

Ad Infinitum 841

Chapter 841: Fully Armed

After arriving at the underground parking lot attached to the Fire & Iron Hotel, Jiang Baimian said to Shang Jianyao, “You’ll do the driving for now. Let Little White or Little Red do it on the way back.”

“No problem.” Shang Jianyao agreed, but he didn’t walk to the driver’s seat’s door. Instead, he circled to the back of the jeep and opened the trunk.

“What’s wrong?” the honest Genava asked.

The Old Task Force had already transferred the equipment that Genava guarded in the suite back to the car in advance. There was nothing else that needed to be stuffed into the trunk.

Shang Jianyao seriously flipped through the crates, boxes of bullets, a few spare weapons, and a small number of canned food, biscuits, and energy bars. After doing this, he answered Genava’s question. “I’m checking if the Subhuti figurine suddenly appeared in our car.”

What a hellish joke... Just as this thought flashed through Long Yuehong’s mind, he couldn’t help but peek into the trunk.

He still remembered how they had worked hard to investigate the nuclear bomb’s whereabouts in the Salvation Army’s Ubei. In the end, they realized that the target item was quietly lying in the trunk of their jeep.

Therefore, Shang Jianyao’s sudden fantasy was definitely not impossible.

“It’s not there.” Shang Jianyao retracted his gaze in disappointment. “Sigh...”

Those existences shouldn’t have such a lack of imagination. They can’t always be so patronizing using the same script... Jiang Baimian muttered and walked to the passenger seat before opening the door.

The jeep soon drove to the street. Spant was standing by the side of the road, waiting for them.

His car was a reinforced brownish-green sedan. The door was open, allowing one to see the canvas backpack and double-barrel shotgun in the passenger seat at a glance.

“Your breakfast.” Spant walked to the jeep and handed the khaki-colored paper bag in his hand to the slowly lowering glass window.

“What is it?” Shang Jianyao reached out to take it and eagerly opened it.

Inside were pieces of bread with sausages and pickles.

“Pure meat.” Spant pointed at the sausages.

This was considered a rather good breakfast in Gesterbourg.

“Mutated meat?” Shang Jianyao asked.

“Otherwise?” Spant smiled. “Sausages made from natural meat are too expensive. The meal allowance isn’t enough.”

Although Gesterbourg was located near Icefield and was considered cold from late autumn to early spring every year, the climate was relatively normal elsewhere. However, this place lacked basic electrical appliances. Even if there was sufficient electricity, not many people had refrigerators. Therefore, in order to preserve meat for long periods, smoking and curing meat were necessary.

The electrical appliances in Gesterbourg mainly came from the surrounding city ruins, but only a few could truly be repaired after they were dragged back. Most of them had to be dismantled and sold as components.

“Oh...” Shang Jianyao didn’t mind at all and excitedly distributed the bread with sausages and pickles.

He had long wanted to taste the mutated meat.

With their genetically enhanced bodies, it wouldn't affect them as long as they didn't eat it for extended periods.

After taking a large bite and chewing for a while, Shang Jianyao commented, "It's not much different from normal meat, but the gamey smell is stronger."

Despite being made into sausages, it still had a slightly gamey smell. This was enough to elucidate how it was originally.

"That's right." Long Yuehong thought so too.

After they finished breakfast alongside their waterskins, Spant honked, indicating that they could set off by following him.

After driving along the street for a while, the two cars circled around the castle one after another and drove into the road that led out of the city beside the factory area.

The blast furnaces and chimneys immediately reflected in the Old Task Force members' eyes. They spewed gray, yellow, or black smoke upward as if they were fingers reaching into the sky.

Shang Jianyao sighed sincerely. "This is a real Buddhist Holy Land!"

Long Yuehong and the others had no retort.

The two cars left Gesterbourg on a cemented road one after another and drove toward the nearby mountains. On the way, they saw railroads and roads that led to the mines in the mountains, as well as trains and strange trucks that chugged past them, filled with goods.

In about ten minutes, Spant's brownish-green sedan and the Old Task Force's jeep officially entered the mountains.

The greenery on both sides gradually increased, and the roads became more winding. From time to time, they could see bald mountains, collapsed cliffs, and black rivers.

The two cars didn't stop despite passing by the mines; they kept driving deeper.

The road situation limited their speed. About 30 to 40 minutes later, Spant spoke through the inter-vehicle walkie-talkie. “We’re almost there. Remember, don’t spout nonsense. I’ll negotiate.”

He had long noticed that the tallest man—whose name was Doug—had a habit of interjecting.

“No problem.” Jiang Baimian didn’t want to cause trouble over two Grand Knight gold coins and affect the subsequent investigations. Therefore, she was very determined to watch Shang Jianyao and prevent him from doing whatever he wanted.

Shang Jianyao turned around and reminded Long Yuehong and Genava in the backseat, “The two of you heard that, right? When the time comes, silence is gold. Leave it to Spant.”

Heh heh... Long Yuehong criticized in the most succinct way possible.

“What if he can’t deal with it?” the honest Genava asked.

Shang Jianyao immediately laughed. “Then, we can only reluctantly do it on his behalf.”

I hope it doesn’t come to this... Long Yuehong didn’t dare to say that.

After two to three minutes, an open area appeared in front of them. Old trees surrounded a few Old World villas built in the Red River style.

These villas seemed to have been renovated and didn’t seem to have any signs of rot. Their parking lot was at the edge of the forest and was connected.

At this moment, there were more than ten cars and 30 to 40 people in the parking lot. Jiang Baimian looked over and realized that the trucks, sedans, and vans that were carrying the goods were either tightly bundled up in tarpaulin covers or had dark plastic film pasted over the windows, preventing others from seeing the interior.

Most of those people had excellent equipment—bulletproof vests, assault rifles, grenades, walkie-talkies, grenade launchers...

The other 12 to 13 people were relatively poorly equipped. They surrounded different vehicles, mainly carrying rifles, pistols, shotguns, and modified hunting rifles. Only a few held submachine guns.

They undoubtedly didn't have bulletproof vests. Their clothes were different, and the air they exuded allowed Bai Chen to determine that they were unquestionably Ruin Hunters.

The subordinates and a few Ruin Hunter teams they hired... Jiang Baimian nodded thoughtfully and signaled for Shang Jianyao to find a parking spot with Spant.

They were the last to arrive, and all the good parking lots had been occupied. They could only find two spots in the corner of the parking lot.

This was also in line with Jiang Baimian's intentions.

Even a lion uses its full strength when hunting a rabbit, much less a slightly mysterious commission that had been warned to hold a certain risk. The Old Task Force wouldn't participate in the mission slovenly; they planned on being fully armed to prevent any accidents.

Just as they alighted, a man in a gray coat walked over and stopped in front of Spant.

This man looked to be in his thirties. His face was chiseled as if it were carved from stone, and his nose was hooked. His short hair was brownish-yellow, and his eyes were light-blue. He was stoic.

He carried a Red River pistol with 9mm rounds and didn't bring any other weapons, making him appear very different.

Of course, he wore a bulletproof vest under his coat.

"You were almost late," the man reprimanded Spant bluntly.

Spant smiled. "Mr. Sandro, we encountered a car accident on the way and were stuck in a jam for a while."

This was undoubtedly a lie—an excuse.

Sandro didn't harp on the question and directly said, "I'll give you ten minutes to prepare. During the mission, you are in charge of driving your cars and leading the way. Pay attention to the situation on both sides at all times and intercept any problematic vehicles.

"When we return to Gesterbourg, I'll pay you at the Hunter's Guild."

He swept his gaze across Genava and nodded slightly, seemingly rather satisfied with Spant's team. This might be the reason why he didn't mind the fact that Spant and his team were almost late.

With that said, Sandro turned around and walked to the other Ruin Hunters.

"Is this the employer?" Shang Jianyao—who had been holding back his questions for a while—asked curiously.

"Yes, he's our employer, but he's not the owner of this batch of goods. He's the cargo owner's security supervisor, and he used to be a very powerful Ruin Hunter," Spant casually introduced. He then asked, "Do you need to make preparations?"

"Yes." Jiang Baimian glanced at the troops and saw that their gazes were blocked by Spant's sedan. Therefore, she circled to the trunk and raised the crates.

"What are these?" Spant was a little curious.

Nobody replied. The Old Task Force members opened the crates and helped each other put on their equipment.

A military exoskeleton! Two, three... Bionic artificial intelligence armor, two... Spant's eyes gradually widened, and he forgot to close his mouth. What's up with this team? What's going on? Why did a team like theirs take on a mission that's only worth two Grand Knight gold coins? Can it be that their real goal is to rob the goods?

Chapter 842: The Wise

Spant stood there frozen, momentarily unsure if he should get into the car and escape or get the other armed personnel present.

After a brief daze, his mind told him that with the road conditions in the mountains, it was unlikely that he could run faster than military exoskeleton-wearing humans unless he was willing to take the huge risk of jumping down the cliff.

Furthermore, the other party didn't necessarily have to chase after him. Just by standing where they were, they could use the military exoskeletons' aiming functions, grenade launchers, laser weapons, and other powerful equipment to deal a devastating blow to his vehicle.

As for the option of calling out to the armed personnel present, Spant glanced at Genava—who had transformed into a large chameleon—and silently ruled it out.

This smart bot wore the equipment too quickly. It completed its preparations in the few seconds he was stunned and hesitant!

Facing such a fully-armed smart bot, it was probably difficult for all the armed personnel present to break through its defense in a short period of time. They might even be pushed back by it.

As long as it lasted for 30 to 40 seconds, its companions seemed capable of donning their equipment. When the time came, the mere dozens on their side wouldn't be a problem.

Spant's thoughts raced as he couldn't make up his mind.

The Old Task Force didn't wait for him to make a choice. They put on the military exoskeletons and the Blackmarsh Iron Snake bionic artificial intelligence armor.

Upon seeing the team's gazes turn to him, Spant forced a smile and tried his best to appear friendly. "W-why did you want to take on this mission?"

"Didn't you get our help?" The honest Shang Jianyao was very surprised.

Spant was speechless, and his eyes stung. He stammered, "No, that's not what I meant. I wanted to ask, how did two Grand Knight gold coins catch your eye?"

“Two is quite a lot. If we’re frugal, it can last us a month.” Jiang Baimian deliberately feigned bewilderment at Spant’s question.

Their high-performance batteries were fully charged. In the future, they only needed to charge whatever Geneva and the jeep needed every day. As a result, the electricity bill would be greatly reduced.

Spant—who was holding a double-barrel hunting rifle—forced a smile and said, “I just don’t understand why you would take a fancy to such a small mission with y-your strength.”

“What’s wrong with a small mission? It’s simple, convenient, fast, and the payment isn’t especially low. Why not take it?” retorted the honest Shang Jianyao.

Jiang Baimian cleared her throat and consoled Spant. “Don’t think of us as a team that likes to do large deals. We have always adhered to the laws or rules of the various settlements. We are honest, hard-working people. What we earn is all hard-earned money.”

“...” Long Yuehong wanted to criticize inwardly, but he was momentarily at a loss for words.

It’s impossible to exchange for three military exoskeletons, two sets of bionic artificial intelligence armor, and a smart bot with hard-earned money... That’s too extravagant. Even their team’s robot can equip bionic artificial intelligence armor! Spant didn’t dare voice his thoughts.

He smiled obsequiously. “I understand. With you guys around, I’ll definitely be able to easily earn the bounty this time.”

Hold your tongue... That’s called raising a flag...? Long Yuehong muttered inwardly.

In this regard, he knew himself well. He knew that with his team’s glorious history of causing trouble for no reason, taking on this mission might not be a good thing for everyone.

Jiang Baimian smiled and said, “There’s no need to praise us. Spant, you and the others are in charge of leading the way. See if there are any known dangerous figures in the approaching cars.”

“No problem.” Spant quickly agreed.

Jiang Baimian turned to look at Geneva. “Old Ge, take Spant’s car later.”

“Alright.” Geneva understood that he had to shoulder the responsibility of monitoring and reconnaissance.

Although Spant was unwilling, he still smiled and said, “Alright.”

The four carbon-based Old Task Force members then got into their jeep. Bai Chen was in charge of driving, and Jiang Baimian sat in the passenger seat. Shang Jianyao and Long Yuehong sat in the backseat.

As Geneva opened the door to Spant’s passenger seat, he activated the Chameleon bionic artificial intelligence armor’s stealth function.

Spant watched helplessly as a tall and terrifying robot disappeared in front of him, and his forehead couldn’t help but twitch.

Having crossed the Rubicon, he could only force himself to remain calm. He returned to the driver’s seat and placed the canvas backpack over the armrest compartment.

He subconsciously moved his double-barrel hunting rifle toward the passenger seat, wanting to leave it there like before.

By the time he came to a realization that seated in the seemingly empty passenger seat was actually a robot, the double-barrel hunting rifle had already been taken by the air and slowly lowered.

“...” Spant couldn’t describe his feelings with words.

Before long, Sandro walked over and casually looked at Spant’s brownish-green sedan. He then shouted in a deep voice, “Are you ready?”

“Good to go!” Spant wasn’t sure if his smile had stiffened.

Sandro nodded. "Alright, let's set off. You take point. I don't have to repeat what I need you to do, right?"

"No, no." Spant forced a smile and shook his head.

At this moment, the employer's 20 to 30 men got onto the vehicles filled with goods and two individual cars inlaid with bulletproof armor. The other three Ruin Hunter teams were also prepared.

Spant perked up and drove his sedan out of the parking lot and back the way he came. The Old Task Force's jeep followed closely behind.

Following them was another Ruin Hunter team. Further back were the cargo vehicles that started one after another. The dark cars that Sandro and the others were in were mixed in the convoy.

At the end of the team were two other Ruin Hunter teams.

Everyone was familiar with the route, but compared to before, not only did they have to be wary of enemies hiding in the forests, cliffs, and streams on both sides, but they also had to be careful of every car that approached them.

They didn't have the ability to block the road and prevent any cars from passing by, nor did they have the madness of blowing up every car.

As a local Ruin Hunter, Spant carefully identified the drivers, the passengers in the car, an estimation of their strength, and their usual actions every time he saw a car drive over.

Genava used his installed binoculars, information gathering equipment, and the corresponding analysis module. He methodically determined if the person in the approaching cars had any ill intentions from their expressions, lips, and body language.

In the jeep behind, Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao sensed their surroundings without relaxing. In order to earn two Grand Knight gold coins, they could be said to be very professional.

The Ruin Hunter team behind their car was also very careful, not missing a single detail.

A few minutes later, the person in charge of driving suddenly smiled. “The team in front is very careful. I see that the two people sitting in the back have their helmets on.”

“Bulletproof?” his companion asked curiously.

“I’m not sure.” The Ruin Hunter shook his head; he could only see the back of Shang Jianyao and Long Yuehong’s heads.

They didn’t pay much attention to this matter.

In a hidden spot in the distant forest, seven to eight people were lying in ambush.

There were two people in the lead. One was tall, with blond hair and a muscular build. His face was rugged with a hint of wild beauty. The other was thin and had long black hair. His wrinkles were abnormally deep. He was less than 1.75 meters tall, but his eyes were sharp. He wore dark, baggy pants and had one hand in his pocket.

At this moment, the rugged one—who seemed to be of Icefield heritage—held a pair of binoculars. With the terrain’s advantage, he watched the goods-transporting convoy.

He was the first to see Spant, so he grinned and laughed. “There’s only one person in the first car. This unlucky bastard is used as bait, right?”

“It’s meaningless. Our people can completely drive to the middle of the convoy before launching an attack,” said the long black-haired Red River man coldly. He then urged, “Wilde, quickly confirm the situation. The vehicle team is still waiting for us to give the signal for them to drive toward the target.”

Wilde grumbled silently and observed the subsequent cars.

The first thing he saw was a person driving with a military exoskeleton.

“Woah! Look, what am I seeing!?” Wilde moved away the binoculars and rubbed his eyes in disbelief. He then brought the binoculars back to his eyes.

The next second, he realized that not only was the driver wearing a military exoskeleton, but the passengers were also fully armed.

The people in the passenger seat and the backseats were also wearing military exoskeletons. The other person was wearing something suspected to be bionic artificial intelligence armor.

Wilde's eyes almost popped out. "Kislin, the situation is bad. Very bad!"

Kislin frowned and took the binoculars, observing the convoy. Under Wilde's guidance, he quickly found the problem and fell silent.

"Where did they find such helpers?" Wilde shouted uncontrollably.

Upon seeing his companions make a commotion, Kislin looked around and said, "Calm down. It's just a well-equipped team. They are indeed very strong, but they won't be able to stop us without Awakened."

The boorish Wilde objected. "Do you think there won't be Awakened in such a well-equipped team? A child with a treasure won't live to return home!"

Nobody could be sure.

After a long silence, Kislin said in a deep voice, "Retreat!"

Chapter 843: New Friend

As he drove, Spant paid attention to the road conditions and observed the people in the approaching cars.

Frankly speaking, he was a little nervous. When a mission had considerable risks, the participants would more or less be a little nervous unless they had sufficient confidence.

But gradually, Spant understood something. I have a sufficient understanding of my strength and know that there are risks involved in this mission. Therefore, I'm not too confident. However, I'm very confident in the Ruin Hunter team I'm working with!

With their equipment and performance, a single one of them could kill all the armed personnel present alone! This was also the case for any enemy assailants!

After confirming that he was standing on the same side with such powerhouses, Spant suddenly felt a heavy sense of security and deep confidence.

Upon understanding this, he relaxed and threw his nervousness to the back of his mind. He even looked forward to any aggressors discovering the unexpected powerhouses and realizing that the dangerous prey—which only required a little effort to dispatch—had become invincible devils.

When that happens, I would love to see the looks on their faces...?Spant almost spaced out.

His sedan circled the bends one after another and went deep into the mountain's mines.

Even when they left the mountains and saw Gesterbourg, Spant still didn't discover anyone suspicious.

The journey was uneventful.

There was no attack? Was the information Sandro received fake?

?Spant muttered silently. Not only did he fail to heave a sigh of relief, but he also felt a little disappointed.

He was disappointed that the 'great battle' he had looked forward to never happened.

Gesterbourg was close to Icefield. The climate was cold, and there were plenty of mineral resources. The people there were inevitably a little intrepid. Therefore, after feeling that his safety had been guaranteed, Spant rather hoped to see the military exoskeletons and bionic artificial intelligence armor battle the enemy who only had ordinary firearms. He wanted to see how strong such high-level equipment was.

The other person—who also felt high strung—was the cargo owner's safety supervisor and the employer of the few Ruin Hunter teams, Sandro.

He was mostly confused.

His boss was a well-informed person; he had proven this in many ways in the past. He had informed Sandro with great certainty that someone was targeting this batch of goods and had organized a group of powerful figures to launch an attack along the mountain path.

But now, the boss's words didn't come true. The entire process of escorting the goods was as calm as an armed demonstration.

Did Boss get bad information?? This was the only explanation Sandro could come up with, but he didn't relax. He definitely wouldn't lose his vigilance until the goods were delivered into the warehouse.

It wasn't like attacks inside Gesterbourg were unprecedented!

Bai Chen drove the jeep and followed the sedan in front of her through an inspection point.

Perhaps it was because the guards had been bribed in advance or perhaps it was because they never usually checked the vehicles coming from the mines, but in short, they didn't stop them and allowed the convoy to successfully enter the large settlement, Gesterbourg.

After driving along the road outside the factory area for a while, Spant turned into the warehouse area according to the planned route. Before long, he stopped the car in front of an ordinary-looking warehouse that only had two security guards guarding it.

There were indeed no attacks... It was a little wasteful to spend 12 Grand Knight gold coins on Ruin Hunters...? Sandro muttered to himself silently and signaled for the driver to speed up and rush to the warehouse's entrance to complete the handover.

The bulletproof armored car he was in drove past many trucks and headed for the warehouse entrance.

On the way, Sandro—who was in the passenger seat—kept looking to the right and examining the convoy, hoping not to fall just before reaching the finish line.

As he examined the area, Sandro's pupils suddenly dilated—it reflected a window and an iron-black python head behind it!

Sandro then confirmed that it wasn't a python but a person wearing the corresponding bionic artificial intelligence armor.

On the other side, the woman driving wore a cold and stiff military exoskeleton.

If it weren't for the fact that he was still rational and that another man wearing a military exoskeleton had suddenly crossed his body over his companion horizontally and waved 'amiably' through the window, Sandro would've already reflexively used his abilities.

The price he paid was the inability to be excited. He had lost his passion, excitement, and other emotions—even sleeping with women was only a routine. This brought about considerable negative effects in many aspects, but it still played a significant role at times.

Sandro—who couldn't become excited—always reacted a little slower at critical moments. This effectively prevented any accidents such as friendly fire from happening.

Therefore, he didn't attack the Old Task Force immediately. He calmly observed the situation and believed that the team opposite him didn't have any ill intentions.

What he didn't know was that Shang Jianyao and Jiang Baimian had already prepared to cast Literary Hipster and Spatial Hallucination.

Sandro's sedan car passed the Old Task Force's jeep and overtook Spant before arriving at the warehouse door. Sandro then alighted from the car and exchanged a few words with the two security guards guarding the door.

The door to the warehouse opened, and the cargo vehicles drove in.

The four hired Ruin Hunter teams were left outside.

Apart from Spant and the Old Task Force, the Ruin Hunters from the other three teams were overjoyed.

The bounty this time was a piece of cake. Furthermore, it gave them three Grand Knight gold coins!

It was as if they had picked up a large sum of money while out on a field trip. The only difference was that they remained tense and felt a little uneasy—it didn't have the languor of a field trip.

After all the cargo vehicles entered the warehouse, Sandro signaled for the two security personnel to close the door as he walked to the Old Task Force's jeep.

Shang Jianyao had already swapped seats with Long Yuehong. He raised his visor and smiled at Sandro through the open window. "It's only slightly past ten. Are we still getting the free lunch?"

Having not been attacked, the escort mission only took slightly less than two hours.

Sandro—who had long thought of what to ask and how to ask—didn't expect to encounter such a question. For a moment, he was like a robot encountering a bug. He stood there in a daze for a few seconds.

"I don't think so." Sandro finally understood what the other party was asking. The reason he replied was that he had to report to the boss quickly since the mission had been completed ahead of time. He couldn't leave these Ruin Hunters around the warehouse and be with his men.

Upon seeing Shang Jianyao's obvious disappointment, Sandro added, "I'll convert it to Knight silver coins and pay it together with the commission."

Shang Jianyao immediately smiled. "You're indeed a nice guy—you're generous and friendly."

"Oh right." He suppressed his voice and asked curiously, "Who's your boss?"

Sandro shook his head silently. "This isn't something you should know."

"Since everyone completed the mission together, we are definitely considered friends. It's normal for friends to share secrets." Shang Jianyao tried his best to persuade him and even used Thought Implantation.

He planned on taking the opportunity to get Sandro to help keep his team's secret.

Spant would enjoy the same treatment later.

Sandro's eyes glazed over for a moment before he whispered, "It's Mr. Aester."

Director of the Gesterbourg United Mining Association, Aester? One of the five people we want to 'visit' in the future??Jiang Baimian quickly gestured for Shang Jianyao to continue asking.

"Oh!" Shang Jianyao was very excited. "We happen to have something to discuss with Mr. Aester. I wonder if you can introduce us?"

"No problem." Sandro agreed without hesitation. "Follow me later."

"You're such a bro!" Shang Jianyao was touched and praised him. For this, he generously said, "You don't have to pay for the meal. Keep it for yourself."

Without waiting for Sandro's response, he looked at the warehouse and suppressed his voice again. "What are the goods this time?"

Sandro looked around and replied softly, "Some are hard liquor made from potatoes, and some are rare metals."

The former was highly profitable in Gesterbourg and all the settlements in the White Knights. The latter was a strategic resource for many factions.

"Oh, oh." Shang Jianyao lost interest.

After his subordinates unloaded the goods, Sandro left them in the warehouse. He led the three Ruin Hunter teams, the Old Task Force—who had already removed their equipment—and Spant to the Hunter's Guild to wrap up the commission.

After receiving the two Grand Knight gold coins, Shang Jianyao tossed them and said in dissatisfaction, "I think it's better to exchange it for Knight silver coins. A large pile just feels better!"

This was worth 200 Knight silver coins.

Jiang Baimian angrily confiscated the gold coins in his hand. “Isn’t having it portable better? Look at the people in Gesterbourg. Most of them have to bring an additional money bag.”

Wallets excavated from the surrounding city ruins weren’t practical here.

At this moment, Sandro approached and said to Shang Jianyao and the others, “Let’s head over to Mr. Aester’s house.”

Chapter 844: Aester

Aester lived in a four-story building near the castle.

This was likely newly built or renovated in the past 20 years. Unlike the sturdy and solemn-looking houses around it, it was brightly colored, and its style was unrestrained, luxurious, and classy.

“It’s still a little lacking and not perfect enough,” Shang Jianyao commented.

Genava—who was sitting beside him—asked very honestly, “What’s lacking?”

Shang Jianyao rolled down the window, stretched out his arm, and pointed at the building. “Isn’t it in the Old World’s entertainment? Such a building needs a beautiful garden; it’s best if it’s planted with roses.”

The building had neither a garden nor a lawn. It only had a cement square in front of it for parking and to widen the distance between it and houses on the street where pedestrians could throw bombs.

“The weather here isn’t suitable for gardens or lawns either,” Genava explained seriously.

Shang Jianyao raised his hand. “Get a greenhouse or a winter-resistant lawn. You have to prove yourself with money!”

Genava was momentarily at a loss for words.

At this moment, Sandro parked the car and came to the Old Task Force's jeep. He asked Shang Jianyao and the others, "Are you guys going in with me now?"

"There's no need to make a request in advance?" Jiang Baimian asked in surprise.

Even if Sandro was Shang Jianyao's good brother now and was Aester's security supervisor, it didn't make sense for him to violate professional ethics and bring people in without his employer's permission.

The fact that he could help introduce and persuade Aester was already deserving of his status as a 'good bro.'

Upon seeing how reasonable the Old Task Force was, Sandro smiled and nodded. "I'll bring you to a reception room on the first floor before asking the boss."

This wasn't considered excessive in his jurisdiction.

He then added, "But the robot has to stay, nor can you bring the military exoskeletons or bionic artificial intelligence armor. It's best not to bring obvious weapons like assault rifles or submachine guns."

You probably don't know that your good brother is much more dangerous than a robot...? Jiang Baimian muttered inwardly.

The next second, she saw Shang Jianyao open his mouth. She suspected that the fellow wanted to ask if he could bring a nuclear bomb, so she answered Sandro immediately. "No problem."

She then pushed open the door and alighted. She said to Genava, Bai Chen, and Long Yuehong, "Old Ge, White, Red, stay here and look after the supplies in the trunk."

She spoke in the Red River language, but it didn't affect the way she addressed Bai Chen and Long Yuehong.

Their Red River names were White and Reder.

Upon seeing Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao remove the grenades and other items from their belts, Sandro nodded in satisfaction before kindly reminding them, “Actually, you can bring a pistol for self-defense. Of course, you can trust me completely. There’s nothing to worry about.”

“I plan on bringing this.” Shang Jianyao pointed at the remaining black flashlight on his belt.

“What’s the use of that?” Sandro asked in confusion.

Shang Jianyao picked up the flashlight and introduced it with a smile. “It looks like a flashlight, but in fact...”

Just as Long Yuehong thought that this fellow was spouting nonsense about ‘it’s actually a laser transmitter,’ Shang Jianyao switched on the flashlight and shone the yellow beam to the side. “It’s actually a flashlight.”

This almost stunned Long Yuehong.

“However, it’s very sturdy and relatively heavy. It can completely be used as a bludgeon.” Shang Jianyao waved the flashlight a few times as if he were holding a bludgeon or a hammer.

Jiang Baimian resisted the urge to facepalm and said to Sandro, “We definitely trust you. There’s no need to bring any weapons.”

She didn’t say that her and Shang Jianyao’s strongest weapon was themselves.

She had Awakened abilities and an electric eel-like biomechanical limb. Shang Jianyao was an Awakened who had explored the Mind Corridor’s depths.

Sandro said in relief, “Let’s go in then.”

With him leading the way, the armed guards along the way didn’t stop them at all and allowed them to enter the four-story building.

The furniture and decorations here matched the house's style very well. It was mainly luxurious and beautiful.

Jiang Baimian casually sized up the area as Sandro led them to a reception room with a fireplace.

"You rely on coal for warmth in the winter?" Shang Jianyao was rather interested in this matter.

Burning coal was strictly prohibited in Pangu Biology's underground building residential area. Ordinary residents couldn't exchange for coal either.

"No, this is just a decoration." Sandro shook his head. "There's relatively little anthracite production near Gesterbourg."

He didn't explain how this place was warmed. After all, he wasn't selling the house.

He pointed at the ceiling and said, "Wait a moment. I'll go up and report to the boss."

"No problem," Jiang Baimian replied with a smile.

Sandro left the reception room and walked up the stairs.

When he reached the third floor, the surveillance on him increased. As Aester's security supervisor, he was extremely familiar with this. He ignored it and went up the stairs to the fourth floor.

After passing through two checkpoints and asking which room the boss was in, Sandro came to a heavy, dark-red wooden door, bent his finger, and knocked thrice.

"Come in." The voice inside sounded slightly tired and old.

Sandro turned the doorknob and walked into the room.

This was a relatively spacious solarium. There was a recliner by the window, and a stack of books, a cupcake, and a cup of black tea stood on the coffee table beside it.

The sky in Gesterbourg was often dark, and the sunlight had to filter through layers of dust to reach the ground. Everyone yearned for the sun.

At this moment, an elder in his fifties was sitting on the recliner. His blond hair had faded significantly, and his straight nose had a few spots. His blue eyes were surrounded by unconcealed wrinkles, and the skin on his cheeks—which weren't too chubby—had clearly fallen.

This wasn't Icefield, and the weather was pretty good today. The temperature wasn't low at all, so the calm elder in his fifties only wore a light-blue shirt with a dark-red sweater and gray pants.

He closed the book in his hand, took off his reading glasses, and looked at Sandro. "You brought guests? Have the goods been delivered to the warehouse?"

"Yes, nothing happened on the way. I suspect that the attacker was deterred by a Ruin Hunter team we hired and chose to give up." Sandro reported the serious matter first.

The latter half of the sentence was his guess, and the other half was a reasonable explanation for his recommendation of the Old Task Force.

He was only Shang Jianyao's good brother and not a fool. He naturally had to think of a way to patronize the boss and not let the latter feel that he was abusing his power for personal gain and be generous at the expense of his boss.

Aester nodded. "That Ruin Hunter team is the guest you brought?"

"Yes." Sandro recalled his good brother's exhortations and didn't introduce the guests' firepower in detail.

Aester fell silent for a moment as if he were thinking about something else.

Just as Sandro felt a little uneasy, Aester looked at him again and said in a deep voice, "Sandro, your performance today isn't like the past you. I'm not saying that you did something wrong, but you wouldn't have taken matters into your own hands in the past and brought the guests here directly. You would've settled them somewhere before reporting it to me. You'd only bring them here when I confirm the time for us to meet."

Sandro became more and more alarmed as he listened. Toward the end, his forehead even broke out into a cold sweat.

He snapped to his senses and blurted out, "I was affected by an Awakened ability!"

Aester nodded slightly. "As expected. Recount the situation; don't miss anything."

With that said, Aester closed his eyes and leaned back in his chair. He assumed a posture of him listening and being in serious thought.

Sandro recalled his encounter and focused on his interaction with Shang Jianyao.

After he finished speaking, Aester didn't move for a while.

The director of the United Mining Association opened his eyes and deliberated for a moment. "Bring them up. I want to see what they plan on doing."

"This way, there's no guarantee of your safety." Sandro played his role of security supervisor.

Aester fell silent for two seconds before smiling. "Don't worry. I won't do anything I'm not confident in."

Sandro could only obey orders. He went down to the first floor and led Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao to the top floor.

On the way, Shang Jianyao tried to speak to him, but the latter ignored him. Therefore, Jiang Baimian knew that Hey had probably lost a brother.

After entering the solarium and seeing Aester, Aester said to Shang Jianyao before he could speak, "Don't speak."

Aester then looked at Jiang Baimian. "You do the talking."

Jiang Baimian was already used to such scenes and directly said, “Mr. Aester, we’d like to make some inquiries.”

Aester laughed involuntarily. “Why do you think I’ll answer your questions? Can you afford a payment that I can’t refuse?”

“How do you know that it won’t work if we don’t give it a try?” Jiang Baimian was already mentally prepared and had the corresponding excuse. “Why don’t we do this? Mr. Aester, hear what we have to say before offering a price you think is suitable.”

Shang Jianyao wanted to raise his conditions, but nobody agreed to him speaking.

Aester fell silent for a while before saying, “What do you want to ask?”

“Have you seen this person?” Jiang Baimian reached into Shang Jianyao’s pocket and took out the photo they had prepared.

Sandro took it and brought it to Aester.

Aester glanced at it and said, “Someone asked me this question not too long ago—I did.”

“What we want to know is what they asked and what kind of answer they obtained.” Jiang Baimian finished speaking in one breath. “Alright, you can name your price.”

She unnoticeably didn’t mention the possibility of rejection and directly focused on the price.

Aester fell silent again, so silent that Jiang Baimian suspected that Shang Jianyao was about to lose his patience and flare up to let the other party know what it meant to do things the hard way.

Finally, Aester smiled and said, “I don’t lack money, but I have some regretful matters that require someone to help me resolve.”

Chapter 845: Regretful Matters

This is much more troublesome than money...? Upon hearing Aester's request, Jiang Baimian—who only had two Grand Knight gold coins—sighed. She then asked, “What is it? If it's too difficult and exceeds our abilities, we can only choose to give up.”

She deliberately didn't show that they were determined to get an answer out of him, lest Aester went overboard with his request. If that happened, the situation would become even messier and even bring them trouble.

Shang Jianyao didn't whimper, nor did he nod or shake his head. He was rather cooperative.

Aester seemed to sink into his memories, and it took for him a while before he said, “What I need your help with might be very dangerous for others. Apart from those who have nothing to speak of except their lives, nobody will be willing to take on the job. However, you are different.”

Jiang Baimian frowned and asked, “Mr. Aester, aren't you overestimating us?”

She wasn't blindly arrogant at all. Although the Old Task Force's strength could be considered outstanding in the Ashlands, and Shang Jianyao was considered to be part of the most powerful group of people under the New World powerhouses while New World powerhouses rarely could move freely and rarely did anything, Jiang Baimian—who had experienced so much—didn't dare let it get to her head. Ignoring the ruins with various dangers that only New World powerhouses could likely resist, just an Awakened's feeble body made her treat this matter with great importance.

It wasn't like no powerful Awakened had failed miserably and died at the hands of those with relatively weaker abilities or even ordinary people!

Aester smiled. “I don't mean that the danger of the matter is nothing to you but that you would likely do it even if it's very risky. There's a high chance that you will.”

“Is that so?” Jiang Baimian tried her best to show her puzzlement, confusion, and worry to show her lack of confidence in their strength.

Aester's gaze swept across her and Shang Jianyao's faces a few times before he smiled. “The matter you are investigating is clearly related to Ceningmis. The regret I want you to help make up for is also related to Ceningmis. Therefore, I have reason to believe that even if you know how dangerous Ceningmis is now and that nobody who enters has come out, you will still head there and make an attempt.”

Jiang Baimian fell silent for a moment before saying, “That depends on whether the last reason can persuade us. Compared to our lives, certain things aren’t that important.”

Aester nodded. “Then, listen to my commission first.”

He emphasized the word ‘commission.’

“Please speak,” Jiang Baimian replied seriously. Shang Jianyao also wore a serious expression.

Aester revealed a reminiscing expression. “You should already know that Ceningmis was destroyed in a disaster 12 years ago.”

Without waiting for Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao’s ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ he continued, “It was a sudden Heartless outbreak; it was unprecedented since the Old World’s destruction. Of course, all of this is only hearsay as there were no real witnesses. None of the people who entered managed to come out either.”

“Then...” Shang Jianyao finally couldn’t help but attempt to speak, but he was silenced by Aester and Sandro’s suddenly sharp gazes.

Jiang Baimian roughly guessed his meaning and took the initiative to ask, “Then, where does the hearsay come from?”

“It originally came from a caravan that went there to make a trade. Before they entered Ceningmis, they encountered the Heartless ambling out. They realized that the situation was a little off,” Aester explained in detail. “They sent people to circle around to the mountain range west of Ceningmis and made use of the terrain and binoculars to observe the situation inside. They only found Heartless with no survivors.

“The caravan returned to Gesterbourg in horror, believing that Ceningmis had suffered a large-scale Heartless outbreak. After that, everyone sent people to Ceningmis’s entrances to wait for a while. However, not a single survivor was found. Instead, they encountered several Heartless attacks.

“As a result, we suspected that Ceningmis had become a city ruin like the ones during the Old World’s destruction—a Heartless paradise. This meant grave danger, and it also meant wealth.

When the coldest season in Icefield passed, the people who knew Ceningmis's exact location took a risk, hoping to obtain valuable supplies from the city ruin. However, none of them returned."

Jiang Baimian had heard this from the leader of the Farstriders caravan, Smith. Furthermore, this wasn't a secret in Gesterbourg.

She nodded indiscernibly and said to Aester, "Please continue."

Her request referred to him continuing to explain the commission.

Aester fell into a daze. "For you to be able to find me, you must know that I once had a close business partnership with Ceningmis. I established a company there and lived there for five to six months a year. During such a life, I betrayed my marriage and let my wife down. I had a mistress in Ceningmis, and that mistress gave birth to two of my children—a boy and a girl.

"I was very lucky. When Ceningmis's Heartless outbreak happened, I was in Gesterbourg, accompanying my family. However, my mistress and my two children were in Ceningmis back then..." Aester's voice gradually softened.

The White Knights used their chivalrous creed as a standard of conduct. They emphasized loyalty and promoted simplicity and restraint. The rules stipulated that one man could only have one wife.

Jiang Baimian didn't comment on Aester's private matters and patiently waited for him to get his emotions in check. Shang Jianyao acted like he wanted to criticize, but he couldn't speak.

After a while, Aester composed himself and continued, "I don't have any hope of whether they are still alive or whether they have yet to become Heartless. My commission is that if you ultimately choose to enter Ceningmis, help me go to the other home I've lived in for many years and retrieve their corpses. If there are no corpses there, bring back my child's teddy bear, a random box of Lego, and a certain item from my mistress. This will allow me to bury any regrets when recalling the past."

"We'll consider it." Jiang Baimian secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

This mission didn't conflict with the Old Task Force's investigation of Ceningmis.

Jiang Baimian then pointed out a difficulty. “But we don’t know where you lived in Ceningmis.”

“When you’re sure you want to go, I’ll give you Ceningmis’s city map and circle out my residence there.” Aester was indeed rather familiar with Ceningmis.

Jiang Baimian tersely acknowledged his words and nodded slightly. “You need to give us a reason to enter Ceningmis now.”

It was what Shang Jianyao’s father’s Old Task Force had asked from him.

“How did it become me begging you to get that information from me?” As Aester laughed self-deprecatingly, he handed the photo in his hand to Sandro to return it to Shang Jianyao.

After Shang Jianyao took the photo, Aester revealed a reminiscing expression again. “They gave me some effective biological agents. In exchange, I told them a rumor I heard in Ceningmis. At Ceningmis’s Council of Virtue—yes, the people who rule Ceningmis have always professed one thing—Ceningmis is unique and favored by God, preventing it from suffering during the Old World’s destruction or having many Heartless outbreaks happen.

“This doesn’t sound like much; it can only prove that they are religious. However, a business partner of mine once told me a piece of intelligence in his delirium after drinking the hard liquor I secretly brewed.

“There’s a big shot behind the Council of Virtue. He’s the real leader of Ceningmis and the real reason why Ceningmis was spared from the Heartless outbreaks and the devastating blows. He called himself the ‘Kalendaria’s Son.’”

Kalendaria’s Son...?Jiang Baimian frowned. “Which Kalendaria?”

“I don’t know about that.” Aester rubbed his eyes, looking exhausted. “If there’s nothing else, you may leave. When you decide to enter Ceningmis, come to me for a map.”

“Alright.” Jiang Baimian didn’t tell Aester and the others that they had already made up their minds. They would definitely enter Ceningmis in about a week’s time.

Aester leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes.

Sandro sent Shang Jianyao and Jiang Baimian downstairs on behalf of his boss. On the way, he—who had been silent for a long time—couldn't help but ask, "Did you take on the protection mission to create an opportunity to use your abilities on me and get me to bring you to meet the boss?"

Jiang Baimian laughed involuntarily. "That's actually a coincidence. We came from afar and have almost used up the supplies we brought along. We also didn't want to cause any trouble in Gesterbourg and affect our investigation of the corresponding intelligence, so we could only go to the Hunter's Guild to take on missions that are relatively difficult and moderate in difficulty."

'Afar' could be the southernmost area of the White Knights' sphere of influence or somewhere further away.

Sandro fell silent again.

He didn't expect two Grand Knight gold coins to attract such a group of people.

Chapter 846: Request

After taking a few steps down the stairs, Shang Jianyao suddenly exclaimed.

"What's wrong?" Jiang Baimian turned her head and asked, "You can speak now."

Shang Jianyao clenched his right fist and punched his left palm. "We forgot to ask Aester another question!"

Upon being reminded, Jiang Baimian immediately recalled that Aester was involved in something else: Some of the goods that Smith's Rootless team sent to the ice ruin came from Aester!

In other words, even if he wasn't the cargo owner suspected to be an Eighth Research Institute partner, he should've seen that person or obtained some clues.

The latter two situations were more likely. After all, Aester had only provided a portion of the supplies, and Gitis had easily found this out. It didn't match the caution used to erase memories on a large scale.

Jiang Baimian immediately turned around and said to Sandro on the other side, “Please bring us up to meet Mr. Aester again. We forgot an important question; this directly affects whether Mr. Aester’s regret can be made up for.”

She deliberately exaggerated the latter half of her sentence and forced the communication to prevent Sandro from rejecting her and taking more effort.

In fact, if one were to delve deeper, there was nothing wrong with what she said.

That batch of goods involved the Eighth Research Institute, and Ceningmis was guarded by the Eighth Research Institute. Whether they could investigate the former would indeed affect the Old Task Force’s exploration of Ceningmis. The Old Task Force’s exploration in Ceningmis undoubtedly affected Aester’s regret directly.

The reason Jiang Baimian forgot to ask about the goods was that she had been mentally occupied by the term ‘Kalendaria’s Son.’

As Jiang Baimian was the one speaking and not Shang Jianyao, Sandro deliberated for a few seconds and said, “Alright.”

He was constantly wary of Shang Jianyao’s words.

After turning around, Sandro led Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao back to the fourth floor.

He didn’t directly go to the room where Aester was. He stayed at the last checkpoint and recounted the matter, getting his colleague to report the matter to the boss on his behalf.

The guard took a few steps to the solarium, bent his finger, and knocked thrice.

No response.

He knocked three more times.

Still no response.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

He knocked three more times and added some strength.

Finally, Aester's slightly deep and exhausted voice sounded from the solarium. "What is it now?"

Upon hearing Aester's response, Shang Jianyao heaved a sigh of relief and happily muttered to himself, "Fortunately, nothing happened. I thought a coincidence happened such that the key witness dies on the spot and is silenced."

These words attracted the attention of Sandro and the guards. Some of them even had some anger.

Don't say anything if you can't do it nicely...?Jiang Baimian grumbled. Frankly speaking, she had the same worries.

Similar situations often appeared in the Old World's entertainment. The protagonist team would finally find a clue and lock onto a key witness. But due to a combination of factors, they were a step too late, resulting in the key witness being silenced by the murderer.

After the guard knocking on the door repeated Sandro's words, Aester fell silent for a moment. "Let them in."

The fatigue in his tone made Jiang Baimian feel like she was disturbing a patient.

In the solarium, Aester seemed to have already adjusted his posture. At present, he was only leaning against the recliner slightly with a blanket covering his lower body.

He looked at Jiang Baimian and said, "Same thing as before. You do the asking."

Jiang Baimian politely asked, "Mr. Aester, did you recently provide a batch of goods to Smith's Farstriders caravan?"

Aester revealed a look of enlightenment. "The batch of goods that went missing in Icefield?"

“Yes.” Jiang Baimian nodded, and Shang Jianyao did the same.

Aester smiled and said, “I did provide some supplies to the Farstriders caravan, but it only accounted for a small portion of that batch of goods.”

Jiang Baimian asked in one breath, “What supplies were they? Who bought them? Who got you to hand them over to the Farstriders caravan?”

She deliberately showed that the Old Task Force had never suspected that Aester was the real cargo owner in case Aester really was the one. This was to prevent them from alarming the other party and causing something unexpected to happen on the spot.

In short, they had to obtain a certain answer first before analyzing the truth. Finally, they had to consider whether they should go all out and force a friendship.

Aester smiled and asked, “Why should I answer these questions? What kind of payment can you provide this time?”

He emphasized ‘payment,’ indicating that it wasn’t about the money.

“What do you want?” Jiang Baimian didn’t know Aester well, so she couldn’t figure out what his weak spot was.

If Aester had to get the Old Task Force to propose something, she planned on starting by offering some medical drugs and biological agents invented by Pangu Biology. After all, Aester didn’t seem to be in good health at his age. Furthermore, Shang Jianyao’s father’s team had exchanged information using such items.

Although the White Knights were also very strong in the corresponding domain and Aester had the money and status, making it easy for him to obtain certain drugs, Pangu Biology’s products still had their own characteristics. Sometimes, something foreign was better.

Of course, this would expose the Old Task Force’s identity to a certain extent.

Aester seemed to have fallen into his thoughts, and his eyes lost focus. After a while, he seriously said, “My request is that you immediately leave Gesterbourg after obtaining the information you

want on these two matters. Don't stay a second longer or get involved in anything. Of course, it would be even better if you went to Ceningmis after you left Gesterbourg."

This request... It's impossible for him to know that matters crop up and cause a considerable storm wherever our team goes, right? He wants to send us out of the borders as soon as possible to ensure his safety?

?As Jiang Baimian found it a little strange, she casually agreed. "No problem."

The Old Task Force had come to Gesterbourg to investigate Shang Jianyao's father's team and the Eighth Research Institute's secret personnel!

Without waiting for Aester to speak, Jiang Baimian added, "But during our investigation of these two matters, we can't sacrifice ourselves and only escape if someone provokes us and comes looking for us."

She meant that they would focus on their investigations and not poke their noses into other people's business. They would leave as soon as they completed the mission. Apart from that, there was no guarantee.

Aester fell silent for a moment before nodding. "Sure, I believe in your promise. At the very least, you've acted trustworthy until now. The corresponding information actually has nothing to do with me, so it won't affect me even if I tell you."

He then said, "Smith should've told you that the relevant personnel have lost their memories regarding the missing goods. Having Awakened among you, you definitely know what this means. I'm not an exception—my memories have also been wiped away."

At this point, Aester smiled. "However, this doesn't conflict with me still knowing the relevant details."

Has he found a way to avoid the influence of Memory Erasure, or rather, it was indeed deleted back then, but he later recovered the portion of memories through some means??Jiang Baimian tried to understand the meaning behind Aester's words.

She felt that if Shang Jianyao could speak, he would definitely ask, "How did you?" However, the other party would undoubtedly not answer.

Aester continued, "I provided some rare metals to the Farstriders caravan. The person who made the payment and commissioned me to do this was Mor."

"Mor? That intelligence peddler?" Jiang Baimian had been repeating these names recently.

Aester nodded. "Yes. As for where he got the money and why he bought such a batch of goods, I don't know the answer, nor do I want to know. I'm only a merchant. I provide the goods once I receive a suitable price and sufficient payment."

"Understood." Jiang Baimian nodded slightly.

According to Aester's answer, she didn't find any signs of lying. However, she had always been careful and wouldn't believe him so easily. But she didn't plan on obtaining Aester's 'friendship' now and making him not hold back. After all, the other party was clearly wary of Shang Jianyao's Thought Implantation.

Furthermore, Aester was mysterious and likely had trump cards. If they really 'befriended' him, it was difficult to say what the final outcome would be.

Caution was of utmost importance. Jiang Baimian planned on 'visiting' the intelligence peddler, Mor, first. She would then decide if she wanted to return to Aester based on his feedback.

When the time came, they would probably be sneaking in and completing the control of him by surprise.

After bidding Aester farewell for the second time, Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao returned to their jeep under Sandro's surveillance. Bai Chen drove the car out of the parking lot.

"The Kalendaria's Son?" Long Yuehong repeated the term with a frown after hearing his team leader's recount.

Shang Jianyao immediately laughed. "What's strange about that? Some Kalendarium have bodies of descent, so it's normal to have human sons."

“From the looks of it, the Kalendaria’s Son had really protected Ceningmis, preventing it from suffering a devastating blow when the Old World was destroyed...” Long Yuehong found the logic relatively reasonable.

Shang Jianyao glanced at him. “Wasn’t Master Zhuang’s hometown—Linhe Village—and the places ‘He’ studied—Tai City, and Dajiang City—destroyed? ‘He’ is a real Kalendaria, not some Kalendaria’s Son.”

Chapter 847: Reaction

In the face of a counter-example, Long Yuehong couldn’t come up with a retort. He could only shut his mouth and stop discussing the problem.

It couldn’t be that the places where Master Zhuang’s body of descent lived were targeted when the Old World was destroyed, right?

At this moment, Bai Chen—who was driving—asked, “Are we finding the intelligence peddler, Mor, now? It’s almost noon. Do you want to have lunch first before going in the afternoon?”

“No, let’s go now!” Shang Jianyao replied first.

He explained rather agitatedly, “What if Mor is silenced when we are having our meal? There are too many instances of such things in the Old World’s entertainment. We can’t afford to make similar mistakes.”

As he spoke, he became earnest.

Uh...?Long Yuehong was stunned for a moment. However, he had to admit that Shang Jianyao had a point.

Such a situation really had to be prevented from happening.

Jiang Baimian tersely acknowledged it. “It’s only 11. It won’t take long to ask for information; let’s find Mor first.”

If they wanted to capture the tail of the Eighth Research Institute—a secret organization—they had to be careful and not give them a chance to react!

The Old Task Force had previously received the information regarding Mor and the others from Gitis, so there was no need to ask further. After making several turns, they arrived at a block with a complicated environment.

The buildings here seemed to be unplanned as they were haphazardly arranged. Some were placed very close to each other, and some were very far away, separating into alleys that led nowhere.

The outer walls of the apartment where Mor lived were grayish-black. It gave off a heavy and unsophisticated feeling, forming a sharp contrast to Aester's house that exuded opulence and beauty.

Gesterbourg was near Icefield. Most of the buildings here made indoor heating their first consideration, which resulted in such an architectural style.

Of course, the houses with similar styles were mainly built after the Old World was destroyed. The ones that belonged to the Old World weren't like this because the climate hadn't changed back then, and Icefield had yet to expand. Although the weather in Gesterbourg wasn't as warm as in the south, it wasn't bitter cold.

Bai Chen parked the jeep and looked up the apartment. "Mor lives on the top floor of this building."

Jiang Baimian observed for a while before suddenly smirking. "The two intelligence peddlers in Gesterbourg are a little strange. There's no need to mention Gitis. Mor's choice also indicates certain contradictions."

"What choice?" Long Yuehong asked in confusion.

Jiang Baimian looked around. "The streets and alleys here are like spiderwebs. They are rather complicated, but the people living here are basically the factory workers and their families. The composition is very uniform.

"In other words, Ruin Hunters like us are like lions among a flock of sheep the moment we enter this block. We are very eye-catching, and we can't hide our incompatibility with this place. Mor only needs a few spies to monitor if there are outsiders and what they look like. He can then make a

judgment ahead of time and determine if he should immediately leave his residence to hide in a spare safe house or make sufficient preparations to wait for business to arrive.

“This is the basic behavior of an intelligence peddler.”

Long Yuehong came to a realization. “The contradiction is that he chose to live on the top floor where it’s most inconvenient to move and evacuate?”

“Yes.” Jiang Baimian nodded slightly.

At the same time, Shang Jianyao laughed. “Wouldn’t it be more convenient if his safe house is in the same building? Besides, the top floor is also conducive for him to personally observe the situation in this block. Or he has a military exoskeleton and can easily and quickly go from the sixth floor to the ground floor with the help of the protrusions in the walls.”

He became more and more ridiculous.

“According to Gitis, Mor is old and no longer has the heart to do this. Such a person won’t place his safe house near his home because he’s afraid that the enemy will take the opportunity to search the surrounding houses,” Jiang Baimian said simply. “There’s a possibility that being right in the open makes it easy for the enemy to mistake him for not being home, but would Mor dare to take the risk? He might’ve dared to do so when he was young, but now...”

At this point, Jiang Baimian changed the topic. “But if he’s really related to the Eighth Research Institute, we do have to be wary of military exoskeletons or other accidents. Old Ge, come up with us this time. Little Red, Little White, stay by the car.”

She took the opportunity to make arrangements.

Shang Jianyao, Jiang Baimian, and Geneva then followed the address provided by Gitis and went to the top floor along the cold and dark corridor.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Shang Jianyao eagerly knocked on Mor’s door.

A violent cough sounded as someone approached the peephole from behind the door.

“Who are you, and what are you doing here?” asked a slightly hoarse voice with phlegm in his throat through the thick wooden door.

“We’re here to get some news,” Shang Jianyao replied in the manner Gitis stipulated.

After a few seconds, the door creaked open. Someone coughed and said, “Come in.”

Shang Jianyao immediately rushed in, and Jiang Baimian and Genova—who had been hiding to the side—followed closely behind.

Mor’s hair was already white, but it was obvious that his hair was the usual Gesterbourg blond in his youth.

His back was slightly hunched, and he coughed from time to time. His expression wasn’t too good, and there were many patches on his skin. He looked ashen.

At this moment, the room was filled with a stench—a result of prolonged lack of cleaning.

Mor held a United 202 in his hand. He walked to the window, turned around, and said to Jiang Baimian and the others, “How may I help you?”

His gaze lingered on Genova the longest.

After Mor retracted his gaze, Genova raised his right hand and curled his thumb and index finger while extending his three other fingers at Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao.

This gesture meant that there were no especially dangerous items in the room—including Mor—according to the scanning and inspection.

“We want to find out something.” Shang Jianyao took a few steps forward, took out a Knight silver coin that Jiang Baimian had given him, and flicked it at Mor.

After Mor caught the silver coin, he smiled and said, "This is the deposit."

"You're very generous." Mor's vigilance clearly decreased a little, and he no longer controlled his cough.

Shang Jianyao immediately replied, "Yeah. Now that you've accepted our money, it's equivalent to agreeing to the establishment of a transaction. As a trustworthy person, you definitely won't lie to us or not answer our questions."

He directly used Thought Implantation.

At this point in the investigation, there was a high chance that they would come into contact with the Eighth Research Institute. The Old Task Force didn't dare to be careless.

Mor's eyes glazed over for a moment. "What do you want to know?"

Shang Jianyao smiled and asked, "Who commissioned you to get Aester to buy a batch of rare metals for the Farstriders caravan?"

Mor's expression changed, and his face suddenly warped. He seemed to have fallen into an indescribable struggle as if an angel and devil were having a tug-of-war in his mind.

The next second, Mor raised his pistol, pointed it at his head, and tried to pull the trigger.

But due to the change in his expression, Shang Jianyao and Jiang Baimian had already raised their vigilance and tensed up. They immediately reacted when they realized that something was amiss.

Whoosh!

Jiang Baimian used her left hand to throw a grenade that still had its ring. It accurately smashed into Mor's hand, deviating his muzzle.

With a clang, the United 202 landed on the ground.

Bang!

A bullet unexpectedly flew over from afar, shattered the window glass, and struck Mor.

Mor's upper body instantly collapsed, scattering blood everywhere.

Two gunshots sounded again, and Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao dodged in time.

When they rolled to a blind spot, the gunshots subsided.

"It's an anti-materiel sniper rifle." Geneva made a judgment based on the severity of the damage to the room and Mor's corpse.

Jiang Baimian didn't immediately stand up and said in a deep voice, "Rough location."

"According to my calculations, the enemy was 398 meters away and at the top of the 17th-floor building but has already left." Geneva—who had wanted to snipe back—failed.

This exceeded the range of Shang Jianyao's abilities.

The 17-story building... That's the Gesterbourg United Mining Association building...? Jiang Baimian left her hiding spot and ran to the window as she ordered, "Chase after him!"

Although the other party had long evacuated by the time they arrived, there might still be some clues left. Furthermore, it wasn't convenient to carry anti-materiel sniper rifles; they were relatively eye-catching. If the Old Task Force could rush over, they might encounter some witnesses.

Jiang Baimian wasn't wearing a military exoskeleton, but she relied on her amazing balance and coordination. With the help of the protruding windowsill, she jumped down one floor after another and quickly descended to the ground floor. Shang Jianyao and Geneva mimicked her and weren't slow at all, akin to agile apes.

During this process, Jiang Baimian understood something.

Mor should've had his thoughts implanted. Once he was controlled and tried to reveal the Eighth Research Institute's information, he would commit suicide in various ways. Furthermore, there was another person hiding in the dark, constantly monitoring him. They would silence him if anything went wrong.

Chapter 848: Sniper

The moment she landed, Jiang Baimian dashed to the jeep and said to Long Yuehong and Bai Chen, "Go to Mor's room and search for any clues related to the Eighth Research Institute. Then, wait for the Gesterbourg sheriff to come."

This place was a land of law, an important settlement under the White Knights. It was impossible for nobody to care about how many people died when something of this sort happened, unlike in the wilderness. Therefore, the Old Task Force had to consider the existence of the officials and cooperate to a certain extent. This was to prevent them from having to hide in Gesterbourg to carry out investigations; it would only seriously affect their progress.

Most importantly, the White Knights were a large faction, and it wasn't like they didn't have powerhouses. It was very likely that one of them was asleep in Gesterbourg. It wouldn't be easy for the Old Task Force to do much here.

Once they were exposed, the officials on the surface and the Eighth Research Institute lurking in the dark would be enough to make their lives miserable. They would be finished if they weren't careful.

Bai Chen and Long Yuehong knew that something had happened from the sound of glass shattering. Therefore, they didn't waste their breath and left the jeep to run into the apartment ahead.

As they had to cooperate with Gesterbourg's sheriff for future investigations, they only brought their basic weapons and walkie-talkies. They didn't bring the military exoskeleton or bionic artificial intelligence armor with them.

At the same time, Jiang Baimian didn't think too much about it. She opened the door and sat in the driver's seat.

Shang Jianyao took a look and hurriedly got into the passenger seat. "Listen to my instructions!"

Jiang Baimian grunted and came to a realization. She didn't insist.

After Genava got into the jeep, Shang Jianyao began to point the way.

They were about 400 meters away from the United Mining Association. The route wasn't complicated if they took the main road instead of alleys; therefore, the Old Task Force didn't get lost and quickly arrived at the destination with brownish-yellow walls.

In front of the building was a small square. There weren't many people at this moment, coming and going with nobody stopping.

After parking the car, Jiang Baimian and the others pushed open the door and ran across the square to the United Mining Association's main entrance.

There were many armed guards. When they saw two humans 'storm over' with a robot, they immediately became nervous and raised the guns in their hands.

Just as the captain was about to give a warning to stop the intruders, Shang Jianyao shouted, "Don't be afraid; we're on the same side!"

The words 'same side' were deeply imprinted in the guards' minds. They relaxed one after another and lowered their muzzles.

"What happened? Why are you guys in such a rush?" the guard captain asked curiously.

As Shang Jianyao ran toward them like a gust of wind, he simply replied, "There's a sniper on the roof!"

He ran past the guards and left a last word in the wind. "He killed Old Mor..."

The United Mining Association guards came to a realization and believed him without a doubt.

A few seconds later, Jiang Baimian and the others entered the United Mining Association's lobby. This place was paved with stone excavated from the mountains, and it was luxuriously decorated and resplendent. It was so spacious that it seemed to allow two teams to play basketball.

Before the receptionist could ask who they were looking for and what the matter was, she saw the group of people rush to the elevator, leaving echoing footsteps only.

She was stunned for a few seconds before she quickly picked up the phone and informed her superior.

“There’s actually an elevator. As expected of the United Mining Association.” Shang Jianyao pressed the button in relief.

As she waited for the elevator, Jiang Baimian took the opportunity to catch her breath. “It’s a mainstay industry in Gesterbourg after all.”

It had constantly produced tycoons.

She then looked around and thoughtfully said, “There are no cameras in the elevator lobby... Are the White Knights lacking in electronic products?”

This led to few surveillance cameras in a place like the United Mining Association.

“That seems to be the case,” Geneva replied according to the information he had gathered so far.

Shang Jianyao smiled. “Maybe it’s just that some people don’t want to install them to prevent them from getting in the way.”

Nobody replied because the elevator arrived on the ground floor. The elevator’s two doors opened.

Jiang Baimian and Geneva entered the elevator first, and Shang Jianyao wasn’t much slower.

“There are cameras here.” Jiang Baimian looked up.

Shang Jianyao raised his hands without hesitation, pressed the corners of his eyes and mouth, and made a face at the camera.

Thanks to the elevator, the Old Task Force team quickly arrived at the top floor and went up the stairs to the rooftop.

After finding the location from where the shot was fired based on Geneva's calculations, the three of them spread out, looked for traces, and carried out a search.

"It's indeed here..." Geneva came to a conclusion not long after.

"Yes." Jiang Baimian nodded first before frowning. "There are no other clues. We can only preliminarily determine that he left through the stairs."

They didn't find any items left behind by the sniper at the scene, nor did they discover any fingerprints or anything else.

"Based on the present situation, that's indeed the case," Geneva agreed.

Shang Jianyao clenched his right fist and punched his left palm. "He knows that there are cameras in the elevator!"

"Let's go down and take a look," Jiang Baimian ordered.

The 17th floor wasn't too high for the three of them—just descending the stairs consumed relatively little stamina. After a while, they returned to the ground floor and realized that the stairwell exit was very close to the building's back door.

From here, there was a wall and a sentry post.

Outside the sentry post, there weren't many people on the street because it was office hours.

"Did you see anyone just now?" Shang Jianyao asked the guards at the sentry post.

Jiang Baimian added, "He was holding a relatively long box or carrying it on his back."

The guards imagined that the sheriff was investigating something. They seriously recalled and shook their heads. “Nothing.”

“Then, did anyone leave through this door in the past ten minutes?” Jiang Baimian asked.

The guards gave a negative answer again.

After exchanging looks, Shang Jianyao and the others returned to the stairwell.

“Either that person didn’t leave the building at all, or he affected the guards and made them ignore his existence. Yes, we can’t rule out the possibility of memory erasure...” Jiang Baimian muttered to herself.

They didn’t consider crossing the wall because the soldiers in the sentry post would see them the moment they left the building’s back door.

Genava then said, “For the street leading to the back door, most people seem to have to work, so nobody is home during the day. It’ll be very difficult to find witnesses.”

Perhaps some passersby had encountered the sniper, but these pedestrians had already left. The Old Task Force wouldn’t be able to find them any time soon.

Shang Jianyao suggested, “Search the entire building, exchange a few words with everyone, and take a look at the surveillance footage.”

“This will take too much time. The Gesterbourg sheriff should be here soon, so he won’t give us a chance.” Jiang Baimian thought for a moment and smiled. “Hey, come back with me to Mor’s place to undergo the investigation. Old Ge, stay nearby and find a place to monitor the building’s front and back doors. See if that person will take the initiative to appear and swagger away after we ‘give up.’”

Clap! Clap! Clap!

Shang Jianyao applauded this train of thought.

This was called luring the snake out of its hole.

...

Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao drove the jeep back to Mor's apartment without hiding anything.

At this moment, two white sheriff's cars with blue stripes were parked downstairs.

"That's pretty fast," Shang Jianyao praised.

Jiang Baimian nodded. "This means that Gesterbourg is relatively orderly."

The two of them chatted all the way to the top floor and saw two public security officers in bulletproof armor guarding the door.

"You are?" the public security officer—who was taller than Shang Jianyao—asked in a muffled voice.

"Witnesses," Jiang Baimian replied with a smile.

After declaring their identities, the two of them were allowed into the house and saw Bai Chen and Long Yuehong being investigated by a sheriff.

The sheriff had a thick golden beard and blue eyes. It was impossible to tell how old he was, but he couldn't be more than 50 years old.

He pointed at Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao and asked Bai Chen and Long Yuehong, "Are they your companions?"

"Yes." Bai Chen and Long Yuehong nodded at the same time.

The sheriff then looked at Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao and said, "According to other eyewitnesses, the two of you were the ones who entered the apartment to visit Mor."

“That’s right,” Jiang Baimian replied calmly. “We did witness More getting shot, but it’s obvious that this has nothing to do with us. The bullet came from outside the window and from afar.”

The inspection of the scene could fully prove this. The golden-bearded sheriff didn’t question her and nodded. “Why were you looking for Mor? Why did you leave in a rush after the accident?”

“To get information. Don’t you know that he’s an intelligence peddler? The answer to the latter question is to chase after the sniper.” Jiang Baimian smiled. “We’re Ruin Hunters; it’s impossible for us to miss an opportunity to make a fortune. I think you won’t be stingy with the bounty, right? Besides, didn’t we leave our companions behind to protect the scene and wait for you to carry out the investigations?”

Without waiting for the sheriff to ask further, Shang Jianyao interrupted coldly, “If we really wanted to kill Mor, we wouldn’t have chosen this time and method. Instead, we would’ve first put him under our control and pretended that he was fine before secretly bringing him to the factory area and finding an opportunity to throw him into molten iron.”

Everyone fell silent.

Chapter 849: In the Clear

The sheriff fell silent for a moment before saying, “Based on evidence at the scene, it’s true that you didn’t kill Mor. Our White Knights have always been fair and won’t wrong an innocent person. But as witnesses, you have the duty to answer some of my questions.”

“No problem.” Jiang Baimian was indeed frank and open about this.

The sheriff looked around and deliberated over the order of questions.

At this moment, the polite Shang Jianyao asked, “How may I address you?”

“Yergai,” the sheriff replied simply before getting to the point. “What did you want to know from Mor?”

“The mysterious disappearance of Smith’s caravan’s goods,” Jiang Baimian said truthfully.

As an experienced sheriff in town, Yergai had heard of this rather bizarre matter. He asked in surprise, “Mor is related to this matter? Or did you want to buy the corresponding information from him?”

“We learned from someone that a portion of the goods that vanished into thin air was bought and gathered by Mor.” Jiang Baimian didn’t give Yergai a chance to ask who it was and took the initiative to emphasize, “We promised to keep it a secret for that person and can’t tell you his identity.”

Yergai stroked his golden beard. “I’ll continue investigating. If it’s necessary in the future, it’s not up to you to keep silent on this matter.”

He meant that according to the White Knights’ rules, the private deal was lower than public interests when it involved heinous crimes. When the time came, the Old Task Force would have to face coercion if they wanted to keep it a secret.

“Understood.” Jiang Baimian didn’t harp on the problem.

It wasn’t like she had to keep a secret for Aester. Nobody could find fault with her behavior according to the White Knights’ rules in its sphere of influence.

Yergai nodded in satisfaction and looked at the shattered glass window. “Recount the situation in detail.”

Jiang Baimian didn’t miss out on any details and only hid the fact that Shang Jianyao had used his abilities on Mor.

Toward the end, Yergai frowned. “Did Mor take the initiative to walk to the window and have his back face out? When he heard you ask who commissioned him to gather supplies and hand them to the Farstriders caravan, he fell into a struggle as if he wanted to commit suicide?”

“Yes.” Shang Jianyao gave sufficient affirmation, and Jiang Baimian nodded.

Yergai stroked his beard and muttered to himself, “There’s a nontrivial problem behind the missing goods. I have to report it to the vice commander as soon as possible...”

“Which vice commander?” Shang Jianyao asked with bright eyes.

If it were Eman, the Old Task Force might take the opportunity to build a relationship and complete a ‘visit.’

Eman was on the list of five people that Gitis had given them. The Old Task Force had already visited Aester and Mor.

Yergai was alarmed. “Vice-Commander Pollard, is there a problem?”

Grand Knight Havel had more than one assistant.

“No, I’m just a little curious,” Shang Jianyao replied rather sincerely.

Yergai didn’t continue the topic and asked, “Where did your pursuit bring you?”

“The United Mining Association,” Jiang Baimian replied. “As you know, we have a robot. It calculated the trajectory of the bullet on the spot and realized that the sniper was on the building’s rooftop.”

She then highlighted their tracking and exploration results and finally explained why Geneva wasn’t here. “We didn’t have enough manpower, so we couldn’t investigate the building’s interior. We could only get our robot to guard the area and monitor the people entering and exiting the building.”

Yergai thought for a few seconds and said, “Thank you for your cooperation. You are temporarily free of suspicion, so you may leave. However, don’t leave Gesterbourg for the time being because I might need your help in the investigations at any moment. Where do you live now?”

“Fire & Iron Hotel.” Jiang Baimian probed, “Mr. Sheriff, have you thought of commissioning us to investigate this matter? Our fees are very reasonable, and we know the case well.”

She wanted to step in and track the sniper in the most reasonable manner. Once they captured that person in a short period of time, it meant that they had captured the Eighth Research Institute’s tail.

Yergai sized them up in surprise. “Do you want to figure out the missing goods matter through the gunman, or do you want to take the opportunity to earn some money?”

“Both, both.” Jiang Baimian laughed.

Yergai wiped his beard and said, “We will definitely do the preliminary investigations ourselves. If there are indeed difficulties and can’t resolve them for the time being, we will consider issuing missions at the Hunter’s Guild.”

He spoke rather cautiously and didn’t make any guarantees. After all, this wasn’t something he could decide.

In most places in the Ashlands, the role of public security officers and the police was mainly to maintain order, not to crack cases. When they encountered relatively simple cases, they could resolve them in passing. Once the matter was relatively complicated, they would be in a predicament of not having enough manpower and finding it difficult to assign a team to deal with a difficult case for extended periods. They could only rely on the help from Ruin Hunters.

“You can consider us directly.” Jiang Baimian didn’t show any urgency to pursue the matter. She only reiterated their attitude.

She then reminded Yergai, “The sniper might still be hiding in the building. You have to make a timely investigation; he might escape if you delay any further. Watch the surveillance footage as well. Although only cameras are installed in the elevators, and the sniper had taken the stairs when he evacuated, things hadn’t developed to the point of him necessarily gunning down Mor when he first entered the building. He might not have been that careful and had taken the elevator.”

“My colleagues already rushed over when your companion previously told me about the gunman’s suspected location.” Yergai didn’t reprimand Jiang Baimian for being a busybody, but he also appeared a little impatient. “Do you Ruin Hunters need to teach Gesterbourg’s sheriff how to investigate?”

Jiang Baimian didn’t say anything else and led the Old Task Force members out of Mor’s house and into the jeep.

As they drove toward the United Mining Association, Long Yuehong—who was in the passenger seat—took the initiative to say, “I believe the sniper has already left, and he is also an Awakened. The guards were affected by his abilities and either ignored or forgot the corresponding scene.”

Smack!?

Shang Jianyao clenched his right fist and punched his left palm. “The target is indeed still in the building!”

While Long Yuehong was rendered speechless, Jiang Baimian rubbed her temples. “Be serious.”

Shang Jianyao’s expression changed as he said seriously, “I think there’s a high chance that Yergai and the others won’t be able to figure out anything. When we take over, where should we start?”

The fact that the investigations carried out by the officials in Gesterbourg didn’t bear fruit meant that the sniper wasn’t in the surveillance footage, that there were no traces of gunpowder on everyone in the building, the anti-materiel sniper rifle couldn’t be found, and the guards really didn’t remember such a person leaving.

As for getting eyewitnesses from the pedestrians, it was something that took a long time. The sheriffs would definitely leave it to the Ruin Hunters.

Bai Chen—who was driving—immediately said, “Get Old Ge to check if there are any traces of deletion or interference from the surveillance footage.”

“That’s one aspect,” Jiang Baimian added. “The other is to ask along the street by the back door. The main targets are the bosses or employees of the shops by the street.”

This would be a very tedious job because there was more than one route of escape.

Jiang Baimian tersely grunted and said, “Also, ask Mor’s neighbors and informants. It’s impossible for the Eighth Research Institute to have sent people to secretly monitor him only recently and silence him the moment they discover something amiss. There should be similar personnel around him since he started serving the Eighth Research Institute.

“Over such a long period of time, the monitors will more or less make mistakes. Nobody can avoid making mistakes. Neither can you or me.”

Clap! Clap! Clap! Shang Jianyao clapped—

As the four of them conversed, the jeep arrived outside the United Mining Association again and picked up Genava.

“Did anyone leave the building?” Shang Jianyao asked impatiently.

“There were three public security officers in Gesterbourg before the sheriff came; they took the main entrance. I’ve already recorded their looks and will carry out further investigations.” Genava never disappointed.

“Alright.” Jiang Baimian looked at the sky outside the window. “Let’s get some food and return to the hotel to wait for news.”

Having received funds, they had a simple lunch and entered the Fire & Iron Hotel.

The receptionist for the day shift today was still Gitis.

With listless eyes and unknown thoughts, she immediately perked up when she saw the Old Task Force return. “Mor is dead?”

“You’re really well-informed,” Shang Jianyao praised sincerely.

Gitis didn’t become arrogant because of this. She fell into a daze for a moment and said, “Many people know that the United Mining Association was locked down.”

Jiang Baimian smiled. “Then, do you know that Mor died under a sniper gun?”

The corners of her mouth curled up bit by bit as she revealed a mysterious smile. “Yes.”

Chapter 850: Taking on the Job

Upon hearing Gitis say ‘yes,’ Shang Jianyao became excited. “Then, do you know the sniper’s whereabouts?”

Do you think an intelligence peddler is a deity who knows everything...? Long Yuehong couldn't help but criticize inwardly.

Gitis's eyes momentarily lost focus before returning to normal. She maintained her mysterious smile and said, "If there's a need, it's not impossible."

"What do you mean?" Jiang Baimian's expression turned serious.

Gitis replied in a slightly ethereal voice, "As long as you pay me enough, I can help you find the sniper. Of course, I can't guarantee success."

"How much is the payment before it's enough?" Jiang Baimian didn't offer a price herself.

Gitis thought for a few seconds and said, "Ten Grand Knight gold coins. I'll try my best to give you an answer in three days. Five Grand Knight gold coins will give you feedback in two weeks. One Grand Knight gold coin might take a month or two.

"You don't have to pay now—just pay a deposit of ten Knight silver coins. When I get the corresponding information, you can pay based on the importance of the information and the time it took."

In other words, after paying the deposit, the Old Task Force would have to pay her ten Grand Knight gold coins if she could find the sniper's whereabouts in three days and so on.

"Very reasonable." Although the Old Task Force had less than three Grand Knight gold coins in total, Jiang Baimian agreed without hesitation. "Deal."

The earlier they learned of the sniper's whereabouts, the better. As for money... With the Old Task Force's strength, why would they be afraid of not being able to earn it?

Jiang Baimian actually wasn't too confident that Gitis could provide the corresponding information in the end. However, there was definitely more hope in this matter. At most, she would lose the ten Knight silver coin deposit.

If Gitis was indeed well-informed to such a terrifying extent and could really find the sniper's whereabouts, it would be a pleasant surprise for the Old Task Force. Compared to this information and the value of this joy, the ten Grand Knight gold coins were nothing.

Jiang Baimian then took off her tactical backpack and took out a large handful of Knight silver coins. She counted a total of 30 and handed them to Gitis.

She reminded her, "You can return the collateral from before to us."

The Old Task Force was originally short of 20 Knight silver coins.

Gitis's eyes lit up. After seriously counting the silver coins, she opened the drawer and took out Jiang Baimian's United 202.

As Jiang Baimian checked her gun, Shang Jianyao reminded Gitis, who was busy tidying the Knight silver coins. "There might be a very powerful and terrifying organization backing that sniper. If you want to find his whereabouts, you have to pay attention to your safety. You can't expose your existence just to obtain information quickly. You have to be careful!"

The stiff-looking Gitis was clearly stunned. As an intelligence peddler, she had never encountered an employer who specially reminded her to be careful of her personal safety.

Of course, words like 'be careful' and 'don't walk that path at night' were clearly not included.

Sometimes, Hey is a role model when it comes to ethics...?As Jiang Baimian placed the United 202 back on her belt, she sighed inwardly.

After the Old Task Force walked upstairs, Gitis fell into her world again. She sat there with listless eyes, her thoughts unknown.

After returning to his room, Long Yuehong said worriedly, "We're short of more than half the ten Grand Knight gold coins."

Most of the Hunter's Guild missions were paid in Knight silver coins, and very few involved Grand Knight gold coins.

Jiang Baimian replied in amusement, “If she really can get us to pay those ten Grand Knight gold coins, I’ll sell my blood even if it’s needed to pay her!”

That would be great news!

The honest Genova reminded her, “From various sources, the blood business in Gesterbourg isn’t good. Official members of the White Knights regularly donate blood. Their borders aren’t stressed, and there aren’t many bandits. There are very few cases that require blood transfusions.”

This was different from First City, where there were many unlicensed clinics that required a lot of blood.

Ordinary residents, who were injured during work accidents to the point of needing a large number of blood transfusions, often gave up. Despite the White Knights abiding by the Knight’s creed and providing some subsidies, it was still very stressful for their families.

In short, Genova meant that selling blood in Gesterbourg wasn’t a good business that could earn large sums of money.

“I’m just giving an example,” Jiang Baimian replied weakly.

Shang Jianyao said, “If it really doesn’t work out, we’ll sell the nuclear bomb to the Grand Knight in Gesterbourg! This can at least exchange for a lot of Grand Knight gold coins, right?”

Long Yuehong wanted to criticize inwardly, but he was momentarily at a loss for words.

Jiang Baimian laughed. “Should we leave Old Ge in a hidden spot outside when selling the nuclear warhead and tell the Grand Knight that if you don’t buy the nuclear warhead, we’ll get our companions to issue the detonation sequence remotely so that we can perish together?”

“Of course, if he buys it, we will still keep the nuclear warhead for the Ashlands’ peace and serenity. He can only extract it when he’s forced into a corner to intimidate others.”

“...” The corners of Long Yuehong’s mouth twitched.

The keyword that surfaced in his and Bai Chen's minds immediately was: Extortion!

"No," Shang Jianyao replied seriously. "What if that Grand Knight is a Mind Corridor-level Awakened and is good at Electromagnetic Interference? If that happens, the remote issuance of the detonation sequence will be distorted and can't produce the corresponding effects."

"You were actually considering the feasibility?" Jiang Baimian was peeved and amused. She then quickly concluded, "The money problem is relatively easy to resolve. Things will naturally work out when the situation calls for it. On the other hand, the sniper's whereabouts are difficult to find. Yes, let's wait patiently for news."

When it was almost dark, the Old Task Force had just finished dinner and returned to the Fire & Iron Hotel when they ushered in a visitor. He was none other than the Gesterbourg sheriff, Yergai, that Jiang Baimian and the others had previously met.

Having changed into a thick black coat, Yergai knocked on the Old Task Force's door with a pair of thin black gloves.

In this season, the temperature in Gesterbourg was fine during the day, but it was still rather chilly at night.

After opening the door, Shang Jianyao smiled enthusiastically. "Mr. Sheriff, are you hiring us?"

Yergai coughed awkwardly and walked into the room. "We didn't find any clues at the United Mining Association, and there are still many things we need to deal with in Gesterbourg. Therefore, we plan on entrusting the complicated mission of tracking the sniper's whereabouts to the Hunter's Guild. I'm here because I hope you can participate as well. In this matter, no Ruin Hunter knows the exact details better than you."

"What's the payment?" Jiang Baimian asked with a smile.

Yergai cleared his throat and said, "Every valuable clue found will be rewarded with a Grand Knight gold coin. Five Grand Knight gold coins to lock onto the sniper's whereabouts."

He didn't mention the payment for capturing the target because it was tacitly agreed that the sheriff would cooperate with the local Knight Order to prevent Ruin Hunters from taking the opportunity to have 'legal' gunfights in the settlement.

Five Grand Knight gold coins... If Gitis can really find the sniper's whereabouts in three days, we would only be two and a half Grand Knight gold coins short...?Long Yuehong quickly calculated and felt that it was fine. The difficulty of earning money wasn't too great.

Although they should've taken on the mission from Yergai under normal circumstances and then bought information from Gitis at a lower price to earn a little bit of money, the Old Task Force's goal wasn't to obtain the bounty but to capture the sniper. They were also willing to pay the price.

Jiang Baimian thought for a moment and said, "No problem. Mr. Sheriff, please inform us of the United Mining Association's exact situation today. This can effectively save everyone's time, right?"

This was what they deserved, so Yergai didn't find it excessive. He took out a stack of information that he had long prepared from the inside of his coat and handed it to Jiang Baimian. "These are the results of the investigation and the surveillance footage."

As the Old Task Force had expected, nobody in the surveillance footage had taken the elevator while carrying a relatively long box. Nobody in the building had traces of gunpowder, nor was the relatively eye-catching anti-materiel sniper rifle found.

Furthermore, the public security officers in Gesterbourg also asked about the three people who had left before they arrived. They visited them for questioning and searching, but they didn't discover any problems.

After quickly scanning through the report, Jiang Baimian pondered for a moment and said, "We need the complete surveillance footage."

Yergai glanced at Geneva and nodded slightly. "It has also been prepared."

He then took out a small memory chip.

After Geneva finished reading and copying the data, Yergai took back the information and chip and headed to the Hunter's Guild to issue a mission.

After sending Yergai downstairs, returning to her room, and closing the wooden door, Jiang Baimian asked Genava, “How’s it? Any traces of the surveillance footage being deleted?”

The speed at which carbon-based humans could analyze couldn’t compare to Genava’s. He had already produced the results and told Long Yuehong, Bai Chen, and Shang Jianyao. At this moment, he repeated his answer: “No, there are no signs of interference either.”

“It seems like he did go through the stairs.” Jiang Baimian thought for a few seconds and said, “Let’s go to the United Mining Association now and take a look before asking around.”

In order to prevent the loss of clues, she had to race against time.

“Alright!” Shang Jianyao couldn’t wait.

The five Old Task Force members went downstairs and saw Gitis packing her items, waiting for her colleague to switch shifts.

Upon seeing this, Jiang Baimian casually asked, “Any results?”

Any results in finding the sniper?

Gitis looked up and suddenly revealed a mysterious smile. “Yes.”