all seriousness. “I need to take my wife’s needs into consideration when I get married in the future. We have to consult her opinion.”

Su Yu asked in confusion, “You have a partner?”

“No,” Shang Jianyao replied smoothly.

Su Yu pressed, “When do you plan on having one?”

“After saving all of humanity!” Shang Jianyao’s tone was abnormally firm.

With a square face and a gray combat uniform, Su Yu could only understand this as a tactful rejection. He thought for a moment and said, “Make some other requests.”

Shang Jianyao thought for a moment. “Install a phone at Long Yuehong’s house, one for Bai Chen, and one for the room assigned to Long Yuehong and Bai Chen after they register their marriage.”

Su Yu laughed when he heard that. “You have something against phones, right? Alright, I’ll satisfy your request.”

He fell silent for a moment before asking, “Is the feedback you obtained from the special psychological trauma strong?”

The report Shang Jianyao submitted didn’t mention such content. Therefore, even if he hadn’t requested to meet Su Yu, the latter would have summoned him to inquire.

“You still want to talk about that?” Shang Jianyao had a look of surprise. “Isn’t it only about the exploration of those rooms? This is something that happened after the exploration ended.”

Su Yu maintained his smile. “You can choose not to answer.”

Shang Jianyao shook his head. “I can’t bring myself to do that.”

He paused and said before Su Yu could speak, “The feedback is about two to three times more than normal. There’s also the aura that threw the people on the cruise ship into chaos.”

He didn’t mention his additional gains or the Buddhist aura that had fused with the Six Senses Beads because it was unlikely that anyone would subsequently obtain it after clearing the corresponding psychological trauma.

Su Yu nodded slightly and said, “It’s about what I expected.”

Shang Jianyao drank a mouthful of cold water on the coffee table without standing on ceremony. “Director Su, do you have any research or relevant experience regarding these special psychological traumas?”

Su Yu leaned forward slightly and wiped the sweat from his forehead again. “What we can now determine is that special psychological traumas involve New World powerhouses and even a certain Kalendaria. The principle is that there’s probably an aura hidden in the target’s Sea of Origins or a projection of a New World node.”

After discussing this matter, Su Yu returned to the initial topic. “Why did you request to meet me?”

Shang Jianyao’s expression turned serious. “Director Su, do you still remember the Life Ritual parish?”

“Yes.” Su Yu nodded. “Why? Did you discover more clues regarding this parish again?”

Shang Jianyao replied seriously, “Yes. I suspect it’s them, but there’s no evidence.”

“Tell me about it.” Su Yu wasn’t careless.

Shang Jianyao—who had already prepared ten drafts—randomly chose one. “Here’s the thing. Through Long Yuehong, I found an employee who knows how to draw talismans and went to her to request a Babymaker talisman.”

Su Yu couldn’t help but ask, “I thought you don’t have a partner and don’t plan on finding a partner any time soon?”

Furthermore, it was clear that ‘any time soon’ would be indefinite. It was impossible to save all of humanity without centuries worth of work.

It was even more delusional to rely on three to four people.

Shang Jianyao nodded and replied, “I wanted to see if I could still have children after wearing the Babymaker talisman, even if I don’t have a partner.”

Upon recalling the other party’s mental state, Su Yu accepted this explanation.

“Then?” he asked.

“It doesn’t work.” Shang Jianyao had a look of regret.

Su Yu picked up the porcelain cup and drank a mouthful of water. “I’m asking how did you discover clues regarding the Life Ritual parish?”

Shang Jianyao came to a realization. “The employee who drew the talisman mentioned that her father—an old employee named Mu Renjie—suddenly suffered a myocardial infarction in the middle of the night five years ago while on the way to the public bathroom. He couldn’t be resuscitated. This old employee could draw real Babymaker talismans.”

“What do you mean ‘real Babymaker talismans?’” Su Yu always felt that Shang Jianyao was diverting his focus.

Shang Jianyao explained, “That employee didn’t know how to cherish what she had when she had it. She only realized how precious it was when she lost it. She no longer knows how to draw Babymaker talismans, so she can only make them up.”

“Is that so?” Su Yu thought for a moment and said, “There aren’t just one or two people who suddenly suffer from myocardial infarction. We’ve previously carried out a review. In theory, there shouldn’t be any problems with Mu Renjie’s death. But since there’s the Babymaker talisman, it can barely be considered a coincidence. I’ll get someone to investigate the employees on the corresponding route.”

He could easily do the math to know that the corresponding surveillance footage had definitely expired.

Shang Jianyao looked around and suppressed his voice. “Director Su, you have to be careful of moles. Didn’t the information leak out during the investigation of the Life Ritual parish, causing the key clues to be lost?”

He then pointed at the corridor outside. “The Doctor of the Church has always been watching us.”

Su Yu laughed involuntarily. “I won’t overlook this.”

Shang Jianyao clapped. He then inquired, “Director Su, does the company have a New World-level Arbiter of Fate domain powerhouse?”

This was the conclusion obtained from being able to sense the New World node through the Life Angel necklace after its change of aura—its usage hadn’t changed, but its effects were stronger.

Su Yu didn’t hide anything. “Yes.”

Shang Jianyao curiously asked, “Then, what does he think of the Life Ritual parish?”

“We never discussed such trivial problems with him.” Su Yu recalled and said, “But once, when he mentioned the various religions in the Ashlands, he vaguely said that different Kalendarium have different attitudes toward their believers. Some don’t care, some find it annoying, and some like it very much.”

Su Yu didn’t emphasize that the Kalendarium really existed because the Old Task Force had experienced Master Zhuang’s dream. They also suggested that the Old World’s destruction might be a result of the Eighth Research Institute’s forbidden experiments and that the source of the Heartless disease was most likely in the New World.

Shang Jianyao gave a terse acknowledgment. “Then, don’t disturb him with this matter.”

“Is there anything else?” Su Yu exhaled.

“No.” Shang Jianyao stood up and politely stretched out his right hand.

Su Yu stood up and lightly shook his hand.

“You still have a slight fever?” Shang Jianyao felt that the other party’s hand was relatively warm.

Su Yu didn’t answer and only nodded.

...

After returning to Room 14 on the 647th floor, Shang Jianyao roughly recounted his conversation with Director Su.

“Leave the rest to the company. We don’t have to worry.” Long Yuehong heaved a long sigh of relief.

Jiang Baimian smiled. “That’s right. What you need to worry about is the parent-meeting session and your marriage registration.”

It was still a day before Sunday.

“Yeah, yeah.” Long Yuehong suddenly felt a little nervous.

Upon seeing this, Bai Chen held his hand. “Will you give up if your parents aren’t satisfied with me?”

“No,” Long Yuehong replied firmly.

Bai Chen immediately smiled. “In that case, why are you nervous?”

Jiang Baimian felt a headache coming on as she watched. She quickly said to Shang Jianyao, “When you explore the psychological trauma in Room 506 tonight, focus on gathering information on the room owner and all kinds of other information. Only then can we guess what the room owner did and what mistakes he made back then to find a way to clear the psychological trauma.”

“Alright!” Shang Jianyao had always been interested in gossip.

...

In the Mind Corridor, in the psychological trauma in Room 506.

Shang Jianyao entered the Fourth Research Institute’s residential area again. He then casually found a lady who he found amiable and greeted her with a smile. “Good morning.”

When the lady in her thirties or forties revealed a confused expression, Shang Jianyao spoke first. “We’ve known each other for so long, and we’re all from the research institute. What do you think of me?”

He was using Thought Guidance, making the other party instinctively believe that he was a resident of the Fourth Research Institute’s residential area.

At this moment, everyone was present except for one person—Room 506’s owner.

At this rate, the lady in front of Shang Jianyao would most likely treat him as the other party.

The lady gradually smiled; then, she tip-toed and stroked Shang Jianyao’s hair. “Lass, why are you asking this question for no reason?”

The room owner is female...?Shang Jianyao muttered to himself silently. He then smiled and replied, “It’s because I’m vexed.”

“Vexed over accepting which one? You’re too indecisive, but most young ladies are like that.” The lady smiled and consoled him. “When you Awaken later, you can use this as a price.”

Shang Jianyao smiled. “You also know about my Awakening?”

“Have you forgotten that I’m also an Awakened?” the lady asked in amusement.

Shang Jianyao's heart palpitated. "Then, do you know much about Awakened?"

"What do you want to know?" the lady with a good bearing asked dotingly.

Shang Jianyao smiled and replied, "I want to know about the Arbiter of Fate's domain."

The lady in her thirties or forties thought for a moment before answering, "The Arbiter of Fate's domain mainly affects the respiratory system and the heart. The known prices are limb paralysis, eyeball abnormalities, and..."

She paused and said, "There's also chronic gastric problems and having a higher body temperature than normal people."

Chapter 767: Longing for Peace

"Chronic gastric problems..."

"Higher body temperature than normal people..."

Shang Jianyao repeated the two prices.

Something was squirming under his skin and clothes, right beneath his forehead, shoulders, chest, and gut, but it ultimately didn't burrow out.

The woman in her thirties or forties standing in front of him asked in concern, "What's wrong? Could it be that you are considering choosing the Arbiter of Fate domain? Although the abilities in this domain are very strong, they often pay the price of health."

Shang Jianyao smiled. "I suddenly thought of something. Talk to you later!"

He turned around and walked to the building that represented the room's exit before returning to the Mind Corridor.

The ruthless Shang Jianyao stuck his head out from his left shoulder and said with a solemn expression, “Mei Shou’an always burps. Su Yu has been running a fever.”

Mei Shou’an was the person-in-charge of the C-14 project.

Su Yu was a board member of Pangu Biology. Shang Jianyao had just met him and reported Mu Renjie’s death to him, which was suspected to be related to the Life Ritual parish. He requested that he be wary of moles and send someone to investigate.

Burping often meant gastric problems. A fever was definitely a result of having a higher body temperature than an ordinary person.

The Shang Jianyaos didn’t argue and made the same choice.

He returned to the real world, opened his eyes, and got off the bed. He then walked to the door and gripped the door handle.

At this moment, he suddenly slowed down and stopped.

After freezing for a few seconds, Shang Jianyao retracted his hand, turned around, walked to the bed, and sat down.

We didn’t do anything. Making a report is every employee’s duty, he muttered to himself silently. As for revenge, it’s even more impossible to take it on the day of my report...

Shang Jianyao hummed a song and leisurely lay down, waiting for Hou Yi to broadcast Newspoint.

Then, he heard a knock on the door.

“Who is it?” Shang Jianyao suddenly sat up straight with an excited expression.

The person outside replied, “I’m here to install the phone. Don’t you know?”

“Oh right!” Shang Jianyao clenched his right fist and punched his left palm. He jumped off the bed, put on his shoes, and opened the door.

Outside the door was indeed an employee holding a toolbox and a telephone.

“You aren’t wearing a cap,” Shang Jianyao pointed out.

The male employee was confused. “Why must I wear a cap?”

He was about the same age as Shang Jianyao; it was obvious that he had only been working for a few years. The effects of genetic enhancement were better than Long Yuehong’s, and his skin was fairer because he had never been to the surface.

Shang Jianyao explained, “I’m referring to the kind of cap that can cover half of a face when pulled down.”

“Why should I wear that?” The male employee kept having the feeling that something was wrong with the other party’s brain and that they couldn’t communicate.

He didn’t live on this floor, nor did he have any relatives here, so he had never heard of Shang Jianyao.

Shang Jianyao sighed. “You’re not professional enough.”

He didn’t say anything else and pointed into the room. “Come in.”

Why is not wearing a cap being unprofessional? I’m just here to install a phone...?The male employee rationally gave up on asking and walked into the room.

After looking around, he asked in surprise, “Are you sure it’s here?”

Who would install a phone in such a cramped room?

If one had enough contribution points, they would've long thought of a way to change to a bigger room. If one didn't have enough contribution points, they wouldn't even consider installing items that would rarely be used. A phone cost a sum of contribution points every month.

"That's right, that's right." Shang Jianyao nodded in confirmation.

The male employee took out the list given by the higher-ups and confirmed the floor and door number again.

He was part of the Training Safeguard Department. This department's role was to train new employees or transfer working people to new posts. It was also to provide logistical support for everyone.

After repeatedly confirming that there were no problems, the male employee began to busy himself.

Shang Jianyao retreated to the bed, sat down, and looked at the other party.

After the black telephone was installed, he still didn't encounter any accidents.

He regretfully took the work order form from the other party and signed his name.

Although the male employee found it weird, he quietly left Shang Jianyao's room since they weren't familiar with each other and there was no need to chat. He then followed the address on the list to Room 11 on the same floor, Zone C.

Long Aihong skipped to the door and opened it, only to ask in confusion, "You are?"

"I'm here to install the phone. Don't you know?" The male employee felt that it was his unlucky day.

"I don't know." Long Aihong shook her head in confusion.

The next second, her heart palpitated. She turned her body and head and shouted inside, "Bro! You got them to install a phone?"

Long Yuehong walked out of his room and glanced at his confused parents. He scratched his head with his left hand and said, “No...”

“Are you in the wrong place?” Long Aihong immediately turned around and asked the male employee confidently.

At this moment, Long Yuehong had an idea and recalled something: Shang Jianyao had once said that after submitting his experience regarding the exploration of new rooms, the reward he requested was to install a phone in his room.

Could it be...? Long Yuehong walked to the door and probed the male employee, “Have you been to Zone B, Room 196?”

“Yes, yes, yes.” The male employee heaved a sigh of relief.

Long Yuehong confirmed his guess and asked, “How many phones are you going to install this time?”

“Three. The other one is for the 622nd floor,” the male employee replied truthfully. “But that one will be moved to another room later. The exact details haven’t been determined.”

Long Yuehong nodded. “I understand. Come in and do the installation.”

At this moment, Gu Hong came over and hesitantly said, “What’s the use of installing this phone? There’s nobody to call, and it costs dozens of contribution points every month.”

“Shang Jianyao got a ‘buy one, get two free.’ It doesn’t cost us any contribution points.” Long Yuehong smiled. “After I married Little White, I definitely had to move out. Don’t you want me to call back often?”

“Can’t you just come back?” Gu Hong nagged without stopping the installation.

She and Long Dayong couldn’t hide their smiles.

Telephones were a rarity, just like portable computers. It was enough to make the neighbors envious!

After installing the landline, Long Yuehong accompanied the male employee to the 622nd floor and explained the matter to Bai Chen. Finally, he used the number pasted on the phone and happily called home to test it out.

...

The next morning, Room 14 on the 647th floor.

As soon as Shang Jianyao entered, he grumbled at Long Yuehong and Bai Chen. “The two of you didn’t even call me after installing a phone!”

He looked abandoned.

“Huh?” Jiang Baimian looked at them in confusion.

Long Yuehong quickly recounted last night and said, “You have to pay additional contribution points to make a call.”

He was explaining why he didn’t call Shang Jianyao.

Shang Jianyao scoffed. “Don’t you know that the monthly fixed fee includes 120 minutes of free talk time?”

“That’s right.” Jiang Baimian testified.

“Is that so?” Long Yuehong was delighted; he planned on chatting on the phone with Bai Chen tonight!

Before he could calm down, Shang Jianyao turned to look at Jiang Baimian. “I learned something from Room 506’s trauma last night.”

“What is it?” Jiang Baimian asked seriously.

“It’s regarding the commonly seen price in the Arbiter of Fate domain.” Shang Jianyao’s expression turned serious.

Bai Chen pursed her lips. “What is it?”

Long Yuehong sensed that the atmosphere wasn’t right and unconsciously held his breath.

Jiang Baimian first confirmed that there were no wires or electrical appliances in the room before nodding. “Speak.”

Shang Jianyao said unhurriedly, “On top of what we know, there’s chronic gastric problems and a higher body temperature than normal people. I remember that Mei Shou’an always burps, while Director Su likes to perspire and likes to drink water in large mouthfuls. His hands are warmer than mine.”

An indescribable silence suddenly appeared in Room 14.

Everyone knew that Shang Jianyao meant that Su Yu and Mei Shou’an might be members of the Life Ritual parish. Although not all Awakened in the Arbiter of Fate domain believed in this Kalendaria, the possibility was definitely higher than that of other domains.

By reporting Mu Renjie’s death to Su Yu, it was akin to lodging a complaint at the person in question.

After a while, Long Yuehong slowly said, “Everyone knows that the company has Awakened in the Arbiter of Fate domain. It may be surprising that Director Su and Superintendent Mei are in this domain, but it’s reasonable. It’s not worth fussing over.”

“Back when the Life Ritual parish’s members were investigated, people like them should be the focus of attention, but the company didn’t discover any problems.” Bai Chen tried to eliminate the corresponding possibility from other angles.

“But why didn’t they put their price in the information?” The honest Shang Jianyao had a different opinion.

The Shang Jianyao that valued relationships explained, “Maybe it’s to effectively protect every Awakened’s secret. Those we often come into contact with won’t have their price listed on the information given to us.”

Jiang Baimian tersely acknowledged it. “In any case, we’ve reported the matter. Regardless of whether there are any problems with Director Su’s investigation, the subsequent matters have nothing to do with us. At most, Hey will mention it when he explores the Mind Corridor’s depths and is qualified to meet other directors.”

The meaning behind her words was that this matter ran deep. It was fine if there was no problem, but if there was really a problem, it was very easy to encounter something overwhelming if they continued investigating. Therefore, it was best to extract themselves first, observe the situation, and slowly plan.

Furthermore, the reason for their suspicion was relatively far-fetched. If not for the fact that Shang Jianyao held a grudge over the deaths caused by the Life Ritual parish, Jiang Baimian would’ve previously advised him to ignore Mu Renjie’s death.

“Alright.” Shang Jianyao was very serious this time.

Long Yuehong and Bai Chen also felt that this was better. At the very least, they didn’t have to worry about revenge for the time being.

...

622nd floor, Zone B, Room 59.

Long Yuehong—who had planned on returning home to make a call to Bai Chen—decided to stay the night when he thought of the parent-meeting session tomorrow.

The two of them slept early, not wanting to look exhausted the next day.

In a daze, Long Yuehong had a dream.

In his dream, he realized that Mei Shou'an was indeed from the Life Ritual parish. However, he couldn't immediately find Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao. He could only report to the management he had seen—the Security Department's deputy minister and the Old Task Force's immediate superior, Xenny.

After Xenny heard his recount, she stretched out her hands. As she smiled, she assumed a rocking posture as if carrying a baby.

This was the Life Ritual parish's salute!

Long Yuehong woke up with a start. He panted heavily, glad that it was only a dream.

Bai Chen sat up and asked, "What's wrong?"

Long Yuehong described his dream and smiled bitterly. "I had what I was thinking about in the day reflected in my dreams. I scared myself."

Bai Chen's expression changed slightly as she whispered, "I had the same dream."

Chapter 768: Muddy Waters

Long Yuehong's body stiffened when he heard Bai Chen.

If only he had had such a dream, it could also be explained as him dreaming of it because of his thoughts in the day—the dream's content was simply too realistic and terrifying. However, Bai Chen had the same dream. It couldn't be described as a coincidence.

Even if they slept in the same bed and had similar experiences, it was impossible for the two of them to have dreams with similar details. There were no such coincidences in this world!

Almost at the same time, Long Yuehong and Bai Chen—who were relatively experienced—thought of a possibility, which was also the only possibility: They had their dreams affected by an Awakened in the corresponding domain!

Long Yuehong quickly looked out the window.

Through the curtain, he saw that the lights in the corridor hadn't been switched off. From time to time, people would pass by outside.

Bai Chen deliberated for a few seconds and said, "Although the dream was sufficiently realistic, it didn't mean to kill us."

Real Dreamscape wasn't something that could be woken up from via a shock. Most people would encounter death in their dreams and die in reality.

Long Yuehong had the same doubts and probed, "The person who affected our dream only wanted us to have that dream?"

If the other party had the intention of scaring them or testing their abilities, they wouldn't have let the two people sleeping together have the same dream. This could easily be discovered and investigated by the company.

Therefore, Long Yuehong felt that the focus should be on the dream itself.

Bai Chen slowly nodded. "The person who affected our dream might be trying to tell us through that dream that Mei Shou'an is indeed from the Life Ritual parish. Minister Xenny is the same."

Hiss!?

Long Yuehong gasped. "No way..."

He still believed the possibility that Mei Shou'an was from the Life Ritual parish, but it would be without evidence to claim that Minister Xenny was one!

Long Yuehong then thought of something and frowned. "Why did we have the corresponding dream the night we suspected that Mei Shou'an might be from the Life Ritual parish? Could it be that someone can monitor our conversation in the office?"

This didn't make sense!

Shang Jianyao could sense human consciousnesses in a large area, while his team leader could use electric signals to find any that fell through the cracks and eliminate certain devices. Room 14 could be said to be richly endowed with anti-interference equipment and was impregnable!

Bai Chen fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "If he learned of our suspicions by eavesdropping on our conversation, the Awakened probably wouldn't have come to our dreams tonight. This will expose the fact that he can monitor our office. It's still unknown who's friend or foe.

"I think it's either a coincidence or he has been trying to guide our dreams recently. However, his abilities are limited, so he couldn't make something out of nothing. It was only when we began to suspect Mei Shou'an and Director Su that the dreams developed in the direction he hoped."

Since the previous dreams didn't meet the requirements, the other party would definitely give up midway. Long Yuehong and Bai Chen naturally couldn't remember the corresponding content after waking up and couldn't discover any abnormalities.

"If the latter is true, the Awakened doesn't live far away," Long Yuehong said solemnly.

This was the only way to influence this room's dream every night without being suspected by the Order Supervisory Department or the employees on the same floor.

Due to an Awakened's range and the fact that both of them were affected, Long Yuehong couldn't rule out the people two to three floors above and below.

Bai Chen fell silent for a moment before saying, "That's not the point. The point is whether the dream's content is real."

"This... Maybe the Awakened represents a certain faction that's trying to sow discord." Long Yuehong didn't dare to make an affirmative judgment.

Bai Chen exhaled silently. "Sometimes, I feel that it's safer outside than in the company. At least we know who the enemy is and where the danger comes from. When we encounter a problem, we can fight it head-on. When it's time to evacuate, we can evacuate immediately. We won't be overly suspicious and be restrained."

With the Old Task Force's current abilities and equipment, nobody could capture them once they chose to escape apart from a few situations.

"It's still alright... There are ultimately only a few problems." Long Yuehong still had a lot of affection for Pangu Biology and the underground building. Even though he often fantasized of a time when the company moved to the ground, allowing everyone to see the blue sky and feel the natural wind, he had never considered completely severing ties with the underground building.

This place represented his childhood, teenage years, and half of his youth. It was the most carefree period.

Bai Chen didn't retort and looked at the phone in the room. "Let's tell Team Leader and Hey as soon as possible."

It wasn't lights-out yet. The light from outside could be faintly seen through the curtain.

"Will this be monitored?" Long Yuehong was a little worried.

Bai Chen calmly replied, "It might be a good thing to be monitored."

"Ah..." Long Yuehong was confused at first before he came to a realization.

Bai Chen meant: Those who could monitor phones were most likely from the Life Ritual parish, just like how the Doctor of the Church controlled the surveillance cameras back then. After the Life Ritual parish discovered that other organizations were secretly targeting them, their focus wouldn't be on the Old Task Force!

Go ahead and fight amongst yourselves. Don't disturb us!

"Alright, who should we call first?" Long Yuehong's first reaction was to get Jiang Baimian.

Although Jiang Baimian was much weaker than Shang Jianyao in terms of Awakened abilities, she was more reliable in other aspects, especially in terms of intelligence.

“Let’s give Hey a call first. He’s alone, and he lives on the floor of an ordinary employee. It’s relatively more dangerous.” Bai Chen gave her opinion from a different perspective.

Long Yuehong readily agreed. He got off the bed, walked to the table, picked up the phone, and dialed Shang Jianyao’s number.

...

Mind Corridor, Room 506.

Shang Jianyao chatted with many people in the Fourth Research Institute’s residential area by passing off as the room owner.

In addition to obtaining a lot of relatively useful information, including but not limited to the price of certain domains and the Fourth Research Institute’s suspicion of the Eighth Research Institute’s forbidden experiments, Shang Jianyao also roughly restored the room owner’s original image.

A young girl who was rather pretty in the residential area; she had several suitors and was filled with interest in the Old World’s entertainment. She liked to replicate the clothes in them and dress up in them. Even though she was often scared to sleep because of horror scenes and had tears in her eyes from the emotional scenes, she still enjoyed it.

She had a cheerful personality and appeared to be a forthright person. In fact, she was indecisive when she encountered major matters and couldn’t make up her mind.

She was very interested in all kinds of things in the Ashlands. From time to time, she would travel elsewhere with the Fourth Research Institute’s trading teams. She was a rather curious person.

Perhaps it was because she grew up in a relatively stable place like the Fourth Research Institute’s residential zone, but she had a simple sense of justice and views of good and evil like Long Yuehong prior to his joining the Old Task Force...

Just as Shang Jianyao was about to inquire further, he heard a ringing sound.

The people around didn’t sense anything.

Someone's calling me??Shang Jianyao became excited.

He ran to the exit.

After returning to the real world, he picked up the phone and asked in all seriousness, "Hello, who is it?"

"Me," Long Yuehong replied.

"Who's me?" Shang Jianyao began to pester him endlessly.

Long Yuehong's forehead twitched. "I'm Long Yuehong. Little White and I just had the same dream."

"You guys slept so early?" Shang Jianyao's focus was completely wrong.

Long Yuehong took a deep breath and slowly exhaled. "That's not important. The important thing is that we had the same dream. We all dreamed that Director Mei Shou'an is from the Life Ritual parish. When we reported it to Minister Xenny, she also saluted with the Life Ritual's etiquette."

Shang Jianyao let out a long exclamation. "There are so many fellow parishioners..."

"You guys woke up too early. You have to see what information the person who affected your dream can provide. Perhaps you will later discover that we are also from the Life Ritual parish..."

He let his imagination run wild for a moment before asking, "Did you tell Big White?"

"Not yet. Calling her now." Long Yuehong was very glad that he had called Shang Jianyao's house first. Otherwise, there would be no end to it.

After he hung up, Bai Chen called Jiang Baimian.

...

Ring! Ring!

Xue Sumei picked up the call. "Who are you looking for?"

"Hello, I'm looking for Jiang Baimian. I'm her colleague," Bai Chen replied.

Xue Sumei cupped the receiver with her hand and shouted into the study, "Mianmian, it's for you!"

After Jiang Baimian picked up the call in the study, Xue Sumei put down the receiver on the telephone outside and said to Jiang Wenfeng in disappointment, "It's a woman."

"You can't rush such things." Xue Wenfeng smiled and shook his head.

At this moment, Jiang Baimian figured out Bai Chen and Long Yuehong's encounter after exchanging a few words. She thought for a moment and said, "From the looks of it, we have found ourselves in muddy waters. Could it be that the company has already been seriously corrupted and that many foreign organizations have expanded? It only appears calm on the surface because of Big Boss and a few powerhouses in higher management? Are other organizations taking the opportunity to eliminate the Life Ritual parish this time?"

"Then, it's best if we just sit and watch." Bai Chen voiced her thoughts.

Jiang Baimian tersely acknowledged it. "I think so too."

After all, they couldn't find a higher-up they could completely trust unless they could report it to Big Boss directly.

Jiang Baimian smiled and said, "It won't be too late to discuss this tomorrow. Take turns sleeping tonight to see if you have any more similar dreams. After two to three attempts and confirming that there are no problems, continue sleeping together. Don't delay the parent-meeting session tomorrow."

After comforting Bai Chen and Long Yuehong, Jiang Baimian hung up. She then sat there and fell into deep thought.

After dozens of seconds, she picked up the receiver and dialed Shang Jianyao's number.

"Hello." Shang Jianyao's voice quickly sounded. "Who is it?"

"Who do you think it is?" Jiang Baimian asked in amusement.

"It might be Little Red or Little White." Shang Jianyao said confidently, "Do you want to discuss how they had the same dream tonight?"

Jiang Baimian smiled. "There's no rush for that; let's wait and see. Did you figure out the personality and experience of Room 506's owner tonight?"

"Yes!" Shang Jianyao explained everything he had learned in detail.

Jiang Baimian fell silent for a moment before frowning. "Highly curious... With a sense of justice and a simple sense of good and evil... Do you think the owner of Room 506 back then also fell into our current dilemma? In the end, a wrong choice caused the place she wanted to protect to fall into a disaster?"

She couldn't help but make connections because the Fourth Research Institute's residential area was very similar to the environment, atmosphere, and feeling inside Pangu Biology.

Chapter 769: Attempting Communication

Upon hearing Jiang Baimian's question, Shang Jianyao slapped his thigh. "What a pity!"

"What's a pity?" Jiang Baimian couldn't keep up with his train of thought.

Shang Jianyao replied in frustration, "Didn't I break into the other party's dream when I first entered Room 506? In hindsight, I shouldn't have faced the danger with courage to end things quickly. Instead, I should've tried 'Guidance,' making Room 506's owner reveal what had happened in her dream. In the end, sigh..."

He couldn't enter the other party's dream again for the time being, at least not before clearing the third psychological trauma.

This was a rule in the exploration of the rooms in the Mind Corridor. The information provided by Pangu Biology to Shang Jianyao had a clear description: "When entering a room for the first time, one might face a psychological trauma or intrude into another person's dream. But once one enters a psychological trauma, it will be fixed. One will face the same scene every time until they clear it."

A psychological trauma will connect to another psychological trauma. Unless an explorer can reach the place closest to the target's Sea of Origins and clear the room, it is impossible for them to encounter a dream again.

As for whether the rooms representing the Kalendarium were like this, it was impossible to determine because there were too few samples.

Jiang Baimian knew what Shang Jianyao meant and sighed.

"That's right. If we can use the dream to figure out the encounter of Room 506's owner, it will indeed be a good thing for us. Even if this has nothing to do with the turbulent undercurrents in the company, it has a certain value as a reference."

Shang Jianyao looked at the phone on the table and asked excitedly, "Is there a way to use the psychological trauma to communicate with the room owner?"

Jiang Baimian held the receiver and thought for a moment. "That's unlikely. What you are exploring now is the third psychological trauma. Although it will make the room owner have nightmares continuously and become vigilant, the information doesn't mention if such nightmares are directly related to your actions or if the corresponding details can be fully reflected. Besides, even if you can really transmit information through nightmares, the room owner can't give you feedback..."

At this point, Jiang Baimian suddenly stopped.

Her memory had always been good. A sentence from the information Shang Jianyao had relayed surfaced in her mind: "If you have nightmares for days and feel exhausted every time you wake up, it means that someone has entered your Mind Room and has explored it to a rather deep extent. You have to think of a way to lock onto the other party and give them a warning. If they refuse, prepare for battle..."

Being able to lock onto, warn, and fight means that we can communicate and receive feedback in a sense...?Jiang Baimian muttered to herself and said, “You can indeed give it a try, although I’m not that confident.”

What she didn’t have confidence in was whether the nightmare could fully depict Shang Jianyao’s actions in the psychological trauma, whether it would be exaggerated, whether it would only reflect a symbolic meaning, or whether it would only reflect a certain scene.

Of course, even if the message was wrong, it was also very good to make Room 506’s owner sense the danger and give them a warning. This meant that there was a possibility of communication.

“Alright!” Shang Jianyao couldn’t hide his eagerness.

After hanging up, he immediately lay on the bed and entered the Mind Corridor again.

In the Fourth Research Institute’s residential zone, Shang Jianyao spent a lot of effort to complete the Thought Implantation for everyone.

Therefore, some of these people were shouting, “I have something to consult you about.” Some were in charge of belting the chorus ‘come on, come on.’ Some were arranged in teams and posed with SOS symbols. Some repeated the word ‘friend’ over and over again. There were all kinds of variations.

Tarnan, Serene Dream Hotel.

Aynor—who had already gone to bed—suddenly shivered and woke up with a start.

In her dream, she was surrounded by darkness as her dense, blood-red eyes opened one after another. Ancient god-like whispers constantly echoed in her ears, but she couldn’t discern them clearly.

After Aynor snapped to her senses, she gritted her teeth and muttered, “That fellow is still exploring my psychological trauma!”

She still had a certain level of experience with such situations. In the early years, many people had explored the depths of her Mind Room, making her have nightmares continuously. This made her feel exhausted when she woke up every day.

Her choice back then was to be a coward and avoid reality.

Although this was shameful, it worked. After those people finished exploring the room, they didn't choose to invade her Sea of Origins and left readily.

Later, such matters became fewer and fewer as if nobody tried to explore the depths of her Mind Room. It had been a long time since Aynor had nightmares.

Due to this experience, her response was self-evident.

Aynor hatefully said, "If you dare—if you dare to invade my Sea of Origins, I-I'll fight you!"

She pulled the blanket over her and covered her body and head tightly as if she were an ostrich burying its head in sand.

Room 506, in the psychological trauma at the Fourth Research Institute's residential zone.

Shang Jianyao waited bitterly for a long time, but he didn't receive any warning.

"Could it be that this isn't considered the depths of the room?" the calm and rational him muttered to himself in confusion.

Considering that they had expended a lot of mental energy and that something could go wrong if they stayed any longer, the Shang Jianyaos left.

...

Ding ring ring!

At 1 a.m., Long Yuehong and Bai Chen were woken up by the phone. Due to their experience, this sudden development made their hearts race.

The two of them glanced at each other in confusion and vigilance.

“Could it be a death call?” Long Yuehong recalled the Old World entertainment he had watched.

In the current Ashlands, this was possible.

Awakened had all kinds of strange abilities. Some could exert influence through electromagnetic waves.

“It can’t be that fast, right...” Bai Chen sat up and walked to the desk.

Nights in Pangu Biology were always cold. Long Yuehong saw that Bai Chen’s clothes were thin and that she was trembling a little. He quickly took her cotton coat, stood up, walked over, and helped drape it over her.

As for himself, he had already brought a new thick, military-green cotton coat to Bai Chen’s. He wasn’t as unprepared as last time.

Earning more contribution points made life comfortable!

Long Yuehong looked at the ringing phone and took a deep breath. “You have to add a caller ID later.”

“Anyone who can transmit power through a phone can definitely tamper with the displayed number.” Bai Chen sensed that her neighbors were showing signs of waking up and stretched her hand toward the telephone.

She disconnected the line.

The room became extremely quiet.

Long Yuehong calmed down and voiced his thoughts. “We have to tell Team Leader and Hey immediately to prevent them from encountering this.”

Bai Chen agreed.

They connected the line again, and Long Yuehong dialed Shang Jianyao’s number.

The latter lived alone, so they didn’t have to worry about disturbing his family.

“Hey?” Just as Long Yuehong said that, Shang Jianyao grumbled, “Why didn’t you answer my call?”

Ah??Long Yuehong looked at Bai Chen in surprise.

The call just now was actually from Shang Jianyao!

“What’s the matter?” Long Yuehong quickly asked.

Shang Jianyao sighed. “I’m just concerned about you. I wanted to ask if you had the same dream after returning to the 622nd floor.”

“...” Long Yuehong’s facial muscles immediately warped. “You can ask tomorrow morning.”

Shang Jianyao added, “If you fall into Real Dreamscape at the same time and can’t wake up, you might die at any moment. Such a call is enough to save your lives.”

That’s true...?Long Yuehong scratched his head with his empty iron-black right hand.

Bai Chen’s expression relaxed.

Although they had already followed Jiang Baimian’s instructions and took turns watching each other as one slept for an hour until they confirmed that there were no problems before hitting the sack together, everyone was worried that an accident would happen.

“You have to thank me,” Shang Jianyao reminded him.

Long Yuehong took a deep breath. “Thank you.”

He forcefully steered the topic back on track. “We didn’t have the same dream again, nor did we fall into Real Dreamscape. We slept very normally.”

“That’s good,” Shang Jianyao said in all seriousness. He then laughed. “Do you need me to call you to use the bathroom at three?”

“There’s no need!” Long Yuehong replied firmly.

If he went to the bathroom in the middle of the night, he was afraid of following in the footsteps of Mu Renjie!

After the call, Bai Chen and Long Yuehong returned to bed.

The two of them took more than 20 minutes to fall asleep again. They also kept worrying that Shang Jianyao would call again at some point in time.

Long Yuehong wanted to disconnect the phone, but he was afraid of missing key matters.

The two of them slept uneasily until 7:30 in the morning.

Although they usually woke up a little earlier than usual for breakfast during workdays, it was Sunday. They had suffered a shock last night and couldn’t sleep well.

They originally planned on waking up at 9 a.m. and having snacks for a simple meal.. In the end, Shang Jianyao called again and reminded them: It was the day of the parent-meeting session, so they had to make preparations.

Chapter 770: Negotiation

“It’s only 7:30!” Long Yuehong slammed the phone and gritted his teeth.

He wished he could rush back to the 495th floor now and beat Shang Jianyao up. Unfortunately, he wasn’t the latter’s match.

“We’re just in time to have breakfast at the canteen.” Bai Chen had been forced to wake up early countless times. Of course, her previous instances of being forced to wake up early were based on having to move in the middle of the night despite scheduling to wake up at dawn.

“Are you not going to sleep for a while longer?” Long Yuehong asked in concern.

There was still an hour and a half before 9 a.m. They could still get some sleep.

Bai Chen shook her head. “No, I’m completely awake.”

Long Yuehong couldn’t help but look back at the phone on the table. “I can finally understand the complicated feelings the protagonists in the Old World’s entertainment have toward phones.”

He pressed his cold right palm to his face and forced himself to calm down.

After breakfast, Long Yuehong and Bai Chen killed some time before heading out at 9:30. They carried the cloth, biscuits, and fruits they had bought in advance and took the elevator to the 495th floor.

It was Sunday, and many employees were active on the streets and in the Rec Center. A large number of them knew Long Yuehong. Upon seeing him hold Bai Chen’s hand, they smiled meaningfully and greeted him enthusiastically.

Long Yuehong straightened his back and tried his best not to appear constrained and uneasy. He openly greeted his neighbors and led Bai Chen all the way to Zone C, Room 11.

Gu Hong already had the door open and sent Long Aihong and Long Zhigu to loiter around the corridor outside. They were to keep note of the guest’s arrival.

“She’s here! She’s here!” Long Aihong shouted into the room and quickly walked toward Long Yuehong and Bai Chen. She smiled sweetly and said, “Hello, Sister-in-law!”

On the one hand, she was happy for her brother and was ecstatic to have a guest. On the other hand, she had heard her brother mention that her future sister-in-law had a high rank and had saved up a lot of contribution points. If she could build a good relationship with her, wouldn’t she have another source of snacks in the future?

“Hello.” Bai Chen recalled Jiang Baimian’s teachings and prevented the smile on her face from being too stiff.

At this moment, Gu Hong had already walked out of the room and enthusiastically greeted, “Come on in. Why are you chatting at the door?”

We haven’t had the time to chat, alright? Hypocritical woman.?Long Aihong criticized her mother inwardly.

Bai Chen had previously mentally rehearsed the process of meeting the parents. She immediately nodded and greeted, “Hello, Auntie.”

She couldn’t change the way she addressed her before the marriage registration.

Gu Hong swept her gaze across Bai Chen’s face and was rather satisfied. However, she felt a little regretful when she saw Bai Chen’s height.

The smile on her face remained the same. “Come in. Come in.”

Long Yuehong quickly held Bai Chen’s hand and walked into the room with the gifts they had bought, handing the items to his mother. “Mom, this is from Little White.”

“Gosh, you’re too polite. There’s no need to buy these!” Gu Hong smiled as she handed the gifts to Long Dayong.

Bai Chen suddenly found it surreal: This was identical to the scene her team leader had used as an example.

The subsequent development was about what Bai Chen had expected—everyone sat down and smiled as they chatted about how she and Long Yuehong knew each other and whether they had suffered a lot in the Ashlands.

Bai Chen replied frankly since it wasn't anything sensitive.

They chatted until it was almost lunch when Gu Hong finally stood up and smiled. "Let's chat as we eat. We can't go hungry."

"Alright, Auntie." Bai Chen heaved a sigh of relief.

Jiang Baimian had said that if the elders were relatively satisfied during the first parent-meeting session, they wouldn't test her by asking questions that could easily cause conflict. They would only talk about trivial matters.

Therefore, Bai Chen preliminarily believed that her performance just now barely passed. Long Yuehong's parents and siblings had a good impression of her.

Listen more, talk less; praise more, complain less; and smile more, move less. That was all.

While Gu Hong helped Long Dayong serve the dishes and Long Yuehong went to help because he was embarrassed to sit idle, Long Aihong finally found an opportunity to approach Bai Chen and ask with a suppressed voice, "Sister-in-law, why do you like my brother?"

"He's pretty nice. Why can't I like him?" Bai Chen said truthfully.

Long Aihong smiled and asked, "I mean, how did you guys develop feelings for each other?"

Bai Chen recalled and said, "We are together every day, often going through... Uh, often having to face danger together. He also appears very brave and shows his value in you. It's very normal for us to develop feelings for each other."

"I see... How romantic!" Long Aihong recalled scenes from Old World entertainment and sighed emotively with a yearning look.

Bai Chen didn't give the young lady a blow. She didn't even dare to say the words 'go through life and die together,' afraid that it would agitate Long Yuehong's family.

She only smiled and reminded her, "It's unlikely that you will be assigned to the Security Department."

"That's right..." Long Aihong let out a long sigh. She then looked at Bai Chen and said with sparkling eyes, "Sister-in-law, tell me about your adventures. My brother rarely mentions them."

"If there's a chance later." Bai Chen didn't refuse.

Long Aihong immediately beamed. "Alright, alright. Sister-in-law, you're the best!"

After receiving such treatment, Bai Chen suddenly felt like she was starting to blend into the family.

Outside Room 14, at the end of the corresponding corridor, a figure in blue clothes secretly watched Long Yuehong's house.

It was none other than Shang Jianyao.

"What are you doing?" Someone suddenly patted his shoulder from behind.

Shang Jianyao turned around and saw Jiang Baimian's familiar face.

"I thought it was the Order Supervisors." He clearly heaved a sigh of relief.

"Why are you sneaking around?" Jiang Baimian sized up the fellow in confusion.

Shang Jianyao quickly explained, "I'm just afraid that Little White will have stage fright and can't perform well. If anything really happens, I'll rush over and guide Little Red's parents and siblings to ignore the unpleasant scene and do it over."

Jiang Baimian said in exasperation and amusement, "You really value your friends."

“It wasn’t easy for Little Red and Little White these past few years.” Shang Jianyao suddenly spoke sincerely. He then asked Jiang Baimian, “Why are you here?”

Today was only Bai Chen’s meeting of the parents, not a wedding banquet.

Jiang Baimian laughed. “You can care about Little Red and Little White, but can’t I? I came over to see how effective it was and if there’s a need for me to smooth things over.”

“You’re late. It’s already over,” Shang Jianyao pointed out.

Jiang Baimian gritted her teeth. “Life is always filled with all kinds of accidents.”

“Therefore, you find yourself lost as you walk...” The honest Shang Jianyao was quickly pressed to the ‘ground’ by the other Shang Jianaos.

Jiang Baimian slowly exhaled and looked past Shang Jianyao at Long Yuehong’s house. She revealed a gratified expression when she heard the faint peals of laughter.

Jiang Baimian retracted her gaze and said to Shang Jianyao, “Let’s go take a look at your room.”

“What do you want?” Shang Jianyao was horrified.

Jiang Baimian rolled her eyes at him. “Let’s talk about what happened recently.”

Shang Jianyao came to a realization and looked around warily. “I’ll go back first. Come over later. Remember—Zone B, Room 196.”

You make it seem like a spy meeting...?Jiang Baimian didn’t interrupt Shang Jianyao’s fun and watched him walk to Zone B.

In any case, what they wanted to talk about was indeed rather confidential.

After waiting for a few minutes, Jiang Baimian strode forward and calmly headed to Zone B.

Before long, she entered Room 196, where Shang Jianyao lived. She sized up this place that was only six square meters.

She didn't comment. She pulled a chair behind the desk by the window, sat down, and asked, "What are your plans regarding the Life Ritual parish?"

The reason Jiang Baimian found an opportunity to talk to Shang Jianyao about this was that she was worried he would ultimately be unable to calm down and make an irrational attempt.

Shang Jianyao's eyes lit up. "I plan on asking for your help."

"Help with what?" Jiang Baimian raised her guard.

Shang Jianyao—who was sitting by the bed—said with bright eyes, "If we don't take action, will the person who affected Little White and Little Red's dreams be unable to hold back and make them have the same dream again to transmit more important information?"

"It's quite likely," Jiang Baimian evaluated calmly.

Shang Jianyao smiled. "We all know that it's impossible to determine who's who through human consciousness. If the people affected in the dream weren't Little White and Little Red but you and me, could we have sensed the target in reverse, captured him, and interrogated him about his goal and the authenticity of the information regarding the Life Ritual parish?"

"In theory, yes." Jiang Baimian roughly understood Shang Jianyao's plan.

Shang Jianyao excitedly said, "Let's find an opportunity to disguise ourselves as Little White and Little Red and live in Little White's house, waiting to be affected by the dream. We can do this during working hours. It won't be easy to be discovered."

"But it's impossible to disguise ourselves every day. We have no way of knowing when the other party will come to affect our dreams." Jiang Baimian doused his enthusiasm.

Shang Jianyao thought about it and felt a little depressed.

Jiang Baimian scoffed. “A plan can’t rely on coincidence or luck. The success rate of your plan isn’t better than directly asking Mei Shou’an and Minister Xenny if they are members of the Life Ritual parish...”

As she spoke, Jiang Baimian suddenly fell silent.

Shang Jianyao seemed to have received a reminder as he clenched his right fist and punched his left palm. “That’s right. We can ask directly!”

His expression gradually turned ruthless. “It’s too risky and sudden to find Director Su, but we have sufficient and reasonable reasons to find Mei Shou’an and Minister Xenny. Use the excuses of going to Mei Shou’an to fulfill the previous promise of undergoing a body examination and the reporting of Little White and Little Red’s dream to Minister Xenny. When the time comes, conceal the ‘persuasion’ in our conversation and obtain the most realistic answer.”

“What if there’s nothing wrong with them? It’s impossible for you to maintain the effects of Thought Implantation all the time,” Jiang Baimian asked in a deep voice.

Shang Jianyao smiled frankly. “If there’s really nothing wrong with them and that we are the ones overthinking and being used, I will remove my Thought Implantation and accept the corresponding punishment.. Even if I lose everything and get locked up to undergo education, I have no complaints.”