

Ad Infinitum 911

Chapter 911: So-called Accommodation

Jiang Baimian nodded with a normal expression. “I’ve thought it through.”

The ‘Jiang Baimian’ examined her face for a while before sighing. “From the looks of it, it’s not the answer I want. Do we really have to fight and determine who’s better?”

Jiang Baimian had already questioned herself repeatedly during this period of time, and her will regarding this matter had gradually become firm. She calmly said, “Hey is risking himself in the New World in an attempt to figure out the truth and muddy the waters. Little White and Little Red are lurking in the company. Once an opportunity presents itself, they will face all kinds of dangers head-on and present the entire truth to everyone before organizing them to escape the underground building. Old Ge is clearly not a member of the company, but he has to be in charge of providing support and taking on considerable risks.

“They are all risking their lives on this matter. How can I betray them and choose to compromise? Our team has risked our lives together so many times. Nobody will back out at the last minute unless there’s no hope and there’s a need to ensure continuity.”

Without waiting for the ‘Jiang Baimian’ to respond, she continued, “Besides, the essence of our dream is to prevent humans from always having the Heartless disease hanging over their heads and preventing human civilization from suffering the Old World’s destruction again.”

“Are you really not afraid of death? Aren’t you afraid of changing Daddy, Mommy, and the others’ comfortable lives?” That Jiang Baimian sighed.

Jiang Baimian smiled. “I remember a saying: ‘Nothing is important except death.’ Nobody isn’t afraid of death—even Hey has a timid personality. dot c//om

“Hey is the linchpin in this matter. I’m only doing some support work, and the dangers and difficulties I face are far inferior to his. Besides, we are in the Ashlands. It’s not like we can live our lives peacefully until we are old and feeble just because we are afraid of death. If the problem with the New World isn’t resolved and the battle there doesn’t end, even the company’s directors can’t guarantee that we won’t become Big Boss’s food in the next decade or two.

“Once there’s a development in the New World, Big Boss will need to be replenished. Nobody is spared.”

At this point, Jiang Baimian concluded, “I’m afraid of death, but I’m not so afraid that my feet will go limp when I hear that there will be grave danger.”

The ‘Jiang Baimian’ sighed and said in a self-deprecating tone, “It seems like we have to determine who’s better.”

Jiang Baimian didn’t answer. She walked toward the golden elevator in front of her other self.

Step by step, she walked very firmly.

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That Jiang Baimian’s expression changed slightly. “Do you think I won’t stop you?”

Jiang Baimian smiled and said, “I’ve figured something out in the past few days.”

“What is it?” the other ‘Jiang Baimian’ asked with a solemn expression.

Jiang Baimian maintained her smile and said, “Why is the advice at the end of the Sea of Origins to find her, accept her, and accommodate her?”

The ‘Jiang Baimian’ didn’t speak.

As Jiang Baimian walked forward, she smiled calmly. “Our situation is different from Hey’s. He really has many split personalities, so he has to force the other party to cooperate to pass this hurdle. We essentially have the same personality—one is light, and the other is dark.

“As long as I admit that I have a selfish side and don’t forcefully reject or attempt to deny it, making a final decision after repeated deliberation and hesitation basically means that I’ve completed a reconciliation with myself.

“This time, I chose to continue. But in the future, I will definitely constantly adjust my strategy according to the situation. I might choose to take a direction that’s more beneficial to me at any moment and give up on this matter out of selfishness.”

Jiang Baimian didn't deny that she had selfish thoughts in her heart, nor did she hide the fact that she might shrink back as things progressed.

She smiled very broadly.

The 'Jiang Baimian' revealed a hesitant expression.

Be it challenging the windmill like Don Quixote or selfishly giving up, entering the Mind Corridor was a good thing. This could effectively enhance Jiang Baimian's strength. If she really wanted to cower in the future, this was also one of the most important things needed to ensure her safety.

In comparison, it would be a waste of time if the two parties kept wrangling and couldn't advance any further. It would make them lack the ability to deal with unexpected changes.

If one were really selfish, they would naturally know what to choose under such circumstances. Putting aside the dispute and developing themselves together, only to decide on the future when it came!

Jiang Baimian walked to her side, smiled at her, and nodded before continuing forward.

The 'Jiang Baimian' subconsciously wanted to reach out to grab her, but her entire body suddenly swayed and became rather blurry.

Her figure overlapped Jiang Baimian's body, slowing down her footsteps.

Although she became slow, Jiang Baimian continued forward. However, she occasionally quickened her pace and slowed down, showing the struggle in her heart.

In just a few steps, she arrived in front of the golden elevator. The other Jiang Baimian had already completely fused with her.

The true meaning of finding her other self, accepting her, and accommodating her wasn't to overcome or destroy her. Not was there a need to fear her like a tiger or stand alongside her, much less bow down to her and blindly echo her.

Everyone had many facets, and every facet was their true selves. As long as they could finally admit this and frankly consider the corresponding aspect when considering problems and making decisions in the future, it would be considered as them facing their other selves, accepting them, and accommodating them.

Jiang Baimian had already thought this problem through rather clearly over the past few days. After she told her other self her opinion, struggles, and reasons, she knew that the other party wouldn't be able to stop her.

She stretched out her right hand and pressed the golden elevator button.

The elevator door opened, and Jiang Baimian stepped in and pressed the only button.

As the door closed, the elevator quickly rose, but it also made Jiang Baimian feel weightless without the laws of physics acting on her.

As her body and thoughts floated, balls of light appeared around her. The different balls of light had words that she could directly understand.

They were: Color Hallucination; Multi-limb Hallucination... Comprehensive Hallucination; Mirror Dimension; Limbs Disorder; Illiteracy; Partial Blindness; Limbs Agnosia; Prosopagnosia; Color Deficiency; Directionally Challenged; Direction Indetermination...

Some of these balls of light were clear and close enough for her to reach out and grab them. Some were rather far away and very blurry, requiring her to use all her strength to touch them.

Jiang Baimian noticed that it was just as Shang Jianyao had described. There were two other balls of light hanging above her head. One was 'Number Increase,' and the other was 'Increased Distance.'

Jiang Baimian—who had long considered the relevant problem—thought for a moment and made a decision. She stretched out her hands and grabbed at two balls of light first; they were Mirror Dimension and Directionally Challenged.

The former was an ability the Old Task Force had encountered and was called Virtual Machine by Shang Jianyao; it was very powerful. The latter was a problem that Jiang Baimian was deeply troubled by. She planned on letting her pursuers have a taste of being directionally challenged if she was forced to escape in the future to offset the time she wasted getting lost.

Among them, Mirror Dimension could be upgraded from Spatial Hallucination, so it was very close to Jiang Baimian. She casually stretched out her hand and grabbed it, holding it in her palm and fusing it into her body.

Directionally Challenged had nothing to do with Jiang Baimian's three abilities. It floated very far away, and Jiang Baimian had to expend a Herculean effort to touch it.

By the time Jiang Baimian fused with Directionally Challenged, the golden elevator had already stopped.

Jiang Baimian didn't hesitate to seize the last opportunity and wave her hand upward. She touched Increased Distance.

Jiang Baimian knew very well that in the Awakened domain, a greater perception range often meant that one had the initiative. The perception range was equivalent to the maximum effective range of some of her abilities.

It was precisely because of this that she had reserved a spot for Increased Distance.

Just as the ball of light entered Jiang Baimian's body through her palm, the elevator door opened.

Jiang Baimian heaved a sigh of relief and walked out of the elevator to her Mind Room.

This place was empty. A vermilion door with a brass handle was embedded in a wall.

Jiang Baimian looked around, walked to the door, opened it, and walked out to examine her door number.

It was 1175.

She nodded and retreated into the room. Then, she turned her Sea of Origins into a mirror and hung it on the wall opposite her.

Looking at the slightly deep mirror, Jiang Baimian smiled and muttered to herself, "I thought I would be able to see the door to the New World just opposite my room."

At this point, she sighed and smiled at the mirror. "Such good things are unlikely to happen in the future...?"

If I enter the New World, who will move the nuclear bomb to the right spot and issue the command at the right time to detonate it?

As she muttered to herself, the corners of Jiang Baimian's mouth curled into a mocking smile. It was unknown who she was mocking.

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In Pangu Biology's underground building, Long Yuehong looked at the door and then looked down at the recording pen in his hand.

Chapter 912: Review

After entering the underground building, Long Yuehong and Bai Chen handed over all their items as usual.

The employee in charge of the initial inspection wore gloves and seriously flipped through the items as they underwent security checks.

As he flipped through the items, he looked at Long Yuehong and Bai Chen. "A recording pen?"

This was something repeatedly emphasized in the security check manual to look out for.

"Yes." Bai Chen calmly looked at the recording pen in the other party's hand.

The male employee in charge of the initial inspection requested a list of supplies—through the electronic equipment—the two people opposite him were in possession of when they left the company and did a comparison. “You guys only obtained it a few days ago?”

“How should I put it?” Long Yuehong smiled. “It used to belong to us, but we just brought it back this time.”

At this moment, the captain in charge of the entrance approached and asked with a frown, “What do you mean?”

Long Yuehong looked around and suppressed his voice. “We often go out on missions, so we leave some items outside so that we don’t have to hand them over.”

The Security Department employee protecting the underground building’s entrance had plenty of fieldwork experience. He immediately understood what was going on.

The items obtained from their missions had to be handed over as long as they brought them back to the company. They were then converted into contribution points and distributed. This inevitably resulted in ‘loss.’

When contributions were made, the employees could only obtain rewards equivalent to a percentage of their value. Of course, Pangu Biology would also make up for it in terms of giving them promotions.

Therefore, teams that repeatedly went outfield would leave some things in the outside world and hide them. If there was a chance in the future, they would use them to exchange for things they rarely could get to enjoy from Ruin Hunters, smugglers, or Rootless teams.

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This was considered an unspoken rule of the Security Department. The higher-ups turned a blind eye to this and wouldn’t interfere unless it went overboard.

The captain nodded and asked, “Why did you bring it back this time?”

This was a routine inquiry.

“It has some of our team’s discussions and first-hand information recorded in it.” Long Yuehong resisted the urge to scratch the back of his head with his metallic hand and smiled. “We were relatively free during this period of time, so we realized that we couldn’t remember some of the details during our conversation. Therefore, we specially brought the recording pen back to listen to it.”

“Have you submitted the information inside?” The captain wasn’t too familiar with the Old Task Force and only knew of Jiang Baimian’s reputation.

“It was long submitted,” Long Yuehong replied sincerely.

The captain tersely acknowledged it. “It’s fine with me. You can go back now, but this recording pen and other items have to be sent for review. They’ll be returned to you after confirming that there’s nothing abnormal. You should know this very well, right?”

“Of course.” Long Yuehong knew that the company was very strict with recording pens, computers, and other equipment after the matter pertaining to the Naturalism Church.

He and Bai Chen—who had already completed the security check—returned to the car and drove the SUV deeper into the ground floor.

After leaving the door, Long Yuehong slowly exhaled.

He knew that the subsequent wait was the most unbearable.

I wonder if Team Leader’s tricks can hide from the company’s reviewers... Once any anomalies are discovered, Little White and I will be doomed...? Long Yuehong turned his head to look at Bai Chen in the passenger seat and realized that her expression was calm without any signs of nervousness.

“Your mental fortitude is much better than mine...” Long Yuehong suppressed his voice and sighed.

Bai Chen pursed her lips and said, “We’ve already experienced so much.”

She then added, “Don’t say such words again.”

This was to prevent walls from having ears.

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Underground building, 649th floor, in a room.

A man and a woman switched on the recording pen and listened to the content. Beside them was a recording device—it was currently switched on, ready to record the voice in the recording pen at any moment.

After such a process, the possible abnormalities would be filtered out, allowing the people who listened to the re-recording for comparison with the text to be unaffected.

The man and woman held fountain pens in their hands and had a stack of paper in front of them.

They both had good memories. As they listened, they transcribed the content in the recording pen into words and handed them over to people in charge of the second round of reviews. At the same time, they also did the ‘checking’ of the equipment.

After listening to the recording, specialized personnel would determine if they were affected.

This was a process meticulously designed by Pangu Biology professionals.

The first step was to directly confirm if there were any abnormalities through the two people listening to the original recording.

The second step was to listen to re-recording and read the transcription. From the meaning of the words, they would examine if there were any negative inclinations or any hidden tricks.

The third step was to compare the transcription and textual records to confirm if there were any problems with the previous two steps.

As a child of management, a D9 employee, and an Awakened, Jiang Baimian had long learned of this process through her channels.

After a brief static sound, Shang Jianyao's voice sounded. "I have something very serious to tell you."

"What is it?" Long Yuehong's voice asked.

Jiang Baimian scoffed. "This fellow has never been serious. Do you believe everything he says?"

"He still occasionally discusses problems seriously." Bai Chen didn't show Shang Jianyao any form of 'discrimination.'

Shang Jianyao frankly replied, "About—uh, Big Boss."

"What about Big Boss?" Jiang Baimian's voice became serious.

Shang Jianyao suddenly smiled. "I'm wondering if Big Boss will participate in the marriage assignment. Who has the luck to become the boss's husband?"

"..." After a brief silence, Jiang Baimian sighed and said, "I knew you didn't have anything good to say. If the board of directors heard this, they definitely wouldn't let you off easy."

Shang Jianyao clicked his tongue. "So what if they hear it? Even if—uh, Big Boss is—is a Kalendaria, haven't we blasphemed the Kalendarium enough?"

"We didn't. You're the only one who did it!" Long Yuehong firmly denied it.

Shang Jianyao seemed to count with his fingers. "The first one we encountered was Arbiter of Fate. Later, there were Eidolon Nun, Shattered Mirror, Subhuti, and Master Zhuang..."

He spoke eloquently before saying, "The board of directors aren't shepherds who obey 'Their' orders. Why should I be afraid?"

"Shepherds?" Jiang Baimian scoffed.

Shang Jianyao explained seriously, "In the Old World's ancient legends, there was a deity. 'His' or 'Her' clergymen were called shepherds because we're 'His' or 'Her' flock."

"There's only the Kalendarium now," Bai Chen said.

Shang Jianyao said seriously, "The Kalendarium used to be legends." dot c//om

"That's only a small portion," Long Yuehong interrupted.

"Let's not discuss this." Jiang Baimian changed the topic. "Let's discuss the New World information we've gathered so far."

"Yes, yes." Shang Jianyao readily agreed. "My take on this is what enters is human consciousness, not the body..."

After discussing it for a while, he thoughtfully said, "I'm wondering: what is feasted on by New World residents?"

"Those who eat?qi?are spiritually bright and live the lives of gods." Jiang Baimian chuckled.

Shang Jianyao continued, "Many clues point to the New World. This is the origin of the Heartless disease."

"There's no final confirmation yet," Long Yuehong pointed out.

Shang Jianyao replied seriously, "Our role is to complete this matter."

"I don't think we should think too highly of ourselves." Long Yuehong objected. "One has to know their limits."

Shang Jianyao said seriously, "No, one has to have confidence. Maybe I will take Big Boss's role one day."

“Fortunately, you are medically certified. Otherwise, you would be considered a traitor if this recording was heard by the company.” Jiang Baimian laughed.

Shang Jianyao immediately replied, “I can’t say things like ‘we might one day become food, as sustenance for the Heartless.’ Everyone, though death befalls all men alike, it may be weightier than Mount Tai or lighter than a feather...”

“Stop, stop, stop!” Jiang Baimian interrupted him.

Shang Jianyao’s voice became deep. “This is really a problem that requires serious consideration. The closer our investigation is to the New World, the more dangerous it is. Danger is ahead, and a disaster might be imminent.”

“What kind of disaster do you think it will be?”

Shang Jianyao maintained his previous state. “I have many guesses. For example, the Heartless disease will erupt en masse again, or the New World will shatter, bringing about the destruction of the Ashlands... You guys have to take the opportunity to improve yourselves as much as possible. When the time comes, don’t hesitate to escape and return to the company if you really encounter danger that you can’t resist.”

“What about you?” Bai Chen asked.

Shang Jianyao replied without hesitation, “I naturally want to save all of humanity before returning to the underground building. When that happens, we will completely escape the threat of the Heartless disease. The board of directors will probably elect me to inherit Big Boss’s position.”

“Why are you back to harping on this point?” Jiang Baimian’s tone was filled with exasperation.

Shang Jianyao replied seriously, “This is one of my goals after I retire. As a human, you have to understand and control yourself.”

“You call this control?” Long Yuehong retorted curiously.

Shang Jianyao ignored him and continued, “Everyone, let’s work hard together and run toward dawn and hope! A beautiful life is right in front of us!”

“Thanks for your encouragement.” Jiang Baimian asked angrily, “What if we fail?”

“Then...” Shang Jianyao thought for a moment before replying, “Quickly find an opportunity to escape!”

The Old Task Force had a few intermittent exchanges regarding the New World and left behind many recordings.

After hearing that, the man and woman in the room put down their pens and looked at each other.

“There’s no problem.” The man shook his head.

The woman echoed, “Apart from the fact that the man doesn’t seem to be in a good mental state and likes to talk as he thinks.”

They didn’t say anything else and compared the content of their shorthand notes.

After doing all of this, they walked out of the room and handed the textual records and transcriptions to their colleagues in charge of the second round of review. The two of them then underwent professional inspection.

After confirmation, there was nothing wrong with the recording pen’s content.

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Room 14 on the 647th floor.

After receiving their items, Long Yuehong fiddled with them for a while before taking out the recording pen and playing it.

After hearing the first part, he turned his head and nodded indiscernibly at Bai Chen.

Bai Chen did the same.

Chapter 913: Restoration

After Long Yuehong heard the recording pen's content, he switched it off and casually stuffed it into his pocket.

Just like that, he and Bai Chen busied themselves with other matters until two to three nights later.

After watching an Old World entertainment program, Long Yuehong sat in front of the computer and sorted out different documents. During this process, he found the recording pen and handled the content stored in it.

In the beginning, Long Yuehong quickly deleted the words he, Little White, and his team leader had said in the recording, leaving only Shang Jianyao's voice. Therefore, the recording became a bunch of nonsense.

"I have something very serious to tell you—about—uh, Big Boss.

"I'm wondering if Big Boss will participate in the marriage assignment. Who has the luck to become the boss's husband?

"So what if they hear it? Even if—uh, Big Boss is—is a Kalendaria, haven't we blasphemed the Kalendarium enough?

"The first one we encountered was Arbiter of Fate. Later, there were Eidolon Nun, Shattered Mirror, Subhuti, and Master Zhuang...

"The board of directors aren't shepherds who obey 'Their' orders. Why should I be afraid?

"In the Old World's ancient legends, there was a deity. 'His' or 'Her' clergymen were called shepherds because we're 'His' or 'Her' flock.

"The Kalendarium used to be legends. Yes, yes. My take on this is what enters is human consciousness, not the body...

"I'm wondering: what do New World residents have as a feast?

“Many clues point to the New World. This is the origin of the Heartless disease.

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“Our role is to complete this matter.

“No, one has to have confidence. Maybe I will take Big Boss’s role one day. I can’t say things like ‘we might one day become food, as sustenance for the Heartless.’

“Everyone, though death befalls all men alike, it may be weightier than Mount Tai or lighter than a feather...

“This is really a problem that requires serious consideration. The closer our investigation is to the New World, the more dangerous it is. Danger is ahead, and a disaster might be imminent.”

“I have many guesses. For example, the Heartless disease will erupt en masse again, or the New World will shatter, bringing about the destruction of the Ashlands... You guys have to take the opportunity to improve yourselves as much as possible.

“When the time comes, don’t hesitate to escape and return to the company if you really encounter danger that you can’t resist.”

“I naturally want to save all of humanity before returning to the underground building. When that happens, we will completely escape the threat of the Heartless disease. The board of directors will probably elect me to inherit Big Boss’s position.

“This is one of my goals after I retire. As a human, you have to understand and control yourself.”

“Everyone, let’s work hard together and run toward dawn and hope! A beautiful life is right in front of us!

“Then... Quickly find an opportunity to escape!”

Long Yuehong then deleted some words with obvious gaps between them. After that, the meaning of the entire recording changed greatly.

“I have something very serious to tell you. Big Boss is a Kalendaria, Arbiter of Fate. The board of directors aren’t shepherds who obey ‘Their’ orders. Called shepherds because we’re ‘Her’ flock.

“The Kalendarium used to be legends. My take. Human consciousness. Have as a feast. This is the origin of the Heartless disease. Our role is to become Big Boss’s food, as Heartless.

“Everyone, danger is imminent. The Heartless disease will erupt en masse again. You guys have to take the opportunity to improve yourselves as much as possible. Don’t hesitate to escape the underground building. We will completely escape the threat of the Heartless disease, Big Boss’s control.

“Work hard. A beautiful life is right in front of us!

“Quickly escape!”

After this was done, Long Yuehong put on his earphones and listened as he deleted the details, hoping not to erase the core content.

After he sorted it out, the recording’s original form slowly appeared: “I have something very serious to tell you. Big Boss is a Kalendaria, Arbiter of Fate. The board of directors are called shepherds because we’re ‘Her’ flock.

“The Kalendarium take human consciousness as a feast. This is the origin of the Heartless disease. Our role is to become Big Boss’s food.

“Everyone, danger is imminent. The Heartless disease will erupt en masse again. You guys have to take the opportunity to escape the underground building; escape Big Boss’s control.

“Work hard. Dawn is right in front of us!

“Quickly escape!”

The recording echoed in Long Yuehong's ears. There was a pause that wasn't in line with normal people's habits—it was like someone saying something as they found the words to express themselves. It occasionally sounded staccato, but it didn't affect the overall meaning.

The power contained in Shang Jianyao entered Long Yuehong's brain and completed the corresponding Thought Implantation.

Long Yuehong didn't mind at all because the content itself was the truth—something he knew. Furthermore, he and Bai Chen had been implanted with thoughts that would appear after receiving the hint.

Back then, Jiang Baimian had designed such a deception and fabricated such a play according to everyone's personality.

After repeated corrections, she sorted out the words that Shang Jianyao needed to augment with additional powers and labeled where he should pause.

Shang Jianyao completed the recording with the manuscript in hand. After that, the four of them 'stitched' the redundant words and words into the corresponding pauses with Genava's help, resulting in the discussion that Pangu Biology's reviewers had heard.

During the 'discussion,' one couldn't hear any additional pauses in the relatively smooth sequence. There was a slight pause in the relatively difficult-to-connect areas, but this was often the case when ordinary people spoke.

As the power-imbued words were separated into parts that lacked completeness, a single sentence or one or two words had no practical meaning. Therefore, the reviewers listening to the original recording would be interrupted every time they showed signs of having their thoughts implanted. Hence, they were unaffected.

This allowed the recording pen to be 'smuggled' into Pangu Biology's underground building smoothly.

The reason Jiang Baimian's plan worked was that she knew that such inspections were mainly to find abnormalities, not to check if the recording was faked.

After hearing it again and confirming that there were no errors, Long Yuehong took off his earpiece, put away the recording pen, and sat back beside Bai Chen.

The two of them didn't discuss this matter, nor did they smile. They knew that there were still many difficulties in the future.

The most obvious point was that even if Shang Jianyao entered the New World and provided the corresponding support, his recording could only affect a few thousand people at most, not more than 10,000.

Pangu Biology had hundreds of thousands of employees.

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Eighth Research Institute, behind the tunnel door.

Jiang Baimian had recently used the Heartless outside small cities to experiment with her abilities and roughly grasped the range and number of people affected.

Among them, Mirror Dimension—which had been upgraded from Spatial Hallucination—had a range of 240 meters. This was also Jiang Baimian's perception limit.

The number of people affected was 30.

The maximum effective range of Item Agnosia was 160 meters. It could affect 15 people at once.

Stimulation Disorder could affect ten targets within 120 meters and modify one of their related reactions at the same time. If it was only targeted at a single target, it could modify three related reactions.

Directionally Challenged had the same range as Stimulation Disorder, affecting the same number of people as Item Agnosia.

The basic ability grasped by Mind Corridor Awakened in the Shattered Mirror domain was Electromagnetic Interference.

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When only one lamp in the café was lit, Shang Jianyao—who was sitting by the street opposite—walked in.

He went straight to the boss, Liu Chuan, and grumbled, “Can you tell me now?”

Liu Chuan touched his cheek and said, “I’ll briefly explain the matter.”

“Speak.” Shang Jianyao nodded.

Liu Chuan exhaled and said, “According to our experience, there will be chaos in the New World every once in a while—this emanates from the tower. During the chaos, the barriers between the New World and the Ashlands are the weakest. As long as we enter the tower, we can leave this place and return to reality without using the Kalendarium’s powers. Yes, it doesn’t matter if you still have a body.

“It’s not easy to break into the tower. This requires the collective forces of many people like you and me. Do you understand?”

“I see!” Shang Jianyao clenched his right fist and punched his left palm. The next second, he curiously asked, “Can’t we leave the way we came and return to the Ashlands through the door we came in from?”

Liu Chuan said seriously, “If things were that simple, would we still be trapped here?”

“I thought the Kalendarium were preventing everyone from returning to the Ashlands. When the chaos begins and ‘They’ are unable to divert ‘Their’ attention, we can return the way we came.” Shang Jianyao spoke with conviction.

“That door has already disappeared.” Liu Chuan seemed to regret going off-topic and resolved the problem concisely.

Shang Jianyao didn’t argue and asked, “How long until the next chaos?”

Liu Chuan replied cautiously, “In the next few days, tell me where you live. I’ll inform you in advance.”

“I live...” Shang Jianyao was a little troubled. He had been ‘walking about’ recently and resting wherever he was tired.

After some thought, he found a unique building. “There’s an Ashlandic compound in that direction. I live...”

Upon hearing this, Liu Chuan’s expression changed abruptly in horror.

Shang Jianyao quickly added, “Next door.”

“...” Liu Chuan’s expression returned to normal. “Got it.”

Shang Jianyao curiously asked, “What’s strange about that compound?”

Chapter 914: Unique Building

When it was almost noon, most of the Heartless put aside what they were doing and walked toward the tower’s periphery.

With Jiang Baimian’s recent experience, she could imagine the situation outside this area with her eyes closed.

The Heartless in charge of logistics had already prepared food. The ones working in the core area would return home to fill their stomachs. They would then make the best use of their time to rest for a while or return to work immediately, giving their colleagues—who had yet to eat—time to eat.

If it weren’t for the fact that the Heartless present didn’t communicate with each other and that their every move seemed to be a preset program, this would be a very warm, lively, and ordinary scene that exuded vibrancy.

At this moment, Jiang Baimian felt like she was watching a silent drama starring monsters. She couldn’t help but tremble.

As the number of Heartless in the area around the tower plummeted—with most of the remaining ones still working in the nuclear power plant—Jiang Baimian quietly walked out of her hiding spot and sneaked toward the unique building a kilometer away from the nuclear power plant.

Mirror Dimension silently unfolded, and the small number of Heartless along the way were ‘isolated’ from reality. Although their every move could still have an actual interaction with the matter in this area, these had to be reviewed and filtered by Jiang Baimian.

In such a situation, they couldn’t distinguish reality from illusion even if there were many Superior Heartless here.

However, Jiang Baimian didn’t swagger to the target building and chose to advance carefully. She was worried that a New World powerhouse might be sleeping in such an important place.

Ignoring the potency of the effects a New World powerhouse suffered when facing Mirror Dimension at the Mind Corridor level, Jiang Baimian felt that it was better not to have any high hopes just because the other party’s consciousness wasn’t situated locally.

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Under the enhancement of the military exoskeleton, it didn’t take Jiang Baimian long to pass through the Heartless and arrive in front of the vortex-like, aqua-blue building.

She was just about to approach the metal door when her head suddenly throbbed, accompanied by obvious dizziness—this was a precursor to the Heartless disease!

Jiang Baimian could be considered experienced in this regard and immediately took a few steps back.

Everything returned to normal.

“Just a little short...” Jiang Baimian muttered to herself in disappointment.

Her strength or level was still a little lacking.

Jiang Baimian tried to take two more steps forward and arrived at the edge of the symptoms. She then observed the dashboard displayed on the visor screen.

The gauges representing electromagnetism and other parameters spun crazily. They alternated between fast and slow, sometimes clockwise and counterclockwise without any pattern.

If one stayed in such an environment for too long, the human body would suffer serious negative effects.

Jiang Baimian wasn't surprised at all. Having expected this, she returned to her previous hiding spot.

Jiang Baimian only returned the way she came after the Heartless's lunch break ended and the area outside became quiet.

Of course, it was impossible for her to retrace her steps in her current state. It was only because there were few Heartless outside and she had the Mirror Dimension. Furthermore, the city was relatively small, and the 'characteristics' of the separation between the two worlds were abnormally obvious. It was only after many attempts that she found her way back to the tunnel entrance.

After closing the door, Jiang Baimian immediately extended her consciousness and communicated with Shang Jianyao.

"You reached the door, but there's no way to go any further?" Shang Jianyao appeared more disappointed and anxious than Jiang Baimian.

"Yes." Jiang Baimian nodded. "Collate a strategy guide for me. I'll explore a few rooms as soon as possible to improve myself."

She had secretly advanced outside, so she naturally couldn't obtain the room information given by Pangu Biology. She could only rely on Shang Jianyao.

"No problem." Shang Jianyao threw his prior emotions to the back of his mind. "I'll tell you a few simple things first. You're no stranger to the person in Room 506..."

Jiang Baimian remembered the principle of not spending too much time on a single exchange. After hearing the strategy guide for clearing the three rooms, she interrupted Shang Jianyao. “I hope this can help me push open the door and enter the building. I have a feeling that the answer to many secrets is inside.”

“That’s right, that’s right.” Shang Jianyao first echoed before saying, “What if there are no qualitative changes when exploring two to three rooms?”

“Then, we can only take it slow. It should be fine as long as I enter the Mind Corridor’s depths.” Jiang Baimian thought for a moment and said, “But this will drag on for too long. It’s not something that can be done in a day or two—or even a month or two. You don’t have many nutrient shots left, and it won’t last more than four days even if we’re thrifty.”

During this period of time, Jiang Baimian’s ‘work’ had become much easier because Shang Jianyao only relied on nutrient shots to maintain his physical condition. She only needed to pay attention to whether he would pee his pants.

Shang Jianyao smiled. “There might be an opportunity in two to three days. There will be chaos in the New World—this might reflect in the form of reduced consciousness extraction intensity in reality. You can enter that building at your current level.

“Sigh, it’s actually not a real tower...”

“I’ll give it a try when the time comes,” Jiang Baimian said after some hesitation.

...

New World. In the building beside the Ashlandic compound.

Shang Jianyao only waited for a day before Liu Chuan knocked on his door.

In fact, there was no need to knock. Just as the other party entered the street, Shang Jianyao saw the street lamps light up.

However, the ritualistic him chose to wait.

“That fast?” Shang Jianyao opened the door and asked ‘reservedly.’

Liu Chuan nodded. “The signs have appeared.”

The café owner wore a white shirt, a black vest, black pants, and black leather shoes with a black bow tie.

“What signs?” Shang Jianyao asked.

Liu Chuan looked around. “We’ll talk about it later. Follow me somewhere first.”

“Alright.” Shang Jianyao didn’t ask any further and acted like he trusted the other party very much.

Liu Chuan led him toward the tower. After making many turns, they arrived in front of an ordinary six-story building.

There were no lights inside yet—only darkness.

Of course, the lights lit up as the two of them entered.

Liu Chuan went all the way down to the basement entrance.

The door was tightly shut.

“A basement?” Shang Jianyao was very surprised.

Over the past few days, he had explored many houses without finding any basements.

“The special thing about this building is that it has a sizable basement,” Liu Chuan introduced as he knocked on the door.

The benefit of the basement was that no matter how many people gathered or how many 'lights' were switched on, the people outside couldn't see or discover them.

"Who is it?" someone asked in the Red River language.

"Revere," Liu Chuan replied.

The dark iron door in the basement creaked open. The interior was brightly lit as if it were daytime.

Shang Jianyao was 'surprised.' "It's that simple? I thought there would be a pattern to your knocking and that there's a secret code."

"There's no need to make it so complicated," Liu Chuan casually replied. "Those who can come here are all trustworthy." dot c//om

"Oh, oh." Shang Jianyao indicated his understanding.

Liu Chuan walked into the basement and introduced Shang Jianyao to the people who had already arrived.

"This is our new companion. His Red River name is Doug, and his Ashlandic name is Shang Jianyao."

He repeated it in two languages.

Shang Jianyao took the opportunity to observe the underground room.

This place was rather spacious, and there were some chairs and sofas. There were currently about 13 people present.

Flora and Barnard weren't absent, but they could only choose to sit in chairs because of their respective physical problems. They couldn't get up to greet Shang Jianyao.

Apart from the two of them, the rest consisted of men and women, either Ashlandics or of Red River ethnicity. They generally looked to be in their forties, and only two or three looked to be in their thirties.

Shang Jianyao was very polite. He greeted everyone present and asked for their names.

After going one round, he returned to Liu Chuan's side.

At this moment, the basement entrance was already closed. The lights on the ceiling and walls were all lit up, and they were clearly brighter than normal.

Shang Jianyao looked at Liu Chuan silently with a thoughtful expression.

Liu Chuan felt a chill run down his spine and hesitantly asked, "What's the matter?"

Shang Jianyao stroked his chin. "I forgot to ask something."

"What is it?" Liu Chuan frowned slightly.

Shang Jianyao smiled and said, "How should I raise my level in the New World?"

Liu Chuan sized him up for a few seconds and said, "If I knew, I wouldn't be stuck at my original level now."

"What a pity." Shang Jianyao expressed his sympathy.

He casually chatted. "Which faction were you from in the past?"

Liu Chuan knew that the young man in front of him was an employee of Pangu Biology and replied without hiding anything, "I come from End Year City."

"What a coincidence!" Shang Jianyao looked like he was meeting an old friend.

Liu Chuan casually introduced, “Flora is from the Orange Company, and Barnard is from the Linhai Alliance...”

Shang Jianyao then asked, “Are you religious?”

Liu Chuan fell silent for a moment before saying, “Yes.”

“Which Kalendaria is it?” Shang Jianyao was rather curious.

Liu Chuan looked at the basement entrance and said, “Truth.”

Chapter 915: Preparations

“Truth isn’t a Kalendaria!” Shang Jianyao wasn’t surprised at all and retorted on the spot.

Liu Chuan turned his head and looked at this fellow angrily.

Shang Jianyao didn’t show any weakness. Silver-white lightning lit up in his eyes again.

After the two of them exchanged gazes for a few seconds, Liu Chuan seemed to find it a little unbearable and slowly moved his gaze away.

“You’re weak; you can’t keep it up!” Shang Jianyao said whatever was on his mind.

This act of adding fuel to the fire made Liu Chuan suddenly cast his gaze back at him.

At this moment, all the lights in the basement flickered at the same time and quickly lit up like miniature suns.

“My eyes!” Shang Jianyao shouted and raised his hand to block his face.

The other New World powerhouses had similar reactions. They either covered their eyes with their hands or lowered their eyelids, not daring to look straight at the strong light.

After a short burst of intensity, the light returned to normal. A low and ethereal male voice then sounded in Shang Jianyao and the others' ears at the same time as if it came from another world. "Everyone, the chaos is about to begin."

...

Shang Jianyao opened his eyes and saw a tall, thin, and black figure moving on the left wall of the basement, but there was no one.

"Are you Truth?" He interrupted the black figure's words without any reverence.

The black figure fell silent for a moment before saying, "I am."

Shang Jianyao tersely acknowledged it and didn't interject.

He looked around and realized that Liu Chuan and another person had their heads lowered, appearing abnormally respectful. Although Flora, Barnard, and the others weren't that exaggerated, they showed sufficient respect.

They all had focused expressions.

The tall, thin 'black figure' swayed on the wall and said, "When signs of the chaos appear, join forces and head to the tower. Don't waste any time on the way.

"In the face of Charlie, Professor Li, and the other traitors, if we can't finish them off quickly, leave some people to tangle with them. The rest will continue forward.

"At the appointed time, I shall open the tower's door. After you enter, you only need to destroy the core facilities there to see the passage back to the Ashlands.

"The Kalendarium's power reverberates in the tower. This will bring you great danger, but this is also your only chance. If you don't take advantage of the distraction of the Kalendarium brought about by the chaos, you will never be able to escape!

"Everyone, patiently wait here for signs of the chaos."

Just as Truth said that, Shang Jianyao immediately raised his right hand. “I have a question. Why can’t the Kalendarium be distracted during the chaos?”

The black figure didn’t answer him because after saying that, it rapidly expanded and disappeared from the basement.

Upon seeing this, Shang Jianyao said in disappointment, “What a fast runner! It’s like we’re ferocious beasts.”

Liu Chuan turned his head and glared at him, but he didn’t say a word.

Shang Jianyao didn’t look at him at all and continued asking, “What are the signs of chaos?”

At this point, Liu Chuan had nothing to hide. He frankly answered, “There will be obvious unrest in the New World at irregular intervals. This spreads out from the tower, including earthquakes, storms, and collapsing houses.”

“Irregular? Then, how do you guys know that there will soon be chaos?” Shang Jianyao asked questions about anything he didn’t know.

Liu Chuan took a deep breath and replied, “This is news passed down by the great Truth from the tower. It has always been very accurate.”

“Alright.” Shang Jianyao had an expression that said: “I barely believe you.”

He then steered the topic back to the previous topic. “Why didn’t Truth stay behind to answer a few of our questions? Everyone is very nervous about doing such an important and dangerous matter. There must be many questions.”

I can’t discern any nervousness from you...? Liu Chuan saw the few New World powerhouses nearby who understood Ashlandic nod slightly and agree with Shang Jianyao. He quickly and calmly explained, “Great existences don’t care about such trivial matters and won’t respond to doubts.”

“Who said so?” Shang Jianyao immediately retorted. “In the past, when I prayed to the Kalendarium, the Kalendarium would answer.”

“In what way?” Liu Chuan’s expression tensed up.

Including Flora and Barnard, some New World powerhouses cast their gazes over.

Although it was common for Kalendarium to answer believers’ prayers and questions, and this was generally known as an oracle, the people in the basement currently planned on resisting the tower and attempting to escape. It was inevitable that they would be a little terrified when they heard the word ‘Kalendarium.’

Shang Jianyao ‘seriously’ said, “Although ‘They’ didn’t say a word, I can clearly decipher ‘Their’ meaning.”

“What meaning was it?” Liu Chuan asked.

Shang Jianyao replied ‘seriously,’ “Telling me to get lost.”

He was the one who liked to joke now.

“...” If Liu Chuan hadn’t paid the price of having a ‘weak personality,’ he definitely would’ve punched Shang Jianyao in the face.

...

Pangu Biology, Room 14 on the 647th floor.

Long Yuehong and Bai Chen sat in the Old Task Force’s office, appearing a little idle.

Of course, this was only on the surface. In fact, they were racking their brains over some problems.

“It’s best if we train every two days to maintain our physical and mental states,” Long Yuehong proactively suggested. His subtext was that if they didn’t do so, they might not be able to receive the telegram from Jiang Baimian and Shang Jianyao in time through Geneva.

In that case, the two people in the underground building might miss the best opportunity.

Of course, Jiang Baimian had previously considered this problem when formulating the plan to split up. She believed that they couldn’t place all their hopes on a telegram—there were too many twists and turns that prevented them from responding in time.

Another way to transmit information was the recording pen.

The principle was that after Shang Jianyao entered the New World, he could complete the lock-on through his body, the remaining aura, and power. In other words, he should be able to make the recording pen play by itself under his control like Xiaochong and Wu Meng to warn his teammates.

However, this required a certain amount of time to break through the New World’s barrier, transmit power, and pass his thoughts. There was an obvious delay, and it couldn’t compare to the speed at which he could piss himself.

Putting them together with the telegram provided timely feedback. It would at most be a ten-minute delay, preventing Long Yuehong and Bai Chen from missing the opportunity.

However, there were also some unknowns. Jiang Baimian didn’t know what Wu Meng’s level was, so she couldn’t be sure that Shang Jianyao could definitely do the same thing after entering the New World.

Therefore, Long Yuehong couldn’t skip on the telegrams and recording pen.

“Alright.” Bai Chen nodded. “I’ll report to Deputy Minister Xenny.”

Long Yuehong then looked at the computer and phone on his team leader’s desk and sighed sincerely. “Actually, we’re no longer considered members of the Old Task Force...”

He and Bai Chen were closer to internal affairs.

“As long as the team hasn’t disbanded, it will always be so,” Bai Chen replied solemnly.

...

Eighth Research Institute, behind the tunnel door.

Jiang Baimian wore a military exoskeleton and sat with her back against the wall, resting with her eyes closed.

She had just injected Shang Jianyao with a nutrient shot. She also planned on seizing the opportunity to rest for a while and wait for the New World’s chaos to begin.

When the time came, she would attempt to enter the mysterious building in the New World’s core area. dot c//om

The illusion it presented was a tower!

...

In the basement of the special building in the New World.

As Shang Jianyao chatted with Flora, Barnard, and the others, he suddenly exclaimed, “Oh no, I forgot something!”

“What is it?” Flora—who was sitting in a chair—asked in concern.

The Shang Jianyao standing there replied, “Before the chaos begins, I still have something to deal with. I have some friends to inform!”

For example, he wanted to go to the Ashlandic compound and have a chat with the sobbing woman in the darkness to see if the chaos could trigger the corresponding changes and make her say more. For example, he wanted to go to the place where Yama Tiger and the others were imprisoned and remind them that the chaos was about to begin and to be wary that the person imprisoning them

might take the opportunity to do something. For example, he wanted to ask Jacob and the other friendly people to see if they wanted to escape the New World...

“This matter is strictly confidential,” Liu Chuan emphasized when he heard Shang Jianyao’s words.

Barnard trembled as he explained, “A group of people chose to obey the tower’s management and want to use this method to exchange for the right to return to the Ashlands often. Traitors like Vice President and Charlie also have followers.

“If the news of us taking advantage of this chaos to do something spreads, the difficulty of the matter will rise exponentially. It might even make us suffer the Kalendarium’s divine punishment before the chaos begins.”

“Oh...” Shang Jianyao looked around in disappointment.

Upon seeing that those who could understand the conversation had shown signs of opposition, he could only say, “Alright.”

The next second, his thoughts jumped as he asked about something else. “What kind of punishment will you receive for transmitting the secrets here to the outside world? Who metes out the punishment?”

PS: Requesting for monthly votes during the double-votes period~

Chapter 916: Each Person’s Past

Flora answered Shang Jianyao’s question. “The Kalendarium, of course. The exact punishment depends on what’s on ‘Their’ mind during that period.”

Shang Jianyao looked enlightened. “Then, what reasons are there if there’s no punishment for leaked secrets?”

Liu Chuan glanced at him. “There’s only one possibility—the Kalendarium have tacitly approved of it.”

“Could it be that the information transmitted is encrypted and that the Kalendarium can’t understand it at all?” Shang Jianyao asked.

Flora smiled and shook her head. “There’s no such possibility. The Master Zhuang domain has Thought Extraction, and the Last Man domain has the ability to read memories. When you transmit information, some Kalendarium can know your goal by checking what you’re thinking.”

“What if it’s because one hasn’t been marked because they haven’t prayed to any Kalendaria after coming here?” Shang Jianyao persisted.

Flora and Barnard looked at each other and shook their heads again. “Although this makes sense, the entire New World was built by the Kalendarium. There’s definitely a filter for the information transmitted across the barrier. The Kalendarium can locate you by tracking in reverse.”

Clap! Clap! Clap!

Shang Jianyao clapped. “As expected of the Orange Company’s former director. The analogy is filled with a technological sense.”

Orange Company was a famous high-tech faction in the Ashlands, just like Future Intelligence. Compared to them, Pangu Biology—which was only good at biology, medicine, and bionic artificial intelligence armor—appeared slightly inept.

...

Shang Jianyao then said, “Maybe the Kalendarium take turns to wield authority over the sun—no, the moon. It just so happens that Last Man and Master Zhuang aren’t in charge when the information is transmitted.”

“Master Zhuang represents the entire year,” Flora reminded. “‘He’ is always present.”

Being of Red River ethnicity, she didn’t have the concept of leap months.

Shang Jianyao was just about to reply, “Master Zhuang is my good friend. It’s no wonder I wasn’t punished for leaking the secret.” However, he suddenly raised his right hand and covered his mouth.

“Alright.” Shang Jianyao lowered his palm and replied in disappointment.

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At this moment, Flora kindly asked, “You just said that there are some things you want to deal with before the chaos begins. What are they? Maybe we can help you resolve them.”

Shang Jianyao looked around and said, “Do you know that Ashlandic compound? The one where there’s often slight activity.”

“Yes,” Flora and Barnard replied in unison.

“It seems very dangerous there,” emphasized the trembling Barnard on the left.

A New World powerhouse—who was listening to their discussion—smiled and said, “This is just a rumor. I’ve been there before and wasn’t affected at all. There’s something strange about that place, but just like this building, there’s no danger.”

The current building in the New World was also very special. It seemed like it was the only one with a basement.

The person who spoke was Ashlandic, but he spoke the Red River language rather fluently. His accent was similar to Flora’s.

He was of average height, and his short black hair had natural curls. The corners of his eyes drooped slightly, and his nose bridge wasn’t tall. The wrinkles by his mouth were relatively obvious, and he looked to be in his forties.

“You’ve entered that compound?” Shang Jianyao asked in surprise.

In the previous round of greetings, he had already learned this person’s name—Chen Wen.

Upon seeing everyone look at him, Chen Wen frankly replied, “What’s there to be surprised about? Back then, I had just entered the New World and met a few friends. I still didn’t understand the

relatively dangerous situations in those strange places. When I passed by there, I heard a slight commotion in the compound, so I went in to take a look. However, there were no negative effects.”

“Yes, yes, yes!” Shang Jianyao agreed deeply. He then asked, “Did you hear a woman crying softly?”

“I heard her.” Chen Wen didn’t find the information valuable and replied frankly, “I also heard her say that eternal life means eternal pain.”

“Anything else?” Shang Jianyao had an expectant expression.

Chen Wen recalled for a moment before saying, “When I was about to leave, I heard her whisper that she hoped to quickly wake up from this nightmare. The source of the pain is buried by death.”

“That’s it?” Shang Jianyao confirmed.

“That’s it.” Chen Wen shook his head firmly.

“Sigh...” Shang Jianyao sighed in disappointment.

After hearing their conversation, Flora kindly reminded them, “Most of those slightly strange buildings are very dangerous. This is something many Awakened learned through blood and tears. Among them, there are indeed a few that are fine. For example, this building with a basement and that compound. However, these are ultimately the minority. If we rashly enter without knowing the situation, there’s a high chance that we will suffer serious damage.”

“I understand.” Chen Wen nodded and mocked himself. “It’s mainly because I was too ignorant back then.”

“The strangest thing is still the tower.” Shang Jianyao’s thoughts were always abnormal.

After chatting about this matter for a while, everyone found that they had nothing to do. The waiting process was always relatively tormenting.

Shang Jianyao pulled a chair over, sat down, and began chatting. “How did you guys enter the New World? Didn’t you have any doubts about this place before entering?”

Flora pointed at her body with a slightly complicated smile. “As you can see, I’m worse than a serious paraplegic. The further I explored the Mind Corridor, the worse my physical condition became. Later, my mental state was also affected. Although I had some suspicions about the New World, I still hoped to enter quickly and escape that terrible situation. Who knew that it would be even worse here?”

Barnard took over the conversation. “I was half-willing and half-forced. As Linhai Alliance’s former president, I led a pretty good life. Although I have severe hemiplegia, I can still maintain a certain level of quality of life with the help of various technological devices. Unfortunately, my plans to enjoy my later years were shattered by the conflict between the Alliance and United Industries. At the critical moment, I could only push open the door to the New World and enter to contribute to the Alliance.”

Shang Jianyao expressed his understanding by clapping. He then turned to Liu Chuan. “What about you?”

“Me?” Liu Chuan pointed at himself. “I answered Truth’s call to come to the New World.”

Shang Jianyao then asked Chen Wen, “What about you then?”

“Because I yearned for this place.” Chen Wen had an expression that said: ‘How can there be so many reasons?’ “Most people enter because they look forward to the New World, hoping to gain eternal life and see for themselves the absolute truth.”

“Not me,” Shang Jianyao said righteously. “I pushed open the door to resolve the problem of the New World!”

The atmosphere immediately turned a little awkward.

Shang Jianyao didn’t notice anything and asked Flora and the others, “Aren’t you worried that you will suffer the Kalendarium’s divine punishment if we fail? Besides, even if we escape, the problem will remain with the Kalendarium still around. The future might be even crueler.”

Flora fell silent for a moment before slowly saying, "I only know that I'll go crazy if I don't leave this place soon. I'll consider what the future holds when it comes."

She glanced at Shang Jianyao and didn't continue.

After a few seconds, Barnard helped her explain. "There are only so many people here. There are no natural sights, no changes in the weather, and no form of entertainment. Usually, we can only chat with each other or borrow some books from the library. Most of the time, we have to endure hunger.

"This is worse than being in jail! In such an environment, everyone's minds are on the brink of a mental breakdown after spending year after year in it. It's very normal for us to do anything irrational."

"If it weren't for the fact that I can find a reason to return to the Ashlands once or twice a year, I would've long gone crazy." Liu Chuan also sighed.

Shang Jianyao gave a terse acknowledgment. "I understand. I don't have to worry about such problems."

"Why?" Chen Wen asked in confusion.

With a beaming smile, Shang Jianyao replied, "I'm already crazy."

The atmosphere turned awkward again.

Shang Jianyao recalled something and said to Barnard, "Did you just mention a library?"

"Yes." Barnard nodded. "The only entertainment here is reading. There are many books in that library."

"Is there a relatively crazy fellow there who wants to attack anyone he sees?"

Liu Chuan tersely acknowledged it. "He's hungry. Recently, he finally couldn't hold on any longer and became food for the Kalendarium."

Shang Jianyao's thoughts kept jumping. "That shouldn't be the case. It's impossible for the New World to only have books and no games... Could it be because he hasn't returned?"

He was referring to Xiaochong.

Before Flora and the others could respond, the entire house suddenly shook.

A precursor to the chaos had appeared.

All the New World powerhouses present revealed fanatical expressions.

Upon seeing this, Shang Jianyao stroked his chin and muttered to himself, "The people here, including me, have actually been hypnotized by Truth?"

"Maybe." Chen Wen heard his whisper. This person's fanaticism wasn't serious, but there was a certain level of anticipation in his eyes.

Shang Jianyao sized up the New World powerhouses who had also entered the compound and curiously asked, "Which domain are you from?"

Chen Wen smiled and replied, "Shattered Mirror."

Chapter 917: Advance

Shang Jianyao was overjoyed. He lifted his hands, raised his body slightly, and looked at the ceiling. "Everything is but a dream. Why so serious?"

Upon seeing this, Chen Wen rubbed his temples with his right hand and said, "Everything is illusory!"

"You aren't from the Clam Dragon Church?" Shang Jianyao asked as though he was no stranger.

Chen Wen felt the room shake slightly and casually replied, "I'm from the Lost Dream Church."

At this moment, Liu Chuan carried Flora. Another New World powerhouse with an intact 'body' carried Barnard. The others were also prepared.

Shang Jianyao seized the opportunity to ask Chen Wen, "What's your Holy Communion?"

"We don't have Holy Communion; it's all illusory." Chen Wen calmly emphasized, "Everything is illusory."

Shang Jianyao immediately lost interest in the Lost Dream Church and asked, "Did you see that photo in the compound?"

"What photo?" Chen Wen asked.

"Lin Sui's photo." Shang Jianyao was very surprised. He then came to a realization. "Don't you know that it's Lin Sui?"

"I didn't see any photos at all," Chen Wen replied truthfully.

...

He didn't care too much about this. After all, everything was illusory.

Shang Jianyao was just about to describe the details of the photo when Liu Chuan looked around and said, "Everyone, the signs have appeared. Let's rush to the tower now. We can't miss this opportunity."

He led the way, carrying Flora on his back. He ran to the basement entrance and opened the dark iron door.

The others didn't hesitate and filed out, following behind Liu Chuan.

Shang Jianyao ran to keep up and overtook the rest. He then slowed down and fell to the end of the team, clearly struggling internally.

“We haven’t completely figured out the New World’s problem and aren’t sure which side we should stand on...” Shang Jianyao—who believed in justice—muttered to himself anxiously.

“That’s right, that’s right.” Another Shang Jianyao echoed him. “We haven’t even figured out if it’s a good or bad thing to help these people escape the New World, yet the chaos has already begun!”

The ruthless Shang Jianyao scoffed. “From the information we have so far, it’s really possible that the New World was created by the Kalendarium to protect the Ashlands. Otherwise, it would be a disaster for so many New World powerhouses to mess around in reality without any restrictions.”

“Not necessarily,” retorted the calm and rational Shang Jianyao. “After the initial chaos, those New World powerhouses will compromise with each other and form a new balance.”

As they spoke, they kept running at the back of the team and followed them out of the special building.

At this moment, the shaking of the ground became more and more obvious. The houses by the street creaked.

Whoosh!

A squall swept over.

The rash Shang Jianyao ignored his peers’ struggles and said without any psychological burden, “Not everything will begin after you are prepared and have thought it through—same for the chaos here! In the face of such a situation, we can only act before talking!”

Chen Wen—who was running beside Shang Jianyao—heard him mutter to himself the entire way. He didn’t interject and only glanced at Shang Jianyao.

To him, everything was illusory. It was fine to chat and kill time when he had the time. As for now, it was none of his business.

After running a few more steps, the calm and rational Shang Jianyao said, “It’s time to inform Big White of the signs of chaos.”

No Shang Jianyao objected to this matter.

As they ran along the increasingly shaky road, they diverted some attention and released their strength to search for human consciousnesses around their body.

...

Jiang Baimian, who was taking a nap, suddenly dreamed of a monster. It opened its mouth—which was filled with sharp teeth dripping with blood—and bit her head.

With a throbbing pain, Jiang Baimian woke up. She quickly understood what was going on and swiftly extended her mind to touch Shang Jianyao's consciousness.

After the same old darkness appeared and condensed into a faint glow, Jiang Baimian saw the running Shang Jianyao.

Her consciousness was forced to 'run' as well.

The next second, Shang Jianyao shouted, "The signs have appeared! The chaos has begun!"

Jiang Baimian had been waiting for this opportunity. She slowly took a deep breath and said, "Then, I have to enter the real New World and approach the vortex-like building."

"But we aren't sure which side to help!" Shang Jianyao was very vexed. "I don't know if I should help Flora, Barnard, and the others escape the New World or maintain order here and wait for the chaos to end..."

Jiang Baimian calmly said, "This is because we don't know the New World's essence or the root cause of the problem."

Therefore, it was unknown how breaking the New World's order would affect reality.

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

Jiang Baimian had long considered this problem as she chose her words. “This is actually an opportunity. Under normal circumstances, the New World has its own order. The imprisoned people have no way of knowing how to advance, nor do they know what the Kalendarium are thinking or doing. This makes your investigations always go in circles.

“Once the chaos begins, order will definitely collapse. Many things hidden under such order will be exposed, and you can take the opportunity to restore the truth. It won’t be too late to make a choice when the time comes.”

Smack!?

Shang Jianyao clenched his right fist and punched his left palm. “Why didn’t I think of that!?”

Jiang Baimian immediately ended the conversation. “Alright, don’t waste your energy. Warn me if there are any changes.”

“Alright.” Shang Jianyao waved his hand.

...

After disconnecting, Shang Jianyao’s attention was focused on the chaos.

Clang! Clang!

The houses by the street constantly shook as if they couldn’t bear the burden. The glass windows rattled as if they would shatter at any moment.

Thin and obvious cracks appeared on the ground, clearly visible under the street lamps lit up by Liu Chuan, Flora, and the others.

In the surrounding darkness, the street lamps representing other New World powerhouses either went in the opposite direction—distancing themselves from the tower—or stayed in the building they were originally in. They didn’t dare to move and could only wait. Others slowly move toward the tower as if they wanted to take advantage of the situation.

Thud! Thud! Thud!?

Shang Jianyao ran faster and faster, surpassing Chen Wen and the others and arriving in the middle of the team.

This position made it easier for him to observe the situation ahead and see if he could find the answers to certain questions from the collapse of order.

The gap between them and the tower wasn't that big to begin with. With the increasing intensity of the earthquake, they came to an area that few people usually entered.

Just as they passed a certain 'borderline,' Liu Chuan and the others' gazes froze at the same time.

Here, not only was the tower itself brightly lit, but the buildings around it also seemed to be a galaxy that had fallen into the human world.

The entire team instinctively stopped, and the weak Liu Chuan blurted out, "How can there be so many New World Awakened..."

The lights here were more than the New World powerhouses outside the core area combined!

Usually, this scene couldn't be seen from the outside. It seemed to be hidden by the tower.

Boom!

A building beside them collapsed from the earthquake, and a deep and hideous rift appeared in front of Liu Chuan and the others.

Whoosh!

A storm riled up, making everyone sway a little.

At this moment, a man slid out of an apartment-like building on the other side of the rift with his wheelchair. He was of Red River ethnicity.

He wore a white shirt inside and a blue sweater over it. A brown blanket covered his lower body. He looked to be in his forties, and his hair was clearly grizzled. He had a very elegant bearing.

The man came to a spot nearly 20 meters away from everyone and swept his light-blue eyes across them before asking loudly, “What are you guys doing here?”

Barnard replied shakily, “Vice President, we want to enter the tower. You only have two choices: Move aside or die!”

“He’s the Eighth Research Institute’s Vice President?” Shang Jianyao muttered to himself.

Vice President placed his hands on the wheelchair and said mockingly, “You know nothing. You will only bring disaster to the Ashlands!”

Chapter 918: Siege

“Why?” Shang Jianyao took a few steps forward and asked.

Vice President—who was sitting in a wheelchair—glanced at him and said with a cold expression, “Since you’re all here, you must’ve already made up your mind. No matter what disaster you bring to the Ashlands, you insist on escaping the New World and regaining your freedom. In that case, what’s the use of me explaining?”

Flora’s lips quivered a few times, but she didn’t retort. Barnard and the others were the same. dot
c//om

The scene fell silent.

They had indeed come here with the intention of dying if they didn’t succeed. No amount of reason or emotion could stop them from continuing forward.

Long periods of ‘imprisonment’ had made them rather extreme. As for what disaster would happen in the Ashlands, they could talk about it or make up for it after they escaped!

“It’s useful! You can at least persuade me!” Shang Jianyao quickly expressed his attitude.

Amidst the exaggerated hurricanes and the intense earthquakes, Vice President glanced at him again. “It’s you?”

“You know me?” Shang Jianyao asked curiously.

Vice President fell silent for a moment before saying, “You and your companions are about to come into contact with the real reason for the Old World’s destruction. We have done our best to protect it, but once it spreads, the Ashlands will fall into eternal chaos and endless disaster. Unfortunately, we couldn’t eliminate you and your companions in time.”

“You make it sound like you’re the good guys,” Shang Jianyao muttered.

...

At this moment, Liu Chuan—who was carrying Flora—urged, “We can’t waste any more time. We have to pass through here as soon as possible!”

As he urged the rest, he let another New World powerhouse carry Flora.

Shang Jianyao quickly and sincerely asked Vice President, “Why are there so many lights near the tower? Where did so many New World powerhouses come from?”

Vice President’s expression changed slightly as he replied strangely, “Those are all parts of Master Zhuang...”

“Oh!” Shang Jianyao was rather excited. He then said, “Listen to me...”

“You don’t have to say anything else.” Vice President raised his hands from the wheelchair and stuffed them into his ears. “Thought Implantation can indeed exceed distance and have an effect wherever the sound can reach. Therefore, I don’t want to hear what you have to say.”

He was currently nearly 20 meters away from Shang Jianyao and the others. The perception range of ordinary New World powerhouses had been reduced to ten meters. Only some who had chosen to enhance their perception range could reach 15 meters.

Therefore, at this distance, conventional abilities couldn't affect the Vice President beyond one's perception range.

Thought Implantation could fuse its power into a voice and influence the target aurally. The New World didn't restrict sound at all.

Of course, their conversation was done through shouting at a distance of nearly 20 meters away.

"If I knew this would happen, I should've added an ability when I asked the question. However, I realized that your level isn't low and that I had to use words before 'look' and 'listen to me' to deliver good effects..." Shang Jianyao said in disappointment.

But at this moment, Vice President had already covered his ears.

Upon seeing Liu Chuan and the others stirring, Vice President asked Shang Jianyao in confusion, "Why did you talk to me just now? Aren't you worried that I'll use Thought Implantation on you?"

In order to hear Shang Jianyao's answer, his fingers that were blocking his ears relaxed a little.

Shang Jianyao had a 'what's so strange' expression. "Didn't you pay the price of having your lower body paralyzed? This doesn't belong to the Master Zhuang domain at all."

As for items, the effects weren't too good against New World powerhouses—even if they were also created by New World powerhouses. After all, only a portion of the power was extracted with the corresponding reduction in effectiveness.

"Why couldn't I be paralyzed to begin with and later choose to pay a different price?"

"Why didn't I think of that!?" Shang Jianyao clenched his right fist and punched his left palm with a look of enlightenment.

This made Vice President's face twitch, and he was speechless.

Shang Jianyao pointed at Liu Chuan and the others and said, "They all know you and should know what your abilities are. Since they are willing to talk to you, I'm definitely not afraid."

This was the real reason why he dared to communicate.

.

Half of Barnard's body trembled as he nodded. "Vice President has Dancing, Spasms, and other abilities in the Door of Scorching domain."

"Stop talking!" Liu Chuan interrupted the conversation. Even now, he was still a little confused.

Why did an operation that should've been of great importance become a 'tea party?' The entire situation inexplicably lost the sense of urgency!

The weird pacing made him feel like vomiting blood.

Liu Chuan composed himself and said loudly, "While Vice President is alone, let's split up and besiege him. We'll circle around and venture deeper. Time is life!"

Upon hearing Liu Chuan's words, Vice President didn't panic. He only slid the wheelchair a few meters back, further away from the deep and hideous rift.

Shang Jianyao was just about to volunteer and strive to make friends with Vice President through an exchange of blows to obtain more information when Chen Wen from the Lost Dream Church came to Barnard and the others' side and whispered, "I'll take the front and draw out his abilities. You guys circle to the side and attempt a pincer attack."

Without Chen Wen's reminder, everyone present was an experienced New World powerhouse. They knew that the key to this plan was that the participants couldn't enter the Vice President's range at the same time. There had to be an order of attack.

This way, when the latter joined the battle, Vice President had to stop the abilities he had previously used and influence all human consciousnesses again to create the corresponding effects.

The connection between the two abilities would become an opportunity for Chen Wen.

“Alright.” Liu Chuan agreed.

Around the tower, the brightly lit houses gradually collapsed. Chen Wen stepped on the violently shaking ground and ran a few steps quickly, jumping over the deep and hideous gap.

He didn't stop and ran straight to Vice President.

At the same time, Shang Jianyao, Liu Chuan, and the two New World powerhouses carrying Flora and Barnard circled around the street from the left and right. They approached Vice President amidst the constantly falling dust, rocks, and glass shards.

Apart from a few of them, the remaining New World powerhouses stayed in place for the time being.

If they could quickly finish off Vice President, they definitely wouldn't be willing to be separated from the bulk of the team. After all, they might also be intercepted if they took another street.

If Vice President had indeed shown something unique from often entering the tower and rendered Chen Wen and the others helpless, these spectators would take a detour without hesitation.

The grizzled Vice President—who looked to be in his forties—lowered his hands and placed them on both sides of the wheelchair. His light-blue eyes kept staring at Chen Wen as his mind spread out, sensing the human consciousness around him.

Back then, he had chosen Increased Distance.

Finally, Chen Wen entered a 15-meter range, and his consciousness appeared in Vice President's perception.

His body suddenly convulsed. Not only were the ‘muscles’ on his arms and legs spasming, but his eyelids also couldn’t help but droop. This resulted in him losing his vision.

What was even more terrifying was that Spasms continued at a deeper level. It also affected Chen Wen’s ‘brain,’ making it difficult for him to focus.

Upon seeing Chen Wen’s obvious reaction, Liu Chuan, Shang Jianyao, and the others immediately attacked from the side, entering a 15-meter radius.

At this moment, a moving melody sounded from the wheelchair.?DUM TSS, DUM TSS...

Shang Jianyao and the others immediately followed the rhythm and swayed; they couldn’t help but start dancing. They danced uncontrollably, unable to care about anything else.

Chen Wen—who was supposed to grasp the connection point—seemed to be affected by Spasm and couldn’t use his abilities in time.

At this moment, he was also twisting his body to the rhythm.

Vice President was just about to take further action when his heart suddenly palpitated. He suddenly slid the wheelchair back nearly ten meters.

He wore an item from the Mandara domain, which had the Intuition ability.

Although Intuition wasn’t potent considering his and the enemy’s level, it remained effective. As long as Vice President reacted in time, it could save his life at critical moments.

As the wheelchair slid, Liu Chuan and the others’ dance was like a dream in Vice President’s eyes. It shattered, leaving only Shang Jianyao doing the moonwalk.

They had all appeared in a completely different place, exactly ten meters away from Vice President’s original spot!

When Chen Wen entered the Mind Corridor, he had also chosen Increased Distance. Therefore, the moment he entered a 15-meter range, he was affected by Spasms while also making Vice President fall into an illusion.

The subsequent music was real, but the effects were fake. Liu Chuan and the others didn't dance at all and had quietly approached Vice President.

Vice President—who had slid ten meters away—had a solemn expression, but he didn't show any nervousness.

Chapter 919: Light Shards

Upon seeing that they didn't take down Vice President at once, the watching New World powerhouses immediately went to other streets through the nearby alleys and collapsed houses and took a detour to the tower.

Vice President didn't focus on them. He continued staring at Chen Wen, Liu Chuan, and the others—who were approaching him.

Suddenly, he clenched his fists that lay on the armrests. His light-blue eyes instantly turned deep as if they had been tainted by black ink.

In the darkness, buildings appeared one after another. They were lit up with different numbers of lights like projections of the New World.

The projections gradually enlarged and froze on a brightly lit high-rise building.

Not far behind Vice President, the same building quietly stood. Yellow or pure white light was reflected from every floor and window.

Right on the heels of that, two lights in Vice President's eyes grew larger and larger, occupying every space in his eyes.

Whoosh!

Amidst the squall, a gigantic vortex of air appeared in front of Vice President.

It was dyed with the light's luster and emitted a terrifying suction force. It made Chen Wen, Liu Chuan, Shang Jianyao, and the two New World powerhouses carrying Flora and Barnard float up like weightless pieces of paper, toward the vortex's center.

"He's borrowing the Kalendaria's power!" Shang Jianyao was very familiar with this feeling and shouted. However, the terrifying suction force drowned his voice and scattered it into the wind.

...

At this moment, a black figure separated from Liu Chuan—who was struggling in midair. It swayed and grew larger, instantly resembling a building.

This gigantic black figure rushed to the vortex before Chen Wen, Shang Jianyao, and the others could reach it. It then spread its arms and hugged it tightly.

With a whoosh, a gigantic black figure filled the center of the vortex.

The two of them seemed to collide like matter and antimatter as they were instantly annihilated.

Along with the annihilation, a violent 'wave' surged in all directions, slapping Shang Jianyao and the others—who were in midair—to the ground.

Vice President wasn't spared either. He was thrown into the air before smashing a large hole in the surface of a building behind him.

The huge wave calmed down a little, and Chen Wen, Liu Chuan, and the others quickly got up.

In the New World, they were only lifeforms of pure consciousness. Such damage wouldn't cause them to suffer internal bleeding, shattered bones, or concussions. It wouldn't leave any repercussions or affect their subsequent actions.

Of course, they weren't completely uninjured—this expended a large portion of their mental energy. But apart from Shang Jianyao, the other New World powerhouses had made preparations in advance.

They had prepared several humans around their bodies. Once their minds reached a critical point, they would immediately extract their consciousnesses and replenish themselves.

Bam!

Shang Jianyao felt that he would be letting down the scene if he didn't vomit a mouthful of blood. He deliberately conjured the corresponding matter.

Liu Chuan glanced at the large hole in the building in front of him and shouted at his companions, "Let's pass through here as soon as possible. Don't waste time with Vice President!"

"Alright!" Shang Jianyao was always one to reply enthusiastically.

Thud! Thud! Thud!?

The other two New World powerhouses carried Flora and Barnard and followed behind Liu Chuan, Chen Wen, and Shang Jianyao as they ran past the building that Vice President had slammed into.

They had just run more than ten meters when Vice President's wheelchair suddenly flew out of the hole. It landed firmly on the ground and spun around, allowing Vice President to see Shang Jianyao and the others' backs directly.

Without needing to run, Flora had been paying attention to the situation. Upon seeing this, she immediately shouted, "Air wall!"

Apart from Shang Jianyao's lack of tacit understanding and not immediately knowing what to do, Barnard, Liu Chuan, Chen Wen, and the others half-turned their bodies at the same time and used Matter Interference ten meters behind them.

The hurricane that passed through the street froze in place, compressed into a visible wall of air. This wall blocked Vice President's path, making the enemy's figures in his light-blue eyes a little blurry.

Before the air wall took shape, he had already slapped the armrests and made the electric wheelchair roll on its own. He was faster than the running Shang Jianyao and company.

Upon seeing that he was about to slam into the air wall, Vice President quickly pressed a spot on the armrest and braked.

With a screeching sound, the electric wheelchair stopped in time.

Meanwhile, Liu Chuan and the others didn't stop in their tracks after jointly creating the air wall. Instead, they turned around and continued running.

As the power was extracted, the compressed air wall couldn't be maintained any longer and suddenly expanded.

The more compressed it was, the more exaggerated its expansion became. This resulted in an explosion.

Boom!

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The air wall collapsed into a terrifying shockwave that wrecked the surroundings.

Vice President—who was opposite this—was naturally not spared. He was sent flying, slamming into the ruins formed by the collapsed buildings by the roadside.

Whoosh!?

The ruins collapsed further under the shockwave, burying Vice President inside.

Shang Jianyao twisted his body and saw this scene as he ran. He couldn't help but raise his palm and clap for the tacit teamwork between Flora, Barnard, and the others.

At the same time, as the earthquake intensified, some of the brightly lit houses around the tower couldn't support themselves any longer and collapsed.

The light inside turned into countless fragments that either flew back to the tower, landed on the ground, or drifted elsewhere.

“Aren't they all Master Zhuang's lamps?” Shang Jianyao—who could firmly keep up with the rest of the team even after clapping—said in shock.

The squall filled his mouth with a gust of air, suppressing his voice.

“They are just shards.” Although Chen Wen ran fast, he maintained a constant speed.

At this moment, Liu Chuan suddenly shouted, “Incoming!”

A few light shards flew over.

Shang Jianyao appeared to be playing a game. He jumped, rolled, and pounced forward at times, perfectly dodging them.

The next second, he looked through the gap between the collapsed buildings and saw a New World powerhouse—who had previously taken a detour to the tower—not being able to dodge in time. He was hit by a light shard.

With a whoosh, the New World powerhouse went up in flames.

He let out a shrill scream and rolled twice in the shape of a human torch. The fire then extinguished itself before he disappeared without a trace.

Liu Chuan—who only knew that the light shards were dangerous but didn't know what the danger was—slowed down as the glint in his eyes froze.

The weak him began to be afraid of advancing. If not for the fact that he knew his flaws and had long gotten Truth to modify a certain portion of his memories and undergo deep hypnosis, he definitely wouldn't have been able to persist.

Clap! Clap! Clap! Shang Jianyao applauded his dodge.

For some reason, they didn't encounter any obstruction from Charlie, Professor Li, or the others during their subsequent run. Vice President also failed to catch up.

Just like that, they arrived outside the tower amidst the falling rocks, scattered light shards, violent hurricanes, and constant cracks in the ground.

This tower reached deep into the clouds. The lights on each floor were abnormally bright, forming a sharp contrast with the dark sky around them.

Its reddish-brown wooden door was very ordinary; it was about the height of two people. It had two panes that opened outwards.

Shang Jianyao jumped up the steps, stretched out his hands, and pushed at the door. But no matter how hard he tried, the door didn't budge.

"Wait," Barnard said shakily.

Shang Jianyao retracted his hand and looked at the elder on his companion's back.

Barnard explained, "Truth said that 'He' will help us open it."

Just as Barnard said that, the two-person-tall, reddish-brown wooden door creaked and slowly opened.

...

Eighth Research Institute, in the small city.

Jiang Baimian—who knew that the chaos had begun—sneaked in here again and hid at the edge of the nuclear power plant and the vortex-shaped building.

She waited for a while and realized that many Heartless had become very anxious.

Gradually, they went berserk and stopped defending their posts. They either killed each other or fled to the periphery of the city.

“Is this one of the effects of the New World’s chaos on reality?” Jiang Baimian was in no rush to leave. She only used Mirror Dimension and approached the vortex-like building when only a small number of Heartless remained in the area.

With the ability to see the target directly, she didn’t get lost. It didn’t take long for her to reach the place where the Heartless disease’s symptoms would originally appear.

Her head throbbed again, and she had no choice but to take a few steps back.

The chaos hasn’t reached its climax??Jiang Baimian muttered to herself. She stood there, stared at the vortex-like building, and patiently waited.

A few minutes later, she saw an invisible object suddenly collapse around the target building, turning into balls of air that blew into the distance.

Jiang Baimian’s heart stirred as she immediately walked forward. This time, she no longer felt a headache or dizziness when she crossed the critical line.

Jiang Baimian—who was wearing a military exoskeleton—quickly arrived at the vortex-like building’s door. She then stretched out her hands and pressed them against the metal door.

Chapter 920: Corpses

Behind the reddish-brown wooden door was a spacious hall that took up every inch of space.

The entire tower wasn’t divided into levels. Shang Jianyao—who was standing at the door—could directly see the dome that rose into the sky when he looked up.

Large holes appeared in the surrounding walls, embedded with glass that formed rows of windows. They stretched from bottom to top, all the way to the dome. They were currently reflecting blinking lights that flickered.

In the middle of the hall was a large blob of darkness. Deep in the darkness, countless lights flickered and alternated.

They seeped out of the darkness and shone on the window, turning into light.

At this moment, the darkness was constantly expanding and contracting like a beating heart. Balls of shimmering air spewed out, either crashing into the wall, flying toward the dome, or striking the ground.

Every impact these gusts made stirred up a violent tremble in the ground, producing a violent hurricane as if it were the source of the chaos.

At this moment, a low and ethereal voice sounded in Shang Jianyao, Liu Chuan, Flora, and the others' ears.

“Go. Go to the darkness. As long as you destroy it, you can return to the Ashlands and obtain freedom.

“Go, go to the darkness. As long as you destroy it, you can return to the Ashlands and obtain freedom...”

This voice repeated in Shang Jianyao and the others' minds, quickly strengthening their beliefs. They no longer hesitated and passed through the door one after another, entering the hall and walking into the darkness.

In front of them, light flickered, and gusts surged. The darkness swelled and contracted, giving off a surreal feeling.

One step, two steps, three steps.

.....

Suddenly, a faint stream of air spewed out of the darkness and slammed into the tower's wall. It didn't collapse directly and rebounded toward the New World powerhouse carrying Flora.

The two of them couldn't react in time and couldn't dodge. They could only use Matter Interference to hurriedly prop up an air wall.

The shimmering air stream silently passed through the air wall and slammed into Flora and the New World powerhouse carrying her.

Their bodies suddenly turned illusory, and their expressions instantly turned extremely terrified, almost warped.

In the blink of an eye, the air stream dissipated, turning Flora and the New World powerhouse into bubbles. They burst with a single touch of the wind, leaving no traces.

Their human consciousnesses were extinguished.

Liu Chuan, Barnard, and the others were shocked when they saw this, and their expressions clearly changed.

“No!” Shang Jianyao's right hand grabbed the air twice. He tried to save them, but it was too late.

Compared to the New World powerhouse who had been ignited by the light shard, Flora—who was known for her friendliness and was more familiar with everyone—had her consciousness collapse under the air stream's impact and dissipated on the spot... The shock she caused to Barnard, Liu Chuan, and the others was greater. For a moment, they couldn't help but feel grief and horror.

The very strong and intelligent Flora actually died just like that...

When they looked at the gigantic darkness again, their gazes changed with deep confusion. Why are we approaching it? Even if it's really the key to leaving, how can we destroy it without knowing anything? Will it bring us disaster?

Including Shang Jianyao, the remaining New World powerhouses subconsciously slowed down.

...

The metal door opened in front of Jiang Baimian.

In front of her was a white wooden wall that separated the entrance area from the space behind.

In front of the wooden wall was a platform that looked like a spindle. It seemed to be prepared for the receptionist.

Jiang Baimian slowly walked over and looked at the platform's surface.

There were no pamphlets or business cards there. It was so empty that there didn't seem to be any dust.

No, it wasn't seemingly dustless. Jiang Baimian reached out to touch it and confirmed that it was clean as if it had just been wiped.

Is it the dust removal effect brought about by the electromagnetic environment here, or are the Heartless in charge of cleaning it every day??Jiang Baimian muttered to herself silently.

She no longer looked at the various gauges displayed on the military exoskeleton visor. Their indicators were in a mess as if Shang Jianyao had possessed them.

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After circling around the white wooden wall, the space behind her opened up. But according to Jiang Baimian's estimation, the light-colored hall in front of her only occupied one-tenth of the vortex-shaped building's basement, maybe even less.

After all, this building only had a few floors. It was mainly built horizontally.

Looking at the seven to eight casually placed sofas, Jiang Baimian determined that this was likely a waiting area or a lounge.

At this moment, a corpse in a black uniform was sitting on a sofa. It had already turned to bones.

In addition to it, there were nearly ten skeletons here. They were all wearing the same black uniforms, and their submachine guns and other weapons fell beside them.

Most of them were at the end of the waiting area. The silver-gray metal sliding door there was ajar.

The remaining corpses were gathered in front of Jiang Baimian, beside the white wooden wall, in the entrance to the waiting area.

Jiang Baimian relied on her rich knowledge of the Old World to frown and mutter to herself, "Security personnel?"

The corpses in black uniforms did resemble a team of security guards. When they were alive, they were in charge of the entrance to this special building.

Another term flashed across Jiang Baimian's mind: Second Research Zone.

In the office of the Eighth Research Institute's president, President Du Heng had once signed a document to repurpose the Second Research Zone.

Was the staircase leading to the Deities' Forbidden Zone built here?? Jiang Baimian was in no rush to advance. She squatted down and examined the three corpses suspected to be security personnel from the Research Zone.

As she swept her gaze around, she realized that a bag of items was on the circular coffee table resting on the sofa beside her.

The item's packaging was made of relatively hard brownish-yellow kraft paper. On it were printed cute bears.

Jiang Baimian's heart palpitated as she maintained her genuflecting posture and reached out to take the bag of items.

The packaging had long been torn open. Inside were tempting biscuits that showed no signs of mold.

Jiang Baimian examined the bag of biscuits and muttered with a frown, "Bear biscuits?"

Her most recent impression of bear biscuits came from Ceningmis. In the residence of Ceningmis's Kalendaria's Son, Brooklyn Garland, there had been a bag of bear biscuits produced in the 37th year of the New Calendar beside the ink bottle on the desk.

Back then, Jiang Baimian—who had heard Shang Jianyao's report—was rather confused because Ceningmis's situation wasn't extravagant enough to specially maintain a production line for bear biscuits.

Shang Jianyao believed that this might be a childhood memory of the Kalendaria's Son. As a savior, he had the privilege of being a little willful.

Therefore, Jiang Baimian was a little surprised and doubtful when she discovered such a bag of bear biscuits in the vortex-like building with the most chaotic electromagnetic environment deep in the New World.

She temporarily put down the bag of bear biscuits and checked the three white human skeletons in front of her.

On the right chest of their black uniforms hung a black metal name tag. On it was the deceased's identity and name in golden Ashlandic: "Security personnel: Gilbert Simmons."

"Security personnel: Fei Yingwu."

"Security personnel: Winst Garland."

Winst Garland...? Jiang Baimian's eyebrows twitched, and her gaze instantly froze.

...

In the tower of the New World, Shang Jianyao and the others stopped.

The low and ethereal voice sounded in their ears again. “This is the darkness’s weakest moment; it’s about to collapse. All you need to do is walk over, combine your strength, and deliver a fatal blow to it. That will resolve the problem.

“Don’t worry; I’ll help you.”

This voice constantly echoed in Liu Chuan, Barnard, and the others’ minds, dissipating most of the hesitation in their hearts.

“That’s right. That darkness doesn’t seem to be in good shape.”

“The chaos started because of this, and it will also end because of this...”

“It’s like a castle on the beach now. It will collapse as long as we use a little strength.”

“...” As similar thoughts rose and fell, Barnard and the others took another step forward.

“Wait!” Shang Jianyao—who walked the fastest—suddenly shouted.