

## Doomsday 71

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 71: Sin City (5)

Who is going this time?

There was a significant difference between the elevator to the Death Prison and the elevator into the city.

The elevator into the city appeared silver-white on the surface, with a large and spacious interior and accompanied by crisp prompt sounds.

On the other hand, the interior of the death prison elevator was pitch black, resembling the open mouth of a beast. Stepping inside felt cramped and claustrophobic.

Under the threat of hundreds of heavy weapons, Su Cha slowly entered the elevator. The oppressive feeling like a thorn in the back finally disappeared. The particle cannon retracted its barrel and disappeared back into the shadows. Artificial light sources and the sky reappeared, and the underground city returned to calm.

Su Cha looked inside the elevator at the floor index. There were no buttons on it. A black number slowly appeared: “-1.”

Suddenly, the elevator cabin plummeted rapidly, and a strong sense of weightlessness hit Su Cha. He quickly stabilized himself.

After about ten seconds, at a depth of fifty meters from the sea surface, the elevator arrived at the Death Prison.

The elevator doors slid open slowly, revealing two sturdy fences in front of Su Cha. A man wearing a black uniform and a police cap stood behind the second fence and said to him, “Your name is Su Cha? I am your supervisor, Kunbu.”

Su Cha took a small step forward, but Kunbu immediately stopped him and scolded him sternly, "Did I tell you to move?"

Su Cha stopped moving, remained silent, and slowly clenched his fists.

"Are you mute? Say 'Yes, Sir!'" Kunbu said coldly.

"Yes, Sir," Su Cha replied with a sour expression but obediently.

Kunbu snorted lightly, not entirely satisfied with the expression, but didn't continue to pick at it. "Listen carefully, after the first fence opens, turn left to get your tag, then go to the room on the right for inspection. Understand?"

Su Cha nodded slightly. "Understood."

Kunbu narrowed his eyes. "Did you forget what I just taught you?"

Su Cha raised his voice. "Understood, Sir!"

"Go."

The fence opened slowly, and Su Cha walked to the left as instructed, covertly observing the surrounding environment.

At the end of the road, there was a small window with a countertop holding a tag.

Su Cha looked down and saw that the bars on it were all gray, indicating his "crime record."

Kunbu's voice came through the corner speaker: "Put on the tag."

Su Cha hesitated for a moment, extended his finger, and prepared to pick up the tag.

The moment he made contact, he felt an extremely uncomfortable and chilling sensation.

The consciousness in his mind was scattered, as if his body and soul had drifted away from him, leaving behind a sense of emptiness in the whole world.

This feeling was fleeting; Su Cha quickly regained his clarity. However, his mental acuity realized that he was being monitored, not by a camera on the wall, but deep within his consciousness, being fiercely watched by a pervasive and ever-present gaze.

As long as he committed another crime, this force would manifest and compel him back to the Death Prison.

No wonder the convicts in the Death Prison didn't need to wear shackles. From the moment they received their Criminal Record, they became lifelong prisoners.

The power in the Criminal Record was currently beyond his control. He could only turn back and think of a way to resolve it.

Su Cha put on the identification tag and followed Kunbu's instructions, turning right and entering the room in the opposite direction.

The structure of this room was somewhat similar to an interrogation room. Kunbu still observed him from behind a barrier, pointing to an empty basin on the ground: "The Death Prison implements zero-entry management, and no personal belongings are allowed."

"Take off your clothes, all of them, and put them in the basin. Then go into the inner room for a shower and come out for inspection."

"Remember, you only have five minutes."

Su Cha swiftly began to undress – his coat, belt, pants, combat boots, the dagger strapped to his calf, the hidden dagger in his shoe, and even the concealed weapons Song Ke had intentionally given him – all clattered into the basin. In the end, only his underwear remained.

Kunbu glanced at him. The man behind the barrier was tall and muscular, with a solid body and no excess fat. When he turned around, the fierce black snake tattoo on the back of his neck gradually revealed itself. Looking further down, the man's back was covered in scars, with hardly a patch of unblemished skin. Some scars were so pronounced that just by looking at them, one could imagine the brutal circumstances at that time.

The rainforest... Kunbu's eyes flickered, and he thought to himself: Seems like a tough one.

Su Cha entered the bathroom, cold water pouring over him. He had a brief moment to contemplate.

From what he could see so far, the management of the Death Prison was very primitive, and the way of incarceration was similar to other cities on the surface. Aside from ubiquitous surveillance and the unique underwater location, there were few traces of technology here. The existence of the Criminal Record was like an astonishing BUG, completely surpassing the overall level.

The three-minute cold shower ended, and Su Cha went into the inner room to undergo a machine scan and change into prisoner's clothing. He then returned to the initial room.

Finally, the second barrier in front of him opened. Kunbu sat at the desk, opening the recently delivered file box and reviewing his information.

“What crime did you get in for?”

“It should be damaging public property,” Su Cha thought for a moment and said, not entirely sure.

“Damaging public property?” Kunbu quickly flipped through a few pages, “2nd-floor confinement, one-month sentence, must pay a fine of 130,000 Alliance coins before release. Huh, it was personally issued by Warden She, what did you destroy to get such a heavy punishment?”

“The city elevator.”

“No wonder... that’s Warden She’s money bag.”

Kunbu put down the documents in his hand, clasping his hands against his chin, looking particularly serious.

“I don’t care about your identity outside, as long as you’re in the Death Prison, you belong to me. I advise you to behave and not cause trouble for me.”

“Understood,” Su Cha said, quickly adding, “Sir!”

Kunbu was satisfied with his obedience. “Since you’re a newcomer, I can give you some guidance. Do you have any questions?”

“Yes,” Su Cha nodded, “How many floors does the Death Prison have in total?”

“Why do you want to know this?” Kunbu asked.

“Just curious.”

“Excluding the activity floor between 6th and 7th floors, the Death Prison has a total of 18 floors. The further down, the longer the sentence.”

Kunbu disdainfully glanced at him, “Kid, stow away your curiosity. Believe me, below the 7th floor, even understanding is a form of pain.”

“Why am I on the 2nd floor?” Su Cha asked.

Kunbu thought he was complaining about the long sentence, and answered unexpectedly detailed, "For a regular charge of damaging public property, at most, you'd stay on the 1st floor for ten days to half a month. But your charge was issued by Warden She, and since he suffered a financial loss, he won't let you off easily."

"Warden She?" Su Cha recalled the cold voice when he was arrested.

Kunbu explained, "The Death Prison is jointly managed by three wardens. Warden She is primarily responsible for floors 1 to 6, Warden White for floors 7 to 12, and as for floors 13 to 18... they are under the jurisdiction of Hades."

Just as Su Cha was about to speak, Kunbu interrupted him, "I advise you not to inquire about Hades's matters."

His gaze fell on Su Cha's identification tag, implying something, "Hades knows everything. When you know about him, he also knows about you."

"Any other questions?" Kunbu closed the file box, "I'll have you taken to your cell. I have another inmate to attend to."

"Is there any way to shorten the sentence?" Su Cha asked.

One month was too long. His original plan was to spend a week understanding the internal situation of the Death Prison, then go out and meet up with Song Ke and the others.

Kunbu smiled, "You're quite experienced. Yes, the sentence can be offset through labor, with a maximum of eight hours per day. If you work actively, you can probably reduce it by half."

Su Cha asked, "What kind of labor?"

Kunbu's smile became intriguing. "A new drug test subject in the laboratory, a sandbag in the black boxing training hall, a sand filler in the undersea tunnel, and a dust collector in the mechanical room. Let's see how long you can endure. Which type of death are you inclined towards?"

Su Cha: "..."

Guided by Kunbu, Su Cha arrived at the 2nd floor. As soon as the elevator door opened, countless pairs of gloomy eyes immediately turned towards them—some were inmates, and others were patrolling prison guards.

The entire 2nd floor resembled a massive assembly line factory. Just looking at the space, it was even wider than the trading street, with a large number of prisoners laboring at each station.

"At 6:00 a.m. every day, the labor list is updated. Sign up first, then go to the designated location to swipe your ID badge for entry," Kunbu explained as they walked. "You must reach the labor point before the countdown ends; don't wander around on the way."

"We're here, go in," Kunbu stopped in front of a cell, unlocked the door, and pushed Su Cha in. "Behave yourself and strive to get out as soon as possible."

...

The next day at 5:50 a.m., Su Cha opened his eyes on time.

He got off the narrow single bed and waited quietly at the door of the cell.

Exactly at 6:00 a.m., the labor list was updated. Su Cha quickly selected "boxing companion," or commonly known as the sandbag.

The cell door automatically opened, and Su Cha headed to the black boxing training area, memorizing the route along the way.

Once there, he put on his gloves and began eight hours of labor.

The labor was quite simple: getting punched.

Su Cha had his hands up in front of his face, defending diligently, keeping an eye on the surroundings. His mind was elsewhere. The boxer across from him kept missing, growing increasingly frustrated and resorting to all sorts of underhanded moves. Su Cha grew annoyed and retaliated with a punch.

The boxer was hit on the bridge of the nose, flying backward and crashing onto the ground, instantly unconscious.

The noise around them quieted down.

A guard rushed over and yelled at Su Cha, "What are you doing? Trying to fight?"

Su Cha tried to explain, "No, officer..."

"I assigned you to be a sandbag, not to hit people. Go back. Today's labor time is null and void!"

Su Cha: "..."

He reluctantly took off his boxing gloves and turned to leave.

The look of frustration vanished in an instant as he walked out of the gym.

Su Cha's eyes were calm as he silently slipped into the shadows.

The various cells on the 2nd floor were well organized, with clear division of labor on the assembly line, and there was no sign of any anomaly for the time being.

Suddenly, a dark red elevator in the corner caught his attention.



Su Cha's expression changed slightly. Was this an elevator for the internal floors of the Death Prison?

He stealthily made his way toward the target.

The elevator doors were tightly closed, and the badge couldn't swipe it open. Su Cha was contemplating when footsteps approached from behind.

He rolled on the ground and concealed himself in the darkness.

Two prison guards were escorting a disheveled inmate. One of them seemed to be the inmate's supervisor and was scolding him, "Look at you. You're about to be released in less than half a month, and you're causing trouble at this critical juncture. Now you've been assigned to the 4th floor for a whole five years. Take your time to endure it!"

The guard showed an adapter on his wrist, pressed it against the elevator, and the elevator slowly started moving, making the three figures disappear.

Su Cha furrowed his brow in the darkness. It seemed that the internal elevator could only be opened with the guards' authorization. However, in the Death Prison, accumulating offenses allowed one to go to deeper floors... That was some new intel.

The second day, the third day, Su Cha diligently participated in the labor reform.

When he returned to the cell at night, he used a nail file (obtained from the gym) to draw a map on the wall.

The three-dimensional map in his mind became clearer, he was on the 2nd floor, which had a total of 12,000 cells. It was said that the 1st floor had over 20,000 cells. Based on this estimation, the total number of prisoners in the entire Death Prison exceeded 100,000. Floors 1 to 6 were considered the light crime zone, 7 to 12 were the medium crime zone, and there was an open activity area between levels 6 and 7 for recreational activities. As for below the 12th floor, there was currently no available information.

Su Cha carefully recalled and documented every detail, then smoothed the wall with the nail file.

The scope of the Death Prison was even larger than he had anticipated, many times larger, making it incredibly challenging to find someone inside.

He didn't know where that person, Lu Xiaoyu, was being held. Judging by Zhuang Qingyan's description of his offenses, he was likely below the 7th floor.

...

Eight days later.

Su Cha was released.

Kunbu handed back his clothes at the elevator entrance. "Make a fresh start when you go out. Don't come back in."

Su Cha said in a low voice, "Sir, I have one more question."

During this time, Su Cha had behaved himself, and Kunbu found him more pleasing than when he first arrived, so he casually answered, "What's the question?"

"How long have you been here as a supervisor?"

"Seven years."

Seven years. Enough time for the outside world to undergo drastic changes, such as the apocalypse, the appearance of zombies, the collapse of cities...

Yet, the Death Prison seemed like a still pool with no ripples, unchanging except for the constant influx and outflow of prisoners.

“So, do you remember the names of all the inmates you’ve come into contact with?”

“Who would bother remembering such things?” Kunbu said nonchalantly. “If you can’t recall, just check the records.”

Su Cha nodded. “No need. Sir, see you next time.”

He stepped into the elevator.

Kunbu stood still for two seconds, then suddenly realized, “Kid, what do you mean by ‘see you next time’? See what!”

...

The pure black elevator rose slowly, and Su Cha recalled the information he had gathered over the past few days.

“Ding.” After reaching sea level, he stepped out.

By the seaside, five people of varying heights were waiting for him.

Zhuang Qingyan and Fang Zhixu were talking and looked up at him.

Lin Youyou and Xu Xing were arguing, dissatisfied, discussing who kicked the blanket last night.

Standing on the raised platform, Song Ke noticed him and waved, “Hey, we’re here to pick you up after your release.”

“Hm.” Su Cha, who hadn’t spoken much in the past eight days, cleared his throat, feeling the darkness of the Death Prison slowly receding from him.

He had a tracker from Song Ke in his clothes; they could track his location, which wasn’t surprising.

“Are you hurt?” Lin Youyou asked worriedly.

“No,” Su Cha shook his head, “let’s talk at the hotel.”

...

Back at the hotel, after cautiously inspecting the room, Su Cha’s first words were, “There’s something we’ve all misunderstood.

“—The true Sin City is the Death Prison beneath the ocean.”

Only those who had been in the Death Prison knew that those who were released were people who had committed relatively “minor” crimes.

As for those merciless demons with no chance of pardon, they would only fall layer by layer, endlessly plummeting.

Su Cha recounted his experiences from the past few days to Song Ke and the others, then drew a map of the 2nd floor and the activity area from memory.

Truly an intelligence expert, he pieced together the fragmented clues, gradually unveiling the mysterious veil of the Death Prison.

Zhuang Qingyan analyzed, “From the two maps, the activity area is nearly one-third smaller in size than the 2nd floor. The Death Prison should be an inverted cone.”

Lin Youyou exclaimed, "Are you saying the Death Prison has three wardens, each in charge of different monitoring levels?"

"We have to undress to enter?" Xu Xing was puzzled.

"I suggest we don't waste time in the underground city," Su Cha suddenly spoke amidst the chatter and discussion.

"—We should all enter the Death Prison."

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 72.1: Sin City (6)

Chapter 72.1 – Sin City (6)

Of course together!

"—We should all enter the Death Prison."

Su Cha usually didn't like to talk, but unexpectedly, he scared everyone as soon as he spoke.

Song Ke's eyes widened, taking in a breath, "You, haven't had enough of being in jail, and you want to drag us along with you?"

The others looked at him with various expressions.

Su Cha hesitated, "...No."

"I actually think it's a good idea."

In the quiet atmosphere, Zhuang Qingyan lightly tapped the wheelchair with his fingers and analyzed calmly, "These days we've been gathering intelligence in the underground city, to be honest, we haven't made any progress."

Song Ke thought about it carefully and realized it was true.

"Since we've confirmed the person is in the Death Prison, it might be better to go in and look for them earlier. Perhaps there's a better chance."

"I have objections," Fang Zhixu unexpectedly spoke, raising his tired eyes slightly, "Perhaps my thoughts are more pessimistic. If everyone goes in and there's no support outside, what if things don't go as planned and we can't come out?"

"Aren't you still going to participate in the Throne Race? Can you ensure finding the person and safely leaving the Death Prison before that?"

"Don't end up with nothing at both ends."

Though Fang Zhixu's words were harsh, they were very realistic. If they entered the Death Prison at this time, they didn't know how long they would stay inside, and it was very likely they would miss the next round of the Throne Race.

For Song Ke, Zhuang Qingyan, Xu Xing, and Fang Zhixu, participating in the competition was not so urgent, but for Lin Youyou...

She had always wanted the opportunity to make a wish to Ilya.

Lin Youyou knew they were waiting for her answer.

She was torn inside, as if standing at a fork in the road. She had always thought that the Throne Race was the only hope to heal her loved one, so she tried her best to fight for the slim chance. But now, things had taken a turn. Fang Zhixu was an A-level healing-type awakener...

Should she continue to pursue elusive promises, or seize the opportunity right in front of her?

Although Lin Youyou debuted with a sweet image, her true character was decisive. She gritted her teeth and confirmed, “Hey, Fang Zhixu, we’ll kill the person you want us to kill, and you promise to help us heal, right?”

Fang Zhixu stood up and solemnly nodded at them, saying, “As long as I can fulfill the obsession of this lifetime, I will do my utmost.”

Whether it was Zhuang Qingyan’s legs or Lin Youyou’s bedridden loved one who had been suffering for a long time, healing couldn’t be achieved solely through abilities. The best solution was for them to return to Tongwan, where they would have the support of top medical resources, and undergo surgery with Fang Zhixu as the lead surgeon.

Lin Youyou bit her lip and nodded slowly, saying, “Alright, I’ll give it a try!”

“Isn’t it just going to jail? Just the 18th floor? Our purpose in coming to Sin City is to rescue people, and we absolutely cannot return empty-handed! Even if we have to dig three feet into the ground at Death Prison, we must find that guy with that surname Lu!!!”

Lin Youyou was resolute, shouting her slogan passionately, eager to charge into Death Prison.

Song Ke looked stunned, gaping at her. No matter how many times she had witnessed it, she still wasn’t used to it... a celebrity’s image was truly fake.

Zhuang Qingyan leisurely extended her hand and helped her close her jaw, which had dropped in shock.

“Now that we are in agreement, let’s discuss how to get in,” Su Cha said, pulling up a floor plan on a screen. He pointed a finger up one level, saying, “I suggest going directly to the 5th or 6th floor. The 6th floor and above fall under the jurisdiction of the same warden. We have confirmed that destroying public property will lead to arrest and imprisonment; the remaining issue is the length of the sentence.”

“The sentence on the 4th floor starts at five years...”

As the adults gathered around to study the floor plan, Song Ke’s hem was tugged.

She turned around and found a distressed Xu Xing with a small, pained face. “Sister, I... I don’t want to go.”

Since officially joining V587, Xu Xing had always been Song Ke’s little follower. Every time she had to do something, Xu Xing would cheerfully shout “gogogo.” This was the first time he had voluntarily expressed a desire not to do something.

“What’s wrong?” Song Ke valued his opinion greatly, crouching down to meet his gaze and asking seriously.

Xu Xing fidgeted with his clothes, hesitated for a long time, and then mumbled very softly, “Have to undress, completely, little elephant...”

The little boy was in the midst of puberty, and his self-esteem was extremely fragile.

Song Ke exclaimed, “Huh?”

She was still pondering what “little elephant” meant when Zhuang Qingyan turned around expressionless and said, “No need to strip naked, you can keep your underwear.”

Indeed, men understood men the best, even though Xu Xing wasn’t quite a man yet.

Xu Xing blinked his big eyes, and he said “Oh” belatedly, and the frustration on his face was wiped away.

Then he said happily, “It’s okay, Sister~ you continue with your discussion.”

Song Ke exclaimed, “Ah??”



...

The trading street was brightly lit, bustling with people. Cheng Yi was loudly discussing business with someone when a group of people approached from a distance. The young girl at the front waved at him and shouted joyfully, "Cheng Yi! We've come..."

Cheng Yi looked left and right, behaving like a thief, and quickly ran over to cover the girl's mouth, leading them to a nearby deep alley.

"Shh! Keep it down. Do you know how much trouble you're attracting? I'm just here for business, not to get involved in your affairs," she warned.

"Wuwuwu!" Song Ke grumbled.

Cheng Yi released her hand and casually twirled her long purple-highlighted hair with her finger. "What do you want with me? Same rule applies—no crystal, no deal."

Mysteriously, Song Ke took out a green crystal, one they had snatched from Gaida in the desert.

Cheng Yi paused her hair-twirling gesture, revealing a longing expression. Wherever Song Ke's hand moved, her gaze followed, fixated on the crystal.

"Business, do we have a deal?" Song Ke asked.

"Deal, deal, deal! Of course, let's do it! It seems like a big deal. Hehe, hehehe," Cheng Yi exclaimed excitedly, rubbing her hands.

"Do you know what kind of crime would land you a minimum of ten years in prison?" Song Ke asked seriously.

“Huh?” Cheng Yi doubted if she heard correctly. “What are you saying? Prison? And starting from ten years? Are you guys alright in the head?”

Her gaze swept across the six people, noticing Su Cha and the badge on his shoulder.

Cheng Yi suddenly understood and pointed at him, aggrieved. “Didn’t you just go in for a whirl? How come, addicted to prison already? Still trying to fool your companions to join you. I have to say, you’re really morally deficient!”

Su Cha: ... There was no way to argue.

Song Ke smiled lightly. “It’s not about him; we’re going there on our own.”

Cheng Yi couldn’t quite comprehend. Why were there people eager to go to prison? But... regardless of what they were thinking, turning down business opportunities would be foolish.

She lowered her voice conspiratorially. “You want to all go in? Not impossible. Just have to create a bit of a commotion to get out. Do you know there are three wardens in the Death Prison?”

Song Ke nodded; Su Cha had already informed them of this information.

“Here’s something you probably don’t know. A warden surnamed She loves money more than life. He stays in Death Prison all year round but still finds ways to amass wealth. Warden White is stern and violent, readily resorting to whipping and punishment. In his hands, the prisoners’ lives are worse than death.”

Cheng Yi licked her lips, maliciously speaking ill of the wardens.

“...But I suggest you start with Warden She; after all, you have a criminal record. If you handle it well, not just ten years, even twenty or thirty years won’t be a problem. I guarantee you’ll enjoy your stay.”

Song Ke responded with an understanding “hmm” and suddenly realized something was off.

Although there were three wardens in the Death Prison, Cheng Yi had almost ignored the one named “Hades” without much thought, and the topic was deliberately ended.

She exchanged a glance with Zhuang Qingyan and saw him shaking his head slowly.

Song Ke understood without further probing and skipped over this matter.

Cheng Yi leaned out and looked around the mouth of the alley for a long time, making sure no one was eavesdropping. Then she smiled darkly. “I know where Warden She’s lifeblood is.”

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 72.2: Sin City (6)

Chapter 72.2 – Sin City (6)

Of course together!

Song Ke and the others were led to a splendid building that was not yet open. Beside an exquisite signboard, there was a line of small characters written in decorative script.

“Rose Auction House,” Zhuang Qingyan read the name in a low voice.

Cheng Yi sneered, crossing her arms. “The name seems quite fragrant, doesn’t it? Unfortunately, what goes on inside is nothing but the dirty business of human trafficking—half-fish people, zombies, fierce beasts, foreign sl\*ves, and kidnapped young boys and girls. Life here is the lowest of commodities. As long as you’re willing, you can buy all sorts of bizarre ‘goods.’

“This is the most important money bag for Warden She.”

After saying this, there wasn’t any particular reaction from Song Ke and the others. Instead, they huddled together and whispered, seeming to have some disagreement.

Cheng Yi tapped her fingers on her arm, waiting for a full ten minutes, but the people on the other side didn't come up with a decision. A hint of imperceptible impatience flashed in her eyes.

Just as Cheng Yi was getting impatient, Zhuang Qingyan stepped forward from the crowd, smiling meaningfully at her. "Manager Cheng, we want to enter the Death Prison, and there are other ways we can explore. But using us so blatantly, you've got quite a scheme going."

"Yeah," now that she was found out anyway, Cheng Yi admitted openly, "I do have ulterior motives. I've been fed up with this place for a long time. But I'm a businesswoman, and businessmen are fundamentally profit-driven. I haven't deceived you. The Rose Auction House is indeed the lifeblood of Warden She. As long as you destroy it, none of you can escape, and you will all be thrown into the Death Prison."

This cunning merchant had finally exposed a flaw, and Zhuang Qingyan being Zhuang Qingyan, how could he easily let this opportunity pass, taking advantage of the situation to drive a hard bargain.

"Since Manager Cheng wants us to work for you, can you show some sincerity first? This kind of place, tsk tsk, it's not easy to handle."

Zhuang Qingyan was calm and composed, while Cheng Yi appeared conflicted. The negotiation roles reversed, and they remained in a stalemate for a while.

In the end, Cheng Yi gritted her teeth and said reluctantly, "Fine, I will only charge you for the information and send you in for free.

"But let's make it clear, if the operation fails, you absolutely cannot implicate me. Anyway, I won't acknowledge it."

...

At 10 o'clock in the evening, it was the most bustling time in the underground city.

Cheng Yi, dressed in a sequined suit, walked into the Rose Auction House with a handsome man, his hair tied in a bun at the back of his head.

The security guards at the entrance stopped the two of them, asking for an invitation. Cheng Yi took out a black card with gold embossing from her wallet and handed it to the security guard.

After careful verification, the security guard looked up in confusion. “Miss Li, there’s only your name on it.”

Cheng Yi moved her finger slightly, and a delicate auction paddle with the number 38 appeared.

Participants in the auction could bring one companion, as per the rules of the Rose Auction House.

The security guard didn’t inquire further and immediately allowed them to pass.

Once inside the venue, Cheng Yi lowered her voice and asked, “Have your people all entered?”

Fang Zhixu, with drooping eyelids, said nonchalantly, “No need to worry. They... should not fail.”

Cheng Yi managed to obtain two invitations—one for Zhuang Qingyan and the other for herself. She brought Fang Zhixu in, stating that, in her opinion, Fang Zhixu was the only “man” among them who appeared relatively normal.

After all, the others...

One was a disabled person in a wheelchair who always had a cunning smile, one was a violent and icy guy, and then there was a little radish head—they were just too conspicuous, not at all low-key.

The two found their seats, and Fang Zhixu observed the surroundings. The furnishings here were ordinary. Apart from the crimson auction stage in front and the huge screen occupying one entire wall, the rest of the place looked like an ordinary auction venue. There were no visible signs of the illicit

human trafficking activities being conducted in the background, indicating that the owners were quite cautious.

...

Shortly after Cheng Yi and Fang Zhixu entered, two more people arrived at the entrance of the Rose Auction House.

A boy of about ten, dressed in a small suit with a neat tie, pushed a silver-white wheelchair forward. A languid man reclined in the wheelchair. When they approached, the man held the invitation between his slender fingers and handed it to the security guard casually.

The security guard glanced down and recognized Mr. "Vyacheslavsky." He was indeed a distinguished bidder. The guard nodded respectfully and without further ado, prepared to allow them inside.

As they passed, another security guard hesitated, unsure whether to stop the boy pushing the wheelchair.

"Mr. Vyacheslavsky" gave him a casual glance, his fingertip brushing over the blanket on his leg. "This child is attending to me."

The security guard, having worked here for a while, knew exactly what kind of activities were taking place inside. When he heard the word "attending," he immediately understood and quickly nodded. "Yes, of course, Mr. Vyacheslavsky, please come in."

Out of the security guard's line of sight, Xu Xing released his hands from the wheelchair and instantly jumped in front of Zhuang Qingyan, gritting his teeth and shouting, "You're treating me like a slave!"

Zhuang Qingyan said calmly, "Be quiet. Do you want the whole place to know we're here to cause trouble? Be careful not to ruin the plan. Your sister won't forgive you."

Xu Xing quickly covered his mouth, staring at him angrily.

Zhuang Qingyan beckoned to him. "Come here, and push me along, little slave."

...

At the rear entrance of the Rose Auction House, there was a food transport passage.

After the sentry finished checking, the rolling shutter door opened automatically, and a white food cart slowly entered the venue.

Lin Youyou and Song Ke were dressed in white waiter uniforms, blending in with the crowd and moving forward.

"You two, stop." The captain of the food delivery team suddenly stopped them.

Song Ke's footsteps halted, her right hand subtly moving towards her uniform pocket.

"You're here to deliver vegetarian meals? You need to go to the other side; don't get it wrong."

"Okay," Lin Youyou said, lowering her head and nodding obediently.

Song Ke breathed a sigh of relief and put her right hand back by her side.

She and Lin Youyou exchanged a glance, and Lin Youyou playfully winked at her. The two of them quickly disappeared into the passage.

...

At eleven o'clock in the evening, the auction officially began.

An auctioneer with slicked-back, shiny hair stepped onto the stage gracefully.

“Good evening, esteemed guests. Welcome to the 278th specialized auction at Rose Auction House. I am Alan, a registered auctioneer of the Alliance. All the items for tonight’s auction can be viewed in the catalog next to you. Without further ado, let’s begin the bidding.”

Alan clapped his hands, and the backstage staff immediately wheeled in a massive iron cage.

“The first item tonight to make its appearance, ‘Pure White Grace,’ sourced from District C75, features six innocent and pure teenage girls. I can almost smell the fragrant scent they exude,” Alan said, his expression intoxicated as he sniffed the air. “Only available for bundled sale, starting bid at 50,000 Alliance coins.”

The curtain was raised, and the girls inside the iron cage were suddenly exposed to the light, trembling in fear and huddling together.

“Scum,” Lin Youyou cursed from behind the curtain. She looked up, and Song Ke had successfully climbed to the top steel beam, signaling her to get ready.

Lin Youyou scanned the seating area, quickly finding Fang Zhixu and Cheng Yi, Zhuang Qingyan and Xu Xing, and signaled back to Song Ke that the “four people were in position.”

Now they were just waiting for Su Cha.

“Pure White Grace” was eventually sold for 350,000 Alliance coins. However, as a display, the sold item would remain temporarily in the venue and would be handed over to the buyer after the auction ended.

Alan energetically introduced the second item, “Next up, we have quite a behemoth. Attention to all pet lovers.”

The closed compartment covered with black cloth was wheeled in, and Alan vividly explained, “Straight from District F180, we have the Deep Crimson Sand Scorpion. Everyone, please take a look!”



He tore off the curtain, gradually revealing the monstrous creature inside—the scorpion, with a length exceeding two meters, entirely golden in color like a spider, was trapped in a transparent container, its sharp stingers banging against the walls.

“This is not an ordinary scorpion but a one-of-a-kind mutant scorpion! Everyone, please carefully observe its golden eyes. This unique pet will make you stand out wherever you go. As a gesture of goodwill, we will give the buyer a strong electric shock device, ensuring that it behaves obediently, transforming into a little sheep~” Alan imitated the posture of a scorpion, exaggeratingly twisting his body.

Laughter intermittently emerged from the buyer’s seats.

“Bang!” The mutant sand scorpion hit the wall again.

Alan glanced at it nonchalantly and turned his head to continue shouting, “Starting bid is 300,000 Alliance coins, with increments of no less than 10,000 each!”

“I bid 310,000.”

“I’ll offer 330,000.”

“I’ll take it for 350,000!”

The mutant sand scorpion was eventually auctioned for a staggering 560,000 Alliance coins and, like the six girls, was pushed to the display area to wait.

“Now, for the upcoming item, ‘Exotic Allure,’ this is a rare sight once in a century,” Alan said with a suggestive expression. “Without further ado, let’s first look at the actual item, and then I’ll introduce it to everyone slowly.”

The black iron cage was once again pushed onto the stage, and a slender young man appeared in the center of the stage.

He was extremely beautiful, with damp black hair clinging gently to his ears. His pupils were amber like honey. The upper half of his body was so white that it seemed to glow, but from the waist down, it was surprisingly a dark green, coiled snake tail!

Alan's voice was unusually excited, "The third item, coming from U-Lab Laboratory, is the mutant— Snake-tailed Youth!"

Song Ke, hanging on the beam, suddenly looked down!

In the buyer's seats, Zhuang Qingyan also frowned slowly.

U-Lab Laboratories had branches across various districts in the Alliance, not just the one near Tongwan.

The Tongwan branch primarily focused on genetic research, while this snake-tailed youth clearly originated from U-Lab's division specialized in human research.

The snake-tailed youth held onto the railing with both hands, his clear eyes gazing outward, seemingly puzzled about his situation, innocently tilting his head.

His actions stirred the crowd, igniting an unprecedented wave of bids.

Alan could only shout, "Starting bid at 1 million Alliance coins, with increments of no less than 30,000!"

The auction paddles kept going up in quick succession, and Alan was busy confirming the bids, temporarily forgetting about the item.

The snake-tailed youth curiously looked around, catching sight of Song Ke, who was hanging on the beam. Their gazes met, and his pupils suddenly shrank by a fraction!

Song Ke: "!" Oh no, why was she so unlucky?

She quickly made a “shush” gesture toward him, disregarding whether the mutant could understand her or not.

Fortunately, the snake-tailed youth didn’t yell. He flicked his tail lightly and nodded with a mixture of belief and doubt.

Song Ke breathed a sigh of relief, silently praying, ‘Su Cha, Su Cha, please hurry up and create some distraction. We’re counting on you.’

Five minutes later, a wisp of green mist subtly wafted in through the ventilation of the auction venue and quickly dissipated in the air.

Song Ke keenly caught a fleeting use of special ability, recognizing it as Su Cha. He was in position!

Song Ke signaled to Lin Youyou behind the curtain, and Lin Youyou nodded.

“3 million! Any more bids? 3 million once, 3 million twice, 3 million...”

Alan was red-faced, and the hammer was about to fall in his hand.

Suddenly, the power in the auction venue was cut off, plunging it into complete darkness!

Yes! Song Ke silently celebrated. Following the first step of the plan, Su Cha had cut off the main power.

Buyers looked bewildered, whispering to each other, thinking this was some surprise event arranged by the auction.

Alongside their ears came the haunting and sorrowful song: “Why do you always leave me alone in the deep night~ I can’t control this longing, searching for you~”

The mesmerizing song filled the ears of the crowd, gradually clouding their consciousness, making them leave their seats and wander aimlessly.

Silent and unnoticed, a frost spread over their feet, slowing their movement, preventing anyone from taking advantage and escaping.

“Boom!!” A deafening noise came from above as a girl wielding a massive silver axe was smashing the ceiling, swinging her arms for another blow!

“Boom!!” The ground seemed to tremble, and the entire auction house felt like it was on the verge of collapse.

Amidst the chaos, someone shouted in panic, “Run! The items are out!”

“Nonsense, how is that possible!” Alan immediately protested.

It was true. In the dark of the night, ghostly figures appeared at the display area, opening each cage.

The six girls ran out in a panic. Lin Youyou pointed them in the direction of the exit. They hurriedly thanked her and helped each other make their way towards the main door.

The mutant sand scorpion also escaped and wreaked havoc inside, flames of bright yellow erupting everywhere.

The snake-tailed youth moved playfully, seemingly amused. He coiled his long tail around a person and casually tossed them away.

“Ah!!” Alan let out a miserable cry as the massive tail flung him towards broken steel rods, impaling him.

“Haha.” The snake-tailed youth laughed joyfully.

Song Ke and Su Cha seized the opportunity and wreaked havoc in the auction house. Their goal was not to kill but to wreck the place. As long as they tore it down quickly and mercilessly, the Death Prison would surely monitor it and come to arrest them.

As expected, just two minutes later, hundreds of particle cannons were aimed at the heavily damaged Rose Auction House. Warden She's chilling voice came through the speakers, sounding angry and cold.

“Everyone inside the auction house, you're all under arrest! Drop your weapons immediately and go to the Death Prison to surrender now!”

“I repeat...”

They did it! Song Ke was satisfied.

Now the Death Prison would become very lively.

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 73: Sin City (7)

Chapter 73 – Sin City (7)

The days are becoming more and more harsh

“Name?”

“I'm asking you, don't look around. What's your name?!”

The stern-faced female prison guard slammed her hand on the table, startling the girl in the prisoner's uniform.

“...Song Ke.”

“Age?”

“19 years old.”

In the closed interrogation room, only a dim ceiling light was on. The prison guard, behind the bars, typed the name into the computer connected to the file room, pressed search, and found no information about “Song Ke.”

“What’s your identification number? Report it.”

“I don’t... Does the ‘Awakener Certificate’ count?”

The prison guard lifted her head from the computer and sneered, “We don’t care about that here. Whether you have abilities or not, coming in here is the same.”

Anyone who entered the Death Prison, tagged with the Crime Record, was like wearing an invisible shackle. True freedom was never possible. So what if you are an awakener? Dare to act recklessly in the Death Prison, and you would instantly become a mindless walking corpse.

The prison guard asked again, “No identification, are you a black household? From District F?”

Song Ke admitted honestly, “F177 District.”

The guard halted the search, opened a new file, and began inputting information.

“Can you... tell me how many years... I’ll be sentenced for?” Song Ke asked tentatively as she watched the guard type.

The guard spared her a sympathetic glance, “You are suspected of intentional destruction of property, with a heinous circumstance and a serious nature. According to Warden She’s orders, you will be confined to the 5th floor for a sentence of nineteen years and seven months, and you must pay a fine of one billion Alliance coins.”

Song Ke gasped. Nineteen years and seven months? That’s older than her! The days were truly becoming more and more harsh.

And one billion Alliance credits! One billion! Was this a number that could be thrown around casually? Even if she spent her whole sentence, she wouldn’t be able to come up with that much money. It seemed she had truly angered the guy surnamed She this time, and they had no intention of letting her go.

“What about the others with me?”

“You still care about others? I advise you to reflect on yourself while you’re in here, try to live a couple more years.”

The guard finished inputting her file, clicked upload, and stood up from behind the desk, saying, “Follow me to the cell.”

“Get in.”

On the 5th floor of the Death Prison, Song Ke was pushed into a narrow cell.

She looked around, and the surveillance above followed her. Apart from the single bed connected to the floor, the simple washbasin and toilet, there was nothing inside. Song Ke looked around curiously, walked to the door, and submitted her activity request for the next day on the screen.

Then she lay back on the bed, adopting the carefree attitude of going with the flow. She closed her eyes, stretched her legs, and fell asleep.

Without any fear.

\*

When Su Cha regained consciousness, he found himself in the familiar interrogation room. Kunbu sat across from him, glaring at him with frustration. "Awake now? You, lad, are you serious?"

"You've only been out for a few days, and here you are again. No wonder you said 'see you next time' to me. Do you think this place is a hotel that you can visit whenever you please?"

His head felt like it had been hit by a sledgehammer, and a cold, numb pain reverberated inside. Kunbu's voice seemed distant and muffled, making it almost impossible to hear what he was saying. Su Cha slowly regained composure, and his vision gradually focused. The chaotic and bewildering sensation finally subsided.

Criminal Record... Is this the Cotard's Syndrome it can produce? It's terrifying.

At the time of the Rose Auction House incident, all of V587 were arrested, and the others, being "newcomers," were coerced into surrendering by force. However, among the buyers on-site were also individuals who had completed their sentences, including Su Cha. Regardless of the number of bars displayed by the Criminal Record before this, they all collectively lost consciousness in that moment and staggered back to the Death Prison like zombies.

Su Cha's memory only remained up to when the voice with the surname She sounded. He didn't remember anything afterward.

Seeing Su Cha silent, Kunbu thought he felt remorse. But now, it was too late for anything. He sighed deeply with a heavy heart. "Adding crime upon crime, this time you've been sent to the 6th floor, a sentence of... forty years, mandatory labor, and no possibility of reduction. I wonder if you can endure this."

The cells on the 6th floor were even more cramped, resembling solitary confinement rooms. There wasn't even a bed inside, and given Su Cha's height, he could only crouch and turning around was difficult.



He activated the light screen at the door, but the labor option was crossed out and turned into an unselectable gray. Fortunately, he could still apply for activities, but the conditions were more stringent, limited to once a month.

Su Cha submitted his activity request for the next day.

\*

On the second day, when the activity time arrived, Song Ke lined up in the corridor. All the inmates who had submitted applications were taken to the mezzanine by the prison guards.

She was looking forward to it, taking quick small steps. Inadvertently, she stepped on the heel of the inmate in front.

The startled inmate slowly turned around, wearing an angry expression and clenching their fists, saying, "Be more careful."

'Avoid trouble, avoid trouble, nineteen years and seven months,' Song Ke silently recited her sentence in her mind.

Then she took a step back, bowed her head, and gestured with exaggerated hospitality, saying, "Please, please."

The prison guard was nearby, and the inmate scowled at her timid appearance, making a disdainful sound and walked past with an indifferent gait.

Song Ke breathed a sigh of relief.

In the quiet reading room, Song Ke walked briskly. As she passed a handsome man sitting in a wheelchair reading a newspaper, she silently slipped a kunai into his collar. Continuing forward, she pushed the door into the coffee shop. A woman with long curly hair was waiting in line for coffee. Song Ke stood behind her, and their fingertips touched lightly, and another kunai was discreetly handed over.

Song Ke casually found a table and sat down. The slender man across from her was focused on building blocks. Song Ke looked elsewhere, placing the kunai at the edge of the table. When the man picked up the blocks, he naturally picked up the kunai.

The two faced each other without any communication. Shortly after, the man in the wheelchair, the woman with long hair, and the boy who came in happily holding the prison guard's hand all coincidentally sat at the same table.

The activity time was only a short hour, and one person was missing.

Ten more minutes passed, and a young man with a crew cut slowly entered through the door and silently sat at the neighboring table.

Everyone was here.

V587's six members reunited in the Death Prison.

This was the plan they had agreed upon before coming in. They would gather intelligence and arrange the next steps during the one-hour activity time.

Using the act of drinking coffee as a cover, Song Ke whispered, "I'm on the 5th floor, where are you guys?"

"I'm on the 1st floor," Xu Xing whispered back.

"The 3rd floor," Lin Youyou said, sipping her coffee.

Neither of them took direct action. Xu Xing even discreetly used frost magic. Being considered suspects involved in the case along with Cheng Yi and others, they received relatively lenient sentences. Lin Youyou was mainly sentenced to the 3rd floor for impersonating a food delivery person.

Fang Zhixu signaled "4" with the building blocks.

Zhuang Qingyan folded the newspaper, revealing the number “4” as well.

They both had forged identities and deliberately infiltrated the auction house, intentionally causing a disturbance to the scene. Hence, they received slightly heavier sentences.

As Song Ke listened, she discreetly handed a kunai to Xu Xing.

All their communication devices had been confiscated, and they had no contact devices on them. These kunai were materialized by Song Ke using objects she had in the cell, carefully crafted without being seen by surveillance. Her spiritual artifact could track them using mental power, functioning as a tracking device to ensure they wouldn’t lose each other.

“6th floor,” Su Cha said lastly.

He was the one sentenced the most severely among the six.

The others showed expressions of sympathy, saying things like, “I feel for you,” “That’s so unfortunate,” and “Light a candle for you.”

Song Ke made a subtle movement with her fingertips, and the kunai flew out. Su Cha effortlessly caught it and held it in his palm.

“I roughly calculated just now, there are about 3000 cells on the 6th floor,” Su Cha said, unperturbed, as if he hadn’t seen their various colorful expressions, and delivered the bad news that they could only move once a month.

Zhuang Qingyan’s gaze fell on the newspaper, and she spoke lightly, “Since we are on different floors, we can conveniently split up to search for people. There are still 7 days left this month; let’s collect and summarize the information.”

Apart from the 2 floors that Su Cha had previously investigated and the monitoring layer controlled by someone with the surname She, they had their people on almost every floor.

Considering that Su Cha would find it difficult to come out frequently and frequent meetings might attract the attention of the prison guards, Zhuang Qingyan decided to set the second gathering time for early next month, giving them 7 days, which should be enough for them to get a rough idea.

“Alright,” they all nodded.

While they were talking, they heard a commotion from behind.

Two inmates bumped into each other, causing one of them to spill hot coffee all over the floor.

“You spilled my coffee.”

The bumped inmate stared at the spilled coffee on the ground and spoke rapidly.

The one who caused the collision sneered, “So what if I spilled it? If you really want to drink it, hurry up and lick it off the floor while it’s still hot!”

The person suddenly raised his head and repeated, “You spilled my coffee!!”

He shouted loudly, and everyone in the coffee shop heard him.

“How did he provoke Jorik?” a prisoner behind Song Ke whispered.

“Who’s that?”

“Crazy Jorik, got shocked too many times. The circuits in his head don’t work well,” the speaker pointed to his own head. “He can only come out once a month, like clockwork, to have a cup of coffee.”

Although the activity floor was meant for leisure and entertainment, there were strict rules. It wasn't for the inmates to enjoy life. For example, the drinks in the coffee shop were limited to a small cup per person each time. If they missed it this time, they would have to wait for the next activity day.

Listening to the conversation between the two, this Jorik seemed to be locked up on the 6th floor as well. This time, he missed his coffee and would have to wait another month.

Jorik didn't look very old, with fair skin and a pampered appearance. He stared at the blistering on his hand, muttering softly, "You spilled my coffee..."

After saying these words, Jorik suddenly exploded!

He mounted the person who bumped into him, raised his fist high, his veins swelling, and his mental force bursting forth.

In the presence of everyone, Jorik's smooth arms were covered in dense fur, sharp fangs grew in his mouth, and he instantly transformed into a half-wolf creature. He then pummeled the person's face with punches, blood splattering everywhere. Broken teeth and shattered bones flew out continuously. In just a few minutes, the arrogant inmate had no chance to fight back and was beaten to death on the spot!

Jorik continued to punch, repeatedly saying the word "coffee" in his mouth, pounding the other person's skull, leaving it concave.

"Shape-shifting ability," Zhuang Qingyan murmured.

A sharp whistle sounded from the speaker. Suddenly, Jorik's Criminal Record displayed five bars. He rolled on the ground in pain, clutching his head. All the inmates in the coffee shop were affected by the arm band, experiencing dizziness, palpitations, and other discomfort.

Song Ke frowned slightly, suppressing the restlessness of her mental power and looking towards her companions.

Zhuang Qingyan was an S-class mental power awakener, experiencing the least impact. There was hardly a ripple in his eyes. Lin Youyou, Fang Zhixu, and Xu Xing felt slightly uncomfortable but were within controllable limits. Only Su Cha had a more intense reaction than all of them.

He clenched his fists, pressing them against the table, trembling all over.

“The power of the Criminal Record has been amplified,” Zhuang Qingyan said coldly.

In the underground city, the limit of the Criminal Record’s effect was 1, but in the Death Prison, it was almost doubled, and strengthened to 10.

After a while, the invisible sound waves disappeared. Su Cha’s breathing gradually calmed down, signaling to them with his eyes that everything was fine.

As for Jorik, he lay on the ground with a vacant look, appearing even more foolish.

Suddenly, shouts came from the entrance of the cafe: “The warden is here!”

Sitting together was too conspicuous. Song Ke and her companions immediately stood up in unison, pretending not to know each other.

Two men wearing black overcoats, exuding a different aura from regular prison guards, strolled in slowly.

Song Ke focused her gaze. The person on the left was slightly shorter, and the eyes under the police hat were as cold as a snake. The nameplate on his shoulder read “She Liang.”

On the right, with a red, freckled face and a bulbous nose from alcohol abuse, it seemed like he had a bad temper. His name was “William White.”

White took a step forward, looking at Jorik lying on the ground, and the body that was covered in blood and unrecognizable. His eyes flashed with hostility as he said, “You bastard!”

The bloodstained whip was raised high, seemingly about to strike Jorik.

A short cane blocked his movement, and She Liang calmly said, "White, he's a prisoner from the 6th floor. You have no authority to deal with him."

In White's eyes, there was a sense of impending doom: "For the third time, this bastard has attacked my prisoner for the third time. She Liang, since you can't control your dog, why don't you just throw him down to the 7th floor? I'll teach him a lesson for you."

She Liang sneered, "No need."

Song Ke took small steps backward, retreating to the inmate who had just spoken. They muttered to each other.

"Jorik always causes trouble whenever he comes out. Why, why not just let White deal with him?"

"Hey, that guy surnamed She can't let him go. Jorik's family is very wealthy, they contribute a lot of money every time they visits, he's like a golden goose laying eggs. Even if he causes trouble, he's only pressed down to the 6th floor."

This was an unexpected discovery. So, different floor wardens couldn't interfere with each other?

Song Ke thought to herself as she lowered her gaze.

She Liang looked around at the inmates watching the commotion. Wherever he looked, the voices disappeared without a trace. The inmates were afraid of him, avoiding his gaze.

She Liang raised his voice, "Today's activity time is over. Everyone, return to your respective floors immediately!"

Following the crowd, Song Ke walked towards the exit, suddenly feeling a chill down her spine.

She turned around, and She Liang's cold gaze lingered on her and Su Cha for a moment longer.

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 74: Sin City (8)

Chapter 74 – Sin City (8)

Have you ever had Mandheling coffee?

Death Prison.

In a lavishly decorated large office, She Liang flipped through some documents and casually asked, "The criminals who vandalized the Rose Auction House and were caught a few days ago, have they paid their fines?"

"The buyers on the 1st floor have mostly paid and been released, but the two with the heaviest sentences haven't paid anything," the prison guard replied.

"How much do they still owe?"

"Um... Warden, they haven't paid a single cent," the guard replied.

She Liang paused for a moment, his expression darkening.

"Understood. You can leave for now," after a long silence, he said slowly.

Once the others left, She Liang pulled up the files of the two individuals.

Song Ke: F177 District, black household, with a wallet cleaner than her face.



Su Cha: E170 District, formerly worked as a bodyguard in C72 District, heavily in debt after paying off previous fines.

“Penniless,” She Liang muttered coldly as he tore the papers of the two individuals into shreds, his expression grim.

\*

Talented professionals are always in demand wherever they go. On the 4th floor, Fang Zhixu quickly found a job as an assistant to the prison doctor.

Of course, he didn’t need to personally perform any procedures. He just had to stand by, handing over instruments. The doctor, with graying hair, had a rough and aggressive treatment style. If a prisoner pretended to have a stroke, epilepsy, or numbness, he’d directly use a needle to draw blood, forcing them to stop the act and escape with cries of pain.

When prescribing medication for the prisoners, the dosages were clearly not meant for regular use by humans. Fang Zhixu glanced at the doctor but remained silent. Was this doctor a veterinarian before?

Unfortunately, the old prison doctor was quite confident in himself, humming a tune and finding time to chat with Fang Zhi Xu.

“Young man, do you know what’s most important about being a doctor here?”

“…What?”

“Remember this, it’s not about curing people, it’s about not letting them die.”

“Dealing with these rascals, I have plenty of experience. Back when I first entered Death Prison, I even helped Lord Hades with his gout!”

Fang Zhixu was taken aback. This old prison doctor could openly mention Lord Hades?

He sensed an opportunity and tentatively asked, "How long have you been working here?"

"Let me think... about twenty years, I suppose," the doctor reclined in his chair, closed his eyes, and reminisced sadly.

"Have you met that person...?"

"Of course, anyone with over ten years of experience has more or less encountered Lord Hades."

"Aren't you afraid to mention... I've noticed others don't dare."

"Humph," the old prison doctor snorted, "that's because they have guilty consciences, afraid Lord Hades will find out."

"Lord Hades knows everything and is all-powerful. Among all the former wardens, he has the most experience. He's much more formidable than those two, to be honest. I'd say Death Prison is what it is today because of him," the old prison doctor scoffed disdainfully, "It's just that in recent years, his health hasn't been great, so he hasn't been very active. Those two monkeys have been jumping around in his absence."

Fang Zhixu contemplated this.

\*

Seven days later.

Outside the activity floor's cafe, six inmates gathered furtively.

"Let's share our findings," Zhuang Qingyan said, flipping through a magazine at a rapid pace.

“No luck on the 1st floor. People come and go too frequently, and I can’t keep track,” Xu Xing said, looking tired and rubbing his eyes. He hadn’t had time to sleep in the past few days, and dark circles were forming under his eyes.

Considering Lu Xiaoyu’s distinctive ice-colored eyes as a dominant trait, it should have been easy to find him. The 1st floor held inmates with minor offenses, so the likelihood of him being there was indeed very small.

“No luck on the 3rd floor either. I tried all the labor areas, unless he’s been staying in his cell the whole time,” Lin Youyou said, her expression serious.

“I have some other findings. I don’t know if they’ll be useful,” Fang Zhixu shared the information about Hades.

Zhuang Qingyan turned a page in the magazine and analyzed in a hushed voice, “From what it seems, there’s a difference in status among the three wardens. The one who’s rarely seen, Hades, should have the highest authority in Death Prison.”

There was very little information about Hades, and it was too mysterious to be their main focus on this mission. They had to put it aside for now.

Song Ke raised her hand quietly, catching the attention of the others. “I, I haven’t found him either, but I have noticed that there are very few awakeners here.”

Moreover, the further down the floors, the fewer there were.

Su Cha nodded in agreement.

Zhuang Qingyan explained, “Death Prison has been around for over twenty years, but the apocalypse only happened last year. The awakening of a large number of awakeners has only been in the past six months. The buildings here can block cosmic rays, and combined with the depth of the underwater location, the radiation levels are negligible. So, it’s normal for there to be fewer awakeners here.”

“So, what do we do next?” Song Ke asked.

“The 7th floor,” Zhuang Qingyan said decisively, closing the magazine and settling the matter.

He turned to the three who had spoken earlier. “Not all of you need to go. You can stay up here and continue searching.”

While Xu Xing was a strong offense-type awakener, being young made him impulsive. Fang Zhixu and Lin Youyou were support-type awakeners and not suitable for sudden combat situations. The three of them understood that going along might cause complications, so they nodded in agreement.

“The question is, how do we get down?” Su Cha asked seriously.

“Murder? Destruction?” Song Ke suggested straightforwardly.

Zhuang Qingyan dismissed her suggestion, “Don’t commit direct crimes, or it will activate the Crime Record.”

He pointed to his badge. In Death Prison, activating the Crime Record came at a great cost, and doing it frequently could cause irreversible damage to the brain.

“Someone like She Liang is very controlling. He won’t let us go down easily.

“Unless he knows that not only can we not afford the fine, but also, we’re very good at causing trouble, keeping us here would just be a nuisance.”

“How can we do that?” Song Ke wondered.

“I have an idea.”

Zhuang Qingyan gestured for the others to look into the coffee shop.

Jorik had just received his coffee after waiting in line. This time during the activity day, no one with a death wish had bothered him. He found an empty table, sat down, took a deep breath, and enjoyed each small sip with a sense of preciousness.

At this moment, he looked clean and peaceful, a far cry from the madman who had previously gone on a killing spree.

Zhuang Qingyan stared at Jorik, a smile slowly forming at the corners of his eyes.

Song Ke had a sudden realization—this familiar feeling... someone was about to have bad luck.

...

Among all the labor reforms in Death Prison, being a sand filler in the underwater tunnel was undoubtedly the most grueling.

This job required heavy pumps larger than one's body to suck up the sludge and sea sand along the way and then spray it outside to fill the outer rim, preventing tunnel blockages. Most of the inmates doing this were sent for forced labor.

Su Cha wore a safety helmet and quietly moved near Jorik, contemplating the upcoming task and dreading the words that Zhuang Qingyan insisted he memorize. It was giving him a headache.

Like a spy meeting, Su Cha lowered his voice and quickly said, "Have you ever had Mandheling coffee?"

Jorik, diligently sucking up the mud, paused and slowly looked up, "What's that?"

"It's a unique variety from C43 District's Mandelin. It has high richness, low acidity, a strong and rich flavor with a hint of herbal aroma. It offers a multi-layered experience—first a subtle sweet-bitter taste, then a pleasant mild sourness, and finally, a lingering sweet fragrance."

Jorik swallowed.

“But compared to Mandheling, I prefer the Geisha coffee produced by the Jade Estate. It’s the aristocrat of coffees, blending natural floral and fruity scents with a hint of citrus sourness. It melts in your mouth, leaving a delightful aftertaste.”

Su Cha recited the lines expressionlessly, cursing his exceptional memory for being word-perfect.

Jorik was captivated, and he let go of the pump, allowing the sand to scatter all over the floor.

“On the activity day, I want to go and have a taste.”

“You won’t be able to,” Su Cha said mercilessly.

“Why?” Jorik asked incredulously.

“The coffees I mentioned are regional specialties with limited production, and there’s none in Death Prison.

“You’ve been in here for a long time, right? That’s why you haven’t had good coffee. The coffee on the activity floor is average. Once you’ve tasted the good ones, you won’t want to go back.”

“I’ve been in for 11 years... or was it 13? I don’t remember,” Jorik muttered.

Jorik had been in Death Prison since his youth, and because he frequently triggered the Crime Record, his brain had become increasingly foggy, and he had gradually lost his memory.

“I can’t have it, I can’t have good coffee...” Jorik repeated these two sentences, his expression growing more and more manic.

A brief moment of clarity seemed to return to his memory, followed by deep confusion: why was he in Death Prison? Why had he stayed in Death Prison for so many years? Jorik remembered everything—his father's death, leaving behind a lot of money, being the sole heir, his uncles finding him, telling him there were problems at home, asking him to hide in Death Prison for a while, and promising to get him out soon. Why hadn't anyone come to get him?

Jorik hugged his head in pain and squatted down.

“I heard that during the sand-clearing today, the passage from the monitoring floor above will open. How do I get there?”

“Oh right, just follow this path all the way, take a left, and then another left, repeating this five times, and I'll reach the sea level.”

“When I get out, I must have a cup of Geisha coffee from the Jade Estate.”

Su Cha dragged the heavy pump, mumbling to himself as he walked away.

Jorik stared blankly at the end of the underwater tunnel.

\*

“Warning! Warning! Prisoner escape in progress!”

A piercing alarm suddenly echoed through Death Prison.

Jorik ran forward recklessly, ignoring everything, reaching the end, taking a left, reaching the end... just four more times, and he could go out for coffee!

He had just opened the passage on the 5th floor when the Crime Record lit up red, emitting intense waves. Jorik screamed in pain, covering his head and rolling on the ground. When he stood up, his expression was vacant, and he had forgotten what he was supposed to do.

“Sand clearing... sand clearing.” Jorik turned around and walked back, his steps slow and hesitant.

“Jorik! Jade... coffee, do you still want to have some?”

Song Ke arrived in time, covertly blocking the passage that Jorik had forcibly opened with her hidden blades. She called out softly to his confused figure.

“Sand clearing... sand clearing... Jade!”

Suddenly, Jorik roared towards the sky, his upper body transforming into a werewolf. Thick fur covered his face and arms, and his powerful limbs touched the ground. He punched the transparent wall with such force that it cracked, and the cold seawater rushed in.

Jorik passed by Song Ke and raced towards the 4th floor in a frenzy.

“Go for it, Jorik! I believe in you!”

Song Ke clenched her fists and cheered silently, placing high hopes on him.

In the 4th-floor office, a prison guard hastily put on his clothes, calling his colleagues using a communicator as he rushed out.

“Jorik has escaped and damaged the underwater tunnel. Quickly contact the warden! I’m on my way!”

He ran so fast that he didn’t notice what was underfoot. He slipped and fell hard, the communicator tumbling to the ground, sliding several meters away.

The prison guard gritted his teeth and looked up, only to discover that some malicious cleaner had spilled cleaning liquid all over the corridor, making it impossible to stand on.



A few meters away, a prisoner in a wheelchair was leisurely mopping the floor at the end of the corridor.

The prison guard yelled angrily, "Come over here!"

His voice suddenly stopped, as if something cold and sharp had pierced his brain. The prison guard's eyes went blank and he fainted on the spot.

Zhuang Qingyan slid over to the officer and said, "Officer, are you heading back to the office? Let me escort you in."

The Crime Record flickered briefly, detecting no anomalies, and dimmed once again.

With one hand dragging the prison guard, Zhuang Qingyan reopened the office door using his privileges, closed it behind him, and strategically placed the mop to "conveniently" block the camera.

He moved to the computer, accessed the archives, and swiftly began reviewing all the inmate records.

\*

She Liang's face darkened, his black coat creating a sharp silhouette as he walked in, a storm brewing around him.

"Where is Jorik?"

"He was apprehended on the 2nd floor, completely out of control. He couldn't even be controlled by the Crime Record. We had to use particle guns..."

"Is he dead?" She Liang's gaze seemed to be murderous.

"No, no!" The prison guard stammered nervously. "He's not dead, but it'll probably take a year or two... maybe three to five... for him to recover."

“What about the damage to the underwater tunnel?” She Liang inquired about another pressing matter.

“There are five leaks and thirty-seven cracks. And Jorik also destroyed three... internal elevators.”

“Estimated losses exceed ten billion...” The prison guard dared not meet She Liang’s gaze.

“Why did Jorik suddenly go insane?” After a pause, She Liang’s hoarse voice echoed.

“We don’t know. When we were apprehending him, he kept shouting ‘Jade.’”

“Jade? What kind of jade?” She Liang looked at the surrounding prison guards, all of them wearing perplexed expressions.

Someone tentatively suggested, “Could it be some kind of jade from an ancient civilization?”

But Jorik had been in the Death Prison for over a decade. Suddenly showing interest in jade? It seemed absurd.

Jade Estate was a newly established aristocratic coffee brand in the Alliance in recent years. It was also a niche variety meticulously selected by Zhuang Qingyan. Sin City was inherently isolated, and these prison guards naturally didn’t know that it was actually the name of a coffee brand.

She Liang’s face seemed to have hardened into ice.

“Check the surveillance footage. Check all the cameras, frame by frame!”

“Yes!”

...

“Stop,” She Liang raised his hand, freezing the frame on a fleeting image of Su Cha and Song Ke.

“What did they say to Jorik?”

The two passed by Jorik, mouths moving rapidly, clearly engaged in a conversation.

“I can’t hear clearly, but the Crime Record didn’t trigger, so it’s probably not something significant... right?”

The Crime Record could only monitor overt criminal behaviors and couldn’t recognize covert activities.

She Liang slowly closed his eyes, feeling the rage building inside him. His instincts told him that Su Cha and Song Ke were somehow involved in Jorik’s escape.

These two paupers not only couldn’t squeeze out a penny, but they also caused him losses exceeding ten billion.

Ten billion... She Liang’s heart was bleeding.

Not only that, Jorik’s severe injury this time meant that his relatives wouldn’t let the matter rest. If he indeed died, those who facilitated his entry, including She Liang, would never see a penny of their share again!

She Liang was furious. “Immediately, execute...”

“Warden She,” an elderly prison guard interjected, “For matters not determined by the Crime Record, if you act recklessly, aren’t you afraid that the Lord will know about it and you won’t be able to explain it? Death Prison is not your place.”

She Liang stared coldly at the speaker. "Are you threatening me?"

"I wouldn't dare. Just reminding you," the old prison guard maintained his composure.

"Warden, there's another inmate who entered with them, and there seem to be some issues," another subordinate rushed over to report.

"Who else?"

The guard brought up another surveillance feed. In the footage, a prison guard in uniform suddenly fell "clatteringly," and the man in the wheelchair "kindly" helped him up and escorted him into the office. Then, the surveillance turned pitch black.

She Liang crushed the cup in his hand. "Not right, something is wrong."

He glanced at the elderly prison guard and gritted his teeth. "Throw them down to the 7th floor and hand them over to White!"

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 75: Sin City (9)

Chapter 75 – Sin City (9)

Welcome Ceremony

In the swiftly descending elevator, three prisoners in prison uniforms looked at each other quietly.

"Pfft~" After a while, Song Ke couldn't help but laugh, "You're really wicked."

"Jorik, would you like some coffee from the Jade Estate~?" Song Ke elongated her tone, imitating Zhuang Qingyan's tone, and repeated slowly.

Zhuang Qingyan raised an eyebrow, letting her joke, after all, it was his idea to incite Jorik to escape.

“Let Su Cha go deceive people,” Song Ke said, a shallow dimple appearing on her cheek as she laughed joyfully.

Su Cha was suddenly reminded of a dark history and stiffened, silently looking at the elevator wall.

A hint of a smile appeared in Zhuang Qingyan’s eyes. “No choice, he’s on the same level as Jorik.”

He adjusted his expression and changed the subject, “I checked the files of all the prisoners from the 1st to the 6th floors. Lu Xiaoyu is not in there.”

“No wonder we couldn’t find him,” Song Ke sighed. “Alright, let’s temporarily leave She Liang aside. The focus now is on floors 7 to 12, under William White’s jurisdiction.”

William White, the second warden in charge of the Death Prison. From the confrontation in the cafe, it was evident that he was cruel and ruthless, completely different from the cold and greedy She Liang. One could only wonder what the conditions were like on the cell block he managed.

The elevator ride from the 6th to the 7th floor took longer than expected.

After exactly ten minutes of descending, a “ding” signaled their arrival at the destination, and the elevator doors slid open slowly.

Just as the three were about to exit the elevator, their steps came to a halt.

White had actually come in person!

A dozen sturdy prison guards lined up, and White stood boldly in the center, a cigar in his mouth, the choking smoke rising. He stared at Song Ke and the others with a smirk.

“Welcome! Poor ghosts!” White clapped slowly, the sound echoing sharply in the current environment.

Song Ke looked at him warily. Weren't they just a few prisoners who had been demoted? Did it warrant the warden personally welcoming them?

“I heard you made She Liang lose ten billion?” White laughed heartily, cigar ash falling.

He took a deep drag, blew out a thick smoke ring, and pointed his whip at the three. “Good, very good. I admire your arrogance. As a reward, tonight I'll allow you to sleep well.”

Song Ke furrowed her brow slightly. What did White mean by this? What did “sleep well tonight” mean?

White's smile hid a deeply malicious intent. “My territory is not like She Liang's gentle play house. Are you ready?”

“Take them to the cells.”

Three people were forcibly separated and taken in different directions by prison guards.

On the 7th floor of the prison, the number of cells significantly decreased, conservatively estimated to be less than 1000, and the environment became even darker.

The depth here had already reached the standard of the Alliance's “ultra-abyssal zone” (below 6000 meters). When Song Ke passed by, she glanced out the transparent porthole. The seawater flowed slowly, dark and lightless, with almost no plants or animals present, only sediment like mud and clay could be seen.

The cells were as cramped as ever, without even a bed. The walls bore many deep and shallow scratch marks. Song Ke curled up on the floor, holding her knees tightly and fell into a deep sleep.

A few hours later, around four in the morning, the prison guard banged on the cell door with a baton.

“Get out! Don’t dawdle, everyone out!!”

From the next cell came the rustling sounds, and the prisoners were all awakened by the harsh noise. Song Ke rubbed her eyes and sat up.

She hesitated for a moment, then regained her senses, left the cell, and went with the silent crowd in the darkness, encountering Zhuang Qingyan, who was also being driven out. She pushed his wheelchair as they moved along.

None of the surrounding prisoners spoke, giving the impression of walking corpses, their eyes filled with profound despair.

“They...” Song Ke hesitated.

“Conscious,” Zhuang Qingyan explained quietly, knowing what she was going to ask.

The two followed the rest of the group to an open area.

Bright spotlights illuminated the scene, and in the center of the ground was a huge octagonal cage fight arena!

The pure black mesh was stained with blood, and the base exuded an indelible dark red. The stench of rust could be smelled from afar.

In the center of the arena, two shirtless prisoners were fighting. One of them seized an opening in the opponent’s defense and delivered a heavy hook punch, sending the other person and their head flying, “crack” – the inmate suffered a fatal blow, and blood mixed with shattered teeth sprayed out. In the strong light of the spotlights, it seemed like an outpouring of flying insects.

The bloody scene made Song Ke physically uncomfortable.

“Ahh!!!”

The prisoners gathered outside the octagonal cage were excited, their faces flushed, fingers grasping the mesh and desperately reaching inside, cheering, mocking, pushing – various voices echoed incessantly, as if they couldn’t wait to rush in themselves the next moment. However, such people were only a small part. More of those who came in with Song Ke and the others were silent, avoiding eye contact.

The scene was distinctly divided into two extremes: on one side was a cruel celebration where the vibrant life disappeared before their eyes; on the other side was a numb wait, waiting for death to descend upon them at any moment.

Su Cha spotted Song Ke and Zhuang Qingyan and silently approached, standing beside them.

“White is over there,” he discreetly pointed in a direction.

Song Ke raised her eyes and looked. On the platform directly opposite the octagonal cage, White was dressed in black leather, the collar open, sitting confidently, holding a highball glass with bright red liquor matching the color of blood.

“Poor little Jack, look at you. When you first arrived on the 7th floor, you were so full of life, like a little colt. Who would have thought you wouldn’t even last a week. Technically, I should’ve sent you down to the 8th floor, but out of pity, since your head is already smashed, I’ll spare you,” White mocked.

The man named “Jack” lay on the ground, white brain matter mixed with fresh blood flowing out, life long gone.

White’s red nose twitched a couple of times as he joyfully took a sip of the liquor, scanning the crowd and noticing Song Ke and her group.

“Oh! Our newbies are here!”



He put down the glass and stood up, raising his voice, "To welcome you to our 'welcome ceremony,' I've specially invited all the prisoners from the 7th floor. How about that? Looking forward to it, aren't you?"

The entire 7th floor...

Song Ke looked around, a sea of people, almost a thousand, a stroke of luck as they didn't have to search through each cell.

But what did White mean by the "welcome ceremony"? Were they going to step into the arena and fight?

"Look at those bewildered expressions. It seems you're not yet clear on my rules," White laughed heartily.

"This is the place where we do 'morning exercises' every day. All prisoners must attend, no exceptions. The winners can stay on the 7th floor, exempt from a day's labor. As for the losers... well, I'll just have to throw them down."

"After all, there's a bunch of hungry lunatics down there. I have to prepare some snacks for them, right?"

White grinned sinisterly. "Now that we've laid out the rules, it's time for the newbies to step up. Which one of you will go first?"

Song Ke was pushed to the outskirts of the octagonal cage by unfriendly inmates, who were eyeing the trio intently.

These prisoners were just ordinary people. What made White so confident...

Song Ke touched the iron mesh, her palm forming a gathering of blue light, ready to transform it into a spiritual weapon. However, the light dimmed and vanished.

She was taken aback, trying again to release her awakened energy, but it dissipated as soon as it appeared.

Song Ke quickly turned her head and looked at Su Cha, who had a grave expression. He had also realized that their abilities were being suppressed.

They couldn't use their powers on the 7th floor!

"I've checked your prison records. You possess special abilities, truly remarkable," White taunted, waving the rolled-up file in his hand, then crumpling it and tossing it into the wine glass. "Unfortunately, I have to disappoint you. The entire 7th to 12th floors are 'zero radiation' zones where using abilities is prohibited."

No radiation meant no available energy to utilize. Awakened abilities couldn't resonate, and their existence couldn't be sustained.

For an ordinary person suddenly finding their abilities nullified, they would likely be distraught, anxious, and unable to summon the courage to deal with the situation.

Unfortunately, White had miscalculated one thing—Song Ke and Su Cha. Even without their abilities, neither of them would easily lose.

Su Cha was known for his exceptional solo combat skills, honed in the rainforest famous for devilish training. Song Ke, on the other hand, had been practicing martial arts for years. Before the apocalypse, the Yue Mountain Martial Arts School held monthly competitions of all sizes, and she had never lost.

Even without their powers, they were more than capable of fighting!

White had just talked about the "rules" – whoever won on the arena would be exempt from a day's labor. But that conflicted with their goal. They were here to find someone, and staying on the 7th floor would be pointless.

Song Ke wasn't sure how to handle the current situation and felt anxious. She lightly tapped Zhuang Qingyan's lower back. He subtly moved aside, extending his right hand and pressing down on Song Ke's wandering fingers.

"Warden, we can participate in this 'welcome ceremony,' but can we change the reward?" Zhuang Qingyan spoke to White from a distance.

"How do you want to change it?" White stared intently at him.

"A swap. If we win, let us go to the next floor."

The surrounding inmates fell silent for a moment, then burst into laughter.

"Did I hear that correctly? He's tired of living and wants to go to his death?"

"You'll regret this, boy. When you're lucky enough to go down, you'll find that the 7th floor is a paradise!" White looked at him with a mocking expression as if he were looking at a fool. "Alright, I'll grant your wish."

Su Cha leaped onto the combat arena.

His opponent was Orson, who was said to have already achieved 10 consecutive victories before today. Orson was a massive man, muscles like hills, standing over 2.5 meters tall, with a width twice that of Su Cha.

Su Cha attacked swiftly, delivering a spinning kick to Orson's abdomen. Orson had a sturdy lower body and stood firm like a mountain. Su Cha then retracted his leg and threw hooks from both sides at Orson's face. Orson smirked, grabbing his arms and violently yanking, lifting Su Cha off the ground. He was then slammed and hit the iron mesh, causing the octagonal cage to shudder, emitting a buzzing sound.

Orson clenched his fists, roaring like a wild ape, spitting around the person lying on the ground. The inmates around shook the mesh, making a clanging noise.

Su Cha got up from the ground, still maintaining a calm demeanor.

His previous move was just a test. The more Orson underestimated him, the worse he would lose.

Su Cha, like a hidden black snake in the shadows, stopped initiating attacks and instead became elusive. He constantly moved, seeking opportunities from various cunning angles, appearing in positions Orson couldn't anticipate with his colossal and cumbersome body.

Suddenly, Su Cha made a rapid stop behind Orson's head. Like a predatory snake, he opened his sharp fangs, wrapping his legs around Orson's waist, choking his throat with one hand and pressing his head with the other, twisting and turning left and right! Orson's eyes widened in disbelief as he witnessed his own head being separated from his body, slowly falling to the ground.

Outside the octagonal cage, the inmates who were cheering moments ago fell into stunned silence, staring in disbelief at Su Cha who had swiftly turned the tables.

White's face darkened as he walked down from the high platform, whipping out the thorny whip from his waist.

“Snap!”

The whip with sharp barbs lashed towards the previously cheering inmates, who now screamed in agony.

“Snap! Snap!”

The relentless whipping sounds continued one after another. White showed no mercy, and the scalding blood splattered on his face, he did not blink, resembling an executioner in front of all the prison guards and inmates, brutally lashing those prisoners who had cheered for Orson to death.

Song Ke's heart turned cold, shivering. That red whip—no, perhaps it wasn't originally red but stained red with fresh human blood.

After venting his anger, White turned towards the three of them, speaking in a grim tone, "Next."

Song Ke questioned, "Why? We've already won."

"What do you mean 'why'? I said each and every newcomer has to participate, including him! Don't even think about evading!"

The sharp wind of the whip approached, aimed directly at Zhuang Qingyan sitting in the wheelchair.

Song Ke slowly clenched her fists. Zhuang Qingyan was a mental power user and was never suited for physical combat. Now, with his abilities nullified, he was at a severe disadvantage. Making him fight was akin to sending him to his death.

White did this on purpose. He had no intention of letting them off.

Stepping forward, Song Ke stood in front of Zhuang Qingyan. "I'll go in his place."

"What did you say?" White scratched his ear, suspecting he had misheard.

"I said, I'll go in his place," Song Ke's tone was firm.

White sat back on the high platform, scrutinizing the two individuals in front of him with an enigmatic expression. The emotionless man in the wheelchair and the delicate-looking girl with slender arms and legs, a fragile figure that could be easily toppled by a gust of wind. Quite the pair of ill-fated lovers, performing a tragic drama in front of him, there's even a scene of sacrificing oneself for love.

"You'll go in his place? Alright then," White cracked a chilling, cruel smile.

As the octagonal cage opened, two menacing-looking inmates simultaneously leaped in.

White's smile turned cold and cruel. "Want to be a hero, huh? I'll grant your wish. Let's see if you have what it takes."

Chapter 76.1 – Sin City (10)

You, are, dead.

The octagonal iron gate of the cage closed with a clang, and the three on the arena became true beasts in a fight.

Facing Song Ke were two prisoners. Though their muscular build didn't look as intimidating as Orson's, judging from their stances, they were clearly skilled fighters.

The surrounding prisoners dared not cheer recklessly, and the whole arena fell silent.

White grasped his goblet again, taking a sip with an enraptured expression. "Two former Alliance champions, Mayweather, with an arm length of 1.85 meters, a genius offensive boxer, and Parry, a defensive counterattack master, skilled at wearing down the opponent's patience. Let me see how long you can last."

The fight began. Mayweather moved his feet at a high frequency, constantly advancing and squeezing Song Ke's living space, while Parry moved like an elusive slippery eel, effortlessly deflecting any attacks that came his way, making it difficult for anyone to strike.

Song Ke kicked in the air, and Mayweather raised his arms to block. The powerful counterforce pushed him back two steps. Song Ke landed gracefully like a swallow and began to think calmly. To deal with such an aggressive opponent, she needed to amplify his fighting spirit and then destroy his psyche, causing him to lose judgment completely on the stage.

Suddenly, Song Ke lifted her head, raised her right thumb, and then turned it down, making a provocative gesture.

The prisoners hissed, and Mayweather became furious. He launched a fierce onslaught, but Song Ke effortlessly defused each punch.

“Is that all?” Song Ke tilted her head and smiled disdainfully.

After spending a long time with Zhuang Qingyan, even her subtle expressions were becoming more like his. When mocking someone now, the curve at the corner of Song Ke’s mouth carried a certain malicious and indifferent charm, with “three parts mockery, three parts coldness, and four parts indifference.”

Mayweather’s fighting spirit engulfed his rationality. His punches became even more relentless, rapidly depleting his own stamina. Song Ke agilely dodged, making him run all over the place, unable to land a hit, and at the same time, disturbing Parry hiding in his turtle-like shell.

With the rhythm disrupted, the actions of the two boxers became disjointed, stumbling and colliding with each other several times, missing Song Ke.

Mayweather and Parry exchanged glances and adjusted their strategy, joining forces to seize the outer perimeter where Song Ke was. Mayweather threw a straight punch with his right hand, and Parry turned defense into offense, launching a jab to block Song Ke’s retreat.

Just when everyone thought she had nowhere to escape, Song Ke hung her hand on the side of the octagonal cage and jumped up, grabbing onto it, like a gecko that can stick to surfaces. Her feet gripped the iron mesh, seeming to walk on level ground. In a few movements, she climbed to the top of the platform.

The legendary “flying on eaves and walls,” a perfect evasion!

The two belt holders suddenly felt something was wrong and looked up, alert.

In the glaring spotlight, a figure leaped high and descended swiftly—wasn’t that boxing? She knew it too. Song Ke clenched her fists and threw a punch at a slightly upward left angle. The punch hit Mayweather’s solar plexus; this was a boxer’s deadly point. Mayweather suffered a massive blow and perished on the spot! As she landed, Song Ke’s right leg spun and kicked, landing squarely on Parry’s left jaw. The rich vagus nerve in that area instantly went haywire, the brainstem ceased its function, and Parry’s pupils dilated, losing consciousness and collapsing.

In this dazzling counterattack that lasted less than ten seconds, one dead and one injured, Song Ke effortlessly KO'd the two renowned belt holders!

The entire audience of prisoners first gaped in astonishment, then fell into complete silence. This was perhaps the quietest "morning exercise" in the 7th floor's history.

Someone nervously swallowed, cautiously glancing at White, fearing another sudden outburst.

At this time, someone dared to pour oil on the fire.

"Warden, will you fulfill the reward you promised in person?" Zhuang Qingyan asked with a cheerful smile.

He had to make White admit it out loud. Nearly a thousand inmates and prison guards witnessed it. As long as White still cared about his face and wanted to maintain his reputation, the probability of him reneging was relatively low.

White's sharp eyes fixed on Zhuang Qingyan, and he pulled the corners of his mouth with a smile, neither sincere nor insincere.

"Of course, I, as the warden, promise to 'reward' the three of you by moving you to the 8th floor."

The cruel "morning exercise" continued, but Song Ke had lost interest in watching. "Let's look for him."

Each of the three was responsible for a different direction. After a while, Song Ke withdrew her gaze and saw the same disappointment on the faces of the other two.

"Not here."

"I didn't find anyone either."



Lu Xiaoyu wasn't on the 7th floor.

"Warden, do you really want to send them to the 8th floor?" White's deputy asked anxiously, "I always feel that they have a different purpose for coming to the Death Prison. They caused trouble before under Warden She's lead, and their intentions were not good..."

White dismissed it, smirking, "Send them, send them tonight. This way, they can catch the 'morning exercise' on the 8th floor tomorrow."

As long as he sent them down layer by layer, it wouldn't take long before he could witness their lifeless bodies. White was very certain of this.

Wishes were beautiful, but reality was incredibly cruel.

On the second day, Su Cha and Song Ke broke through the 8th floor...

On the third day, White amended the rules, requiring Song Ke to take on three opponents alone. The result was the deaths of the three, and the 9th floor was cleared...

On the fourth day, the elite inmates on the 10th floor were defeated, and White smashed all the vases in his office and broke his beloved whip collection.

As the warden, his dignity was trampled and ground into the ground.

There was only one floor left... These damned bastards dared to run wild in his territory and urinate on his head so brazenly!

White's eyes turned red with anger, his chest heaving violently.

The shrewd deputy took the opportunity to remind, "Warden, actually, the three of them have weaknesses in their combination. The handicapped person in the wheelchair is a good breakthrough point..."

White was taken aback, his eyes shifted, and he quickly thought of something. An evil smile crept onto his face. "Is that disgusting thing on the 11th floor still here?"

"It is," the deputy confirmed and gave an affirmative reply.

...

During the "morning exercise" time, Song Ke, Zhuang Qingyan, and Su Cha arrived on the octagonal cage arena on the 11th floor.

The number of inmates on this floor was less than 200. When Song Ke looked over, the inmates on the other side were silently appraising them.

Song Ke furrowed her brows and quickly noticed something unusual. The inmates here seemed... somewhat deformed in appearance. Some had exceptionally long heads but very thin arms; some had asymmetric eyes and terrifyingly wide-open mouths. In short, there was a kind of indescribable strangeness about their appearances.

Zhuang Qingyan said, "The 11th floor is the ultra-abys zone. They probably haven't seen light for a very long time."

Just like deep-sea creatures often appeared bizarre to adapt to environmental and pressure changes, these prisoners trapped in the Death Prison for a long time had undergone subtle genetic changes within their bodies. Judging from their outward appearances, they could no longer be called "normal."

A few minutes later, White and the prison guards arrived.

Song Ke moved her shoulders a bit. Yesterday was one against three, and given White's vengeful nature, it should be one against four today, right?

"Wait," White suddenly reached out to stop her. "There's a change in the rules."

The blood whip in his hand pointed confidently at Zhuang Qingyan. "Today, he must go up."

Song Ke was displeased. White was changing the rules as he pleased, which was too arbitrary.

White's condescending tone seemed to bestow favor upon them. "Here's the deal: as long as he wins, neither of you has to fight. I'll declare you the winners."

Song Ke shook her head and refused, "No need. I'll do it for him, with however many of you."

"I said he must go up today. No one can lie down and win all the time. What's wrong, addicted to freeloading off women?" White said, annoyed.

Zhuang Qingyan, of course, wouldn't be provoked by a few words from him. However, it would be better to resolve the issue quickly.

The wheelchair he was using now was the basic model assigned after entering the Death Prison. However, after two activity days, Song Ke had secretly modified it for him, hiding various lethal weapons throughout.

He might not necessarily lose if he went up to the arena to face these deformed inmates. Zhuang Qingyan held Song Ke's hand and quietly shared his thoughts.

Song Ke still disagreed with him taking the risk.

Zhuang Qingyan patiently explained, "At times like this, try not to confront him directly. It will only waste time. Don't forget our goal."

All 200 people here could be seen at a glance, and since they hadn't found the person they were looking for, their current objective was to descend to the 12th floor as soon as possible. This was also the last region under White's rule.

Song Ke was reluctantly persuaded and nodded slightly, “Fine, if you can’t handle it, call for me, and I’ll help you.”

Zhuang Qingyan smiled helplessly, “Alright, I’ll definitely call for you.”

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 76.2: Sin City (10)

Chapter 76.2 – Sin City (10)

You, are, dead.

Under the watchful gaze of Song Ke and Su Cha, Zhuang Qingyan entered the octagonal cage arena, and the iron door slowly closed and locked behind him.

Song Ke was stunned. Something was wrong—why was the door closed when the opponent hadn’t entered the stage yet!

She suddenly turned her head, only to see a mysterious smile on White’s face.

Suddenly, a black hole appeared below the arena, and the mechanical noises of the platform started. The heavy and murky breathing sounds were getting closer to them.

When the creature fully revealed itself, everyone present, except White, was shocked.

It was an evolved zombie, or rather, an evolved zombie adapted to the abyss environment!

Compared to its human predecessor, it resembled a fish called the “deep-sea anglerfish.” Its large forehead had a fleshy protrusion resembling a luminescent tumor. The lower jaw was extremely prominent, and the face had large gill openings. Its slender limbs were covered with fine scales and pointed adipose fins.

The deformed zombie sluggishly turned its head and, upon spotting Zhuang Qingyan as the closest target, roared and lunged at him.

“You’re playing dirty!” Song Ke shouted in anger.

Putting aside why an evolved zombie appeared on the 11th floor, White had just forced Zhuang Qingyan into the arena, clearly wanting him dead!

“Hahaha, when did I say that your opponent must be a human?” White sneered, laughing arrogantly.

Song Ke clenched the iron mesh with both hands.

Su Cha whispered, “Don’t panic, let’s see if he can handle it.”

Zhuang Qingyan skillfully maneuvered his wheelchair, dodging left and right. After six months, he had completely adapted to mechanical movement. The wheelchair was as agile as if it were a part of his body. Bone-cutting blade pieces popped out from the pedal with a “shoo.” These were the spiritual weapons modified by Song Ke. Zhuang Qingyan had chosen the perfect angle, and they flew out precisely, hitting the zombie’s knee.

The howling zombie lost its balance and fell, its dorsal fin on its back thrusting towards Zhuang Qingyan’s face. Zhuang Qingyan tapped on the shield, and an irregular shield popped up, blocking the attack.

People with high intelligence had an advantage anywhere. Zhuang Qingyan, leveraging his wheelchair, countered swiftly while calmly observing. He gradually discovered the weak point of this deformed zombie. It seemed to have no vision or severely degraded vision, with both pupils so small that they were almost invisible, relying entirely on the glowing tumor on its forehead to discern directions.

Zhuang Qingyan reached back, and in the moment the deformed zombie lunged at him again, he pulled out a miniature rapid-fire crossbow from a rear compartment.

“Pew pew pew!” Hair-thin needles poured out, hitting and bursting the glowing tumor on the zombie’s forehead from a close range!

A putrid yellowish fluid sprayed all over the place. The zombie seemed to sense the pain of losing its sight, clutching its head and kneeling, howling in agony.

Seizing the opportunity, Zhuang Qingyan accelerated the wheelchair and rushed forward. Stepping on the pedal, the bone-cutting blade popped up high again, accurately puncturing its skull from front to back!

They won! Song Ke jumped with excitement, even more thrilled than if she had won herself.

Zhuang Qingyan breathed slightly heavily after a long time without such activity. He controlled the blade to turn and dug out a green crystal from the zombie’s brain.

He turned around and smiled at Song Ke outside the octagonal cage, his eyes curved, still portraying the frail appearance of a scholarly individual.

“We can go to the 12th floor now,” Song Ke cheered happily towards him.

Zhuang Qingyan was about to say something when a cold voice rang out from behind them.

“You can’t. He lost.”

A chilly voice rang out from behind them.

White’s smile was full of malice. “In arena combat, the use of any weapons is not allowed. He violated the rules, so you lost.”

Zhuang Qingyan narrowed his eyes. White had never mentioned this “omitted” rule, not even from the 7th to the 11th floor before Zhuang Qingyan went up. It was intentional.

“If you win, there’s a reward. If you lose, you naturally have to accept punishment.” White’s face was red with excitement. With a gleam in his eyes, he took out a small connector from his leather jacket pocket and pressed it without blinking.

“Boom!”

The ground of the entire arena shattered, and Zhuang Qingyan, along with his wheelchair, plummeted into the bottomless abyss!!!

Everything happened too quickly. By the time Song Ke reacted, Zhuang Qingyan had already disappeared from her sight.

“Where did you take him?” she asked, her voice filled with the impending storm.

To go from the 11th to the 12th floor, they had to use the internal elevator. It was impossible to fall directly from the arena.

White sat back in his chair and leisurely took a puff of his cigar, the red glow stinging Song Ke’s eyes.

They had fought tooth and nail on the verge of life and death, all for the opportunity to advance to the 12th floor. But White? Clearly, he set the rules himself, and now he effortlessly broke them, never treating them as equals.

In White’s eyes, what were they? Disposable pawns for his entertainment, or simply worthless trash to vent on?

“Where did you take him?” Song Ke raised her voice, her clear questioning echoing throughout the arena, resonating layer upon layer.

White calmly looked at her, blowing smoke rings contemptuously. “Can’t you see? He’s already gone down, to the 13th floor, or maybe the 14th? Who knows? Anyway, it’s not my territory down there.”

He had thrown Zhuang Qingyan, the one in the wheelchair who couldn't use abilities, into the deepest part of the Death Prison.

A completely unknown and terrifying place.

"You... are... dead," Song Ke said, each word carefully enunciated.

White sneered dismissively, extinguished the cigar, and stood up, the blood whip in his hand making a faint sound.

"Take a good look. I am the king of the Death Prison. What are you? What qualifications do you have to challenge me?"

"Are awakeners really that great? Here, you're still nothing but trash."

Song Ke felt something burning fiercely inside her.

Was it fire? No, it wasn't fire—it was an uncontrollable anger.

The spiritual force in her body surged, her cells activated and differentiated, forming new combinations. Her formidable ability broke through the constraints, bursting out of her body. Song Ke closed her eyes and opened them again. A deep blue light flashed in her pupils. In the astonished gazes of everyone, a Fangtian halberd materialized out of thin air.

"It's impossible, using abilities... it's impossible!" White exclaimed.

6000 meters below the ocean surface, in the legendary forbidden zone of abilities, S-class awakener Song Ke ignited a dazzling display of her abilities.

White was in a state of shock, instinctively swinging the blood whip in his hand. The long whip could restrain short weapons, but once they encountered longer weapons, they were their natural enemies.



While White's blood whip had strong armor-piercing capabilities, it required maintaining a distance. As he swung his blood whip, Song Ke wielded her razor-sharp Fangtian halberd. Before the blood whip could approach her, she deflected it with a single move, extending the halberd's blade to pierce White's abdomen from a great distance. Startled, White hastily retreated, but Song Ke closed the distance rapidly. In an instant, the cold halberd was inches away!

"Guards, stop her!" White shouted in a panic.

"Su Cha, hold off the others," Song Ke said, positioning Su Cha to block the guards and prisoners rushing to assist.

Song Ke advanced like a drawn sword, step by step. White retreated in disarray, desperately dodging, but to no avail. The Fangtian halberd pressed forward relentlessly, piercing straight into his throat! White's eyes bulged, and blood spurted from his seven orifices. His ruptured windpipe crackled, making it impossible for him to utter a complete sentence.

Song Ke coldly withdrew the Fangtian halberd, letting the blood flow freely from the wound. White's burly body twitched a few times and then ceased its final breath.

A person who found amusement in death would eventually witness their own demise.

The entire Death Prison erupted in a piercing alarm: "Level one alert! Level one alert! The warden is dead!!"

Levels 7 to 12 experienced violent tremors, causing the prisoners to stumble and fall. The internal elevator hummed and buzzed, and its doors slid open automatically.

"Hurry, we need to leave! The prison floor is about to be automatically sealed!" a senior prison guard exclaimed, suddenly awakened as if from a dream. A level one alert hadn't occurred in over a decade, only happening during the transition of a warden. During a level one alert, the floors under the warden's control were completely sealed until the new warden took over.

Su Cha rushed to Song Ke's side, asking, "What should we do?"

Song Ke was about to respond when the display board in front of them erupted in a glaring red light—the Crime Record was activated!

Her mind felt like it was being stabbed by a thousand needles, as if it were about to explode. Song Ke crouched down in agony, using all her willpower to resist.

In the ethereal Cotard band, a hidden call persisted, constantly tempting her to enter the mouth of the arena.

“Come down... come down...”

“You... go first and join them,” Song Ke pushed Su Cha.

Su Cha hesitated.

“Go!” Song Ke shouted.

Su Cha clenched his fist. “Alright.”

Song Ke was clearly unwilling to leave Zhuang Qingyan behind. He would be of no help here. It was better to join the others first and think of another plan.

Su Cha followed the fleeing crowd and rushed towards the elevator.

“Come down... come down...”

That elusive voice continued to echo in her mind, disturbing her greatly.

Song Ke used the Fangtian halberd to support herself and slowly stood up. Her consciousness was gradually becoming chaotic.

In that last moment of clarity, she leaped, jumping into the gap in the center of the arena.

Whether she went down or not, it didn't matter. Who was afraid of whom?

"I will find you."

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 77: Sin City (11)

Chapter 77 – Sin City (11)

Long time no see

After falling from the platform on the 11th floor, the basic model wheelchair was shattered and unusable.

Zhuang Qingyan pulled out a long strip from the steel frame at the bottom, using it as a makeshift crutch. He limped forward, with several joints of his body bruised and his hands scraped. Fortunately, none were serious, except the knee connected to the injured leg, which pressed on the nerve, causing a piercing pain that came in waves.

The surroundings were dimly lit, and only vague silhouettes could be seen. The cells on this level were empty, devoid of any human presence.

After walking for about ten minutes, Zhuang Qingyan stopped in front of an open cell. The prisoner inside was emaciated, with hair resembling tangled straw strewn all over the place. He was curled up in a pile of hair, and if it weren't for the slight movement of his chest, he would have looked like a corpse that had been dead for a long time.

"Forty-five years."

A cold, stern voice suddenly sounded from behind.

Zhuang Qingyan quickly turned around to see a prison guard, around fifty or sixty years old, wearing a neat, old-fashioned police uniform and looking at him calmly.

When did this person approach? Zhuang Qingyan hadn't noticed at all, and his hand gripping the crutch tightened slowly.

"His name is Senran (Green Anaconda), once a top-ranked assassin in the Alliance. He was imprisoned in the Death Prison in the year 2 of the New Calendar, and this year marks the forty-fifth year," the prison guard explained.

Senran, Zhuang Qingyan silently repeated the name, quickly retrieving relevant records from the database in his mind. Like Su Cha, Senran also hailed from the rainforest and was an active figure decades ago. The most prominent rumor about him was that he successfully assassinated the neighboring country's leader on the eve of a globally watched international conference, directly leading to the Alliance's annexation of that country. However... it was likely that no one remembered that now.

"You're not a prisoner in our cell block," the prison guard stated confidently.

"William White threw me down here," Zhuang Qingyan replied.

The prison guard fell silent for a moment. There was no particular reaction upon hearing the name of the warden; instead, he continued, "From now on, remember, you can only enter here, not leave. Stillness is your eternal enemy. Get used to the timeless solitude."

Solitude? Zhuang Qingyan smiled silently and continued to hobble forward.

Ahead was another distinctive cell. In the corner of the room was a glossy, illusionary nutrient pod. The prisoner lying inside had his eyes tightly closed, his naked body soaked in non-decomposing nutrient fluid. There was a small black box connected to the pod, supplying power.

"Smail," Zhuang Qingyan softly spoke his name.

“You know him,” the prison guard said, his voice devoid of emotion.

“Smail is a figure recorded in textbooks. Who wouldn’t know him?” Zhuang Qingyan’s eyes reflected the light from the bottom of the nutrient pod. “But few people know that this renowned visionary of District A5 is also the founder of the ‘Country of Old People’ ideology.”

The prison guard fell silent for a moment and objectively remarked, “You come from an extraordinary background, and you’re very knowledgeable.”

Zhuang Qingyan refrained from giving a definite evaluation of the prison guard. He lowered his gaze, lost in thought. Even creations like nutrient pods, tearing through the fabric of technology, could appear in District F. It seemed that the establishment of the Death Prison was closely related to the covert forces within the Alliance’s higher echelons.

“Is he dead?” Zhuang Qingyan inquired.

“From a biological standpoint, no. The prisoner’s sentence is one hundred years. To prevent premature death, we have detached his consciousness from his body, ensuring his consciousness survives and endures a hundred years of imprisonment here,” the prison guard calmly explained.

The prison guard’s demeanor was unexpectedly calm, readily answering questions. He didn’t reprimand Zhuang Qingyan for wandering around so aimlessly and not returning to the cell.

In the dim light emanating from the nutrient pod, Zhuang Qingyan scrutinized the neatly combed gray hair under the officer’s cap and the weathered, alert eyes.

“Officer, are you this patient with all the prisoners?” Zhuang Qingyan asked.

The prison guard replied, deflecting the question, “No one has come down here for a long time.”

“I see. How many prisoners are left?” Zhuang Qingyan inquired.

“42,” the prison guard added, “still alive.”

Zhuang Qingyan lightly tapped the floor with his cane. “Officer, can I move around freely since I can’t leave anyway?”

“You can,” the prison guard nodded.

After getting the answer he wanted, Zhuang Qingyan slowly moved forward, and the prison guard followed him silently.

Zhuang Qingyan: “...”

What does this mean? We agreed on free movement. Why are you following me?

\*

Song Ke plunged into a void.

After falling from the arena’s gap, she landed on a long slope that seemed endless. Along the way, there were different exits, but she was unconscious at the time, too weak to struggle, and slid directly to the deepest point, crashing onto the ground with a “thud.”

She didn’t know how long had passed before Song Ke faintly regained consciousness.

It was pitch-black around her, the kind where you couldn’t see your hand in front of your face.

Song Ke, lying down, moved her fingers and attempted to use her abilities, all to no avail.

The fantastical sensation of her abilities erupting just now could no longer be grasped. The spiritual power in her body felt like stagnant, depleted water, unable to sense any ripples. Even the injuries that hadn’t healed properly on her chest started to ache miserably at this moment.

Song Ke fumbled to stand up, exploring back and forth in the winding passages. She walked down several dead ends before finally entering a spacious area.

There were faint breaths in her ears, seemingly coming from somewhere higher than her.

Song Ke abruptly looked up, although she couldn't see anything. "Who?"

"Me."

"...Who are you?"

"I am me; I've always been here."

Always here... Song Ke realized this was likely a fellow prisoner, and she might be able to gather some information from them.

She carefully moved towards the voice, step by step, and finally sat down in a corner, exhausted.

"Where is this place?" she asked.

"The Death Prison," the voice replied.

"No, I meant, which level are we on?"

No response from the other person.

Song Ke tried a different question, "Apart from me, have others fallen down here?"

“No.”

Song Ke lowered her head in frustration. The 13th to 18th floors seemed quite different from what she had expected. How was she going to find Zhuang Qingyan?

In the silence, the young-sounding voice spoke again.

“Your body is perfect.”

Song Ke’s hair stood on end, and a chilling sensation ran down her spine. She had heard similar indifferent praise from another person’s lips before.

At the public cemetery in Ferrara, the super AI Ilya had made comments like “...I would still like this body of yours”.

“What do you mean?” Song Ke asked, feigning composure.

“Just a compliment. Your limbs and joints have a vigorous flow of vitality, very healthy,” the man’s tone carried a hint of melancholy.

Song Ke squeezed her palm nervously and asked, “Are you not healthy?”

The man fell silent again.

His silence eased Song Ke’s tension a bit. Perhaps he was missing an arm or a leg, and he made that comment out of envy.

“I have a friend... he broke his leg, but he loves life and is always positive,” Song Ke spoke nonsense in the darkness.

The man’s tone showed some confusion, “Are you comforting me?”



Song Ke stammered, "Uh..."

"Thank you, but I don't need it."

"..."

Communicating with him was difficult; Song Ke had a headache.

"I want to explore the area. Do you want to come along?"

"I can't move."

"I am like a tree."

"Trees have soil to root into, and so do I."

Song Ke was filled with question marks. This person seemed to be speaking very seriously, but she couldn't understand him at all.

"Trees can't talk," Song Ke argued.

"You're not a tree; how do you know trees can't talk?"

"I... I'm not a tree, and you're not a tree either."

"You're not me; how do you know I'm not a tree and can't talk?"

Oh no, he turned the tables on her.

Song Ke couldn't argue with him and could only simmer in frustration.

After a while, the man initiated communication again.

"So, you've seen it now."

"Seen what?"

"A talking tree, me."

"..."

"Let's discuss something. After you die, can I have your body for use?"

"No!"

"You're quite stingy."

Song Ke was infuriated. Me, stingy? Okay, whatever you say.

This person's way of thinking was truly strange, rigid, and robotic, exuding an odd sense of formalism. Although he seemed eager to communicate, he might lack social skills as he could easily annoy people upon opening his mouth.

"I'm going to look for someone," Song Ke declared, and she began to walk away. However, it was so dark that she accidentally stepped on something and stumbled.

"You stepped on me."

“Uh... I’m sorry,” Song Ke said with a choked voice. How could I possibly step on you when your voice was at least ten meters away from me?

“I accept your apology.”

There was a slight rustling sound accompanied by the sound of leaves withdrawing from under her feet swiftly.

Song Ke was taken aback. An absurd thought crossed her mind: Could she really be talking to a tree?

Song Ke wandered in the dark for a while. The place was vast, and she found nothing. She returned to where she started, feeling disheartened.

“Whom are you looking for? I’m sure it’s only me here.”

“Why didn’t you say that earlier?” Song Ke was annoyed.

“Do I need to say this kind of thing in advance? I thought you knew,” the man replied, not sarcastic but genuinely puzzled.

Song Ke stretched out her limbs and lay down on the ground, feeling exhausted. She needed to rest for a few minutes.

At least the 13th to 18th floor seemed safer than she had imagined.

‘Zhuang Qingyan, please wait for me a little longer.’

\*

From the 13th to the 18th floor, Zhuang Qingyan checked each level one by one. Besides Senran and Smail, he found the other 40 prisoners. They were all well-known figures within the Alliance, but here, they were indistinguishable from the living dead.

It might have taken two or maybe three days, but the specific time was immeasurable, as he had no reference point. Due to excessive walking, blisters formed on his palms and arms, and his intact left leg had also begun to ache intensely.

“Officer, what do you think is the purpose of the Death Prison’s existence?” Zhuang Qingyan turned to the person who had been quietly following him.

“The Death Prison is a necessary product of the Alliance’s development at a specific stage, created with the emergence of class and division of districts.”

“Necessary product. What about the Crime Record? Is that necessary too?” Zhuang Qingyan chuckled.

The prison guard remained silent for a second, as if unfamiliar with the sudden use of that term, and didn’t respond immediately.

Zhuang Qingyan instantly understood. Apart from the prisoners, the only other person on this level was the prison guard. The man’s true identity had become apparent.

“The person I’m looking for isn’t here,” Zhuang Qingyan stated.

“All the prisoners from the 13th to the 18th floors are here, alive,” the prison guard replied.

“Is that so? I guess the Death Prison must have more than 18 floors,” Zhuang Qingyan raised his gaze slightly. “Isn’t that right, Lord Hades?”

The prison guard fell silent.

“Sorry, I should be more precise and address you as... the former Lord Hades,” Zhuang Qingyan said slowly.

The prison guard had been giving off an aura of dissonance ever since he appeared. Later, Zhuang Qingyan gradually noticed that this person didn’t breathe, had no chest movement, and displayed an unnaturally stable emotional state. He remembered Senran, who had been imprisoned 45 years ago, in detail, but he couldn’t recognize the Crime Record that every present-day prisoner had, nor did he know about William White, the infamous, ruthless warden.

Connecting all these oddities left only one possibility. However, this possibility likely hid other secrets.

“You’ve been emphasizing ‘alive’ all along because you know you’re no longer a living being. So, what are you? A puppet or a marionette?” Zhuang Qingyan asked.

“You don’t need to answer. Regardless of what you are, take me to see the true Lord Hades.”

\*

“Are you dead?” the man asked.

“No,” Song Ke lifted her leg slightly, indicating that she was still alive, though the man probably couldn’t see her.

“Oh,” the man’s voice sounded a little disappointed, “When will you die, then?”

Song Ke retorted, “You go first, and I’ll die later.”

“But trees have long lifespans.”

“My lifespan is also long,” Song Ke replied spitefully, “Longer than yours.”

The man was about to engage in a logical argument with her about “whose lifespan is longer” when he suddenly paused and said, “Someone’s coming.”

Song Ke immediately rolled over and asked eagerly, “Who’s coming? Are they alive? How many people? Are they male or female? Where are they?”

Finally, someone was coming, and it got her really excited.

The man thought silently for a moment and muttered to himself, “To meet people, you need to have a light.”

“Why didn’t you turn on the light earlier if you had one?” Song Ke shouted in disbelief, considering she had been stumbling in the dark for so many days!

The moment his words fell, a faint light began to shine, gradually brightening from the distance. Song Ke instinctively closed her eyes and waited for her pupils to adjust to the surroundings’ brightness. When she cautiously opened her eyes, she was shocked by the scene in front of her.

A vast sea of data formed a lush, towering tree right in the center of the space. It emitted a vibrant green glow of life. The man who had been speaking to Song Ke was completely surrounded by flowing code. His legs, from the thighs down, were missing, but an endless stream of data continuously poured in, forming the shape of virtual legs. Simultaneously, they acted as two flexible branches, winding and extending throughout the entire space. In other words, the man was a part of the massive tree.

Silver hair! Ice-blue eyes!

Song Ke had never seen a genuine ice-blue eye before. Lu Xinglan’s eyes were not pure; they had a faint touch of ice blue. But at this moment, she was certain that the man in front of her had the purest form of ice-blue eyes. It was hard to describe the exact color in words; it was like the first snow of winter, like a frozen mirror-like lake, like translucent crystal. But it was by no means lifeless. Every time the man blinked, one could see stars moving within them.

Lu Xiaoyu, this tree...ah, no, this person was Lu Xiaoyu! They had finally found the person they had been searching for!

Two other figures slowly emerged from the darkness. The man with the crutches, upon seeing the scene before him, was initially taken aback but then smiled slightly.

“It’s really you.”

“Haven’t seen you for years. How did you end up in such a pitiful state?”

“The Lu family dealt quite a blow; they even broke both of your legs?”

Lu Xiaoyu blinked in confusion and his silver hair scattered over his shoulders. “I have legs.”

The data around him trembled slightly, and the branches decorated with green 101010 leaves rustled.

“You’re the one without legs,” Lu Xiaoyu retorted.

“You seem to be enjoying yourself as the Lord Hades here,” Zhuang Qingyan removed the Crime Record from his shoulder and casually threw it in front of him. “Is this lousy thing also your creation?”

Lu Xiaoyu glanced at the Crime Record on the ground, then looked back at Zhuang Qingyan. He furrowed his brows slightly, and the data flow around him accelerated, making it clear that he was not pleased.

Zhuang Qingyan raised an eyebrow and smiled, “What’s this? Lost your legs and your memory has regressed?”

The flow of data came to an abrupt halt, and Lu Xiaoyu observed Zhuang Qingyan’s expression for a while before softly saying, “Ah, it’s you.”

“Zhuang Qingyan!” Song Ke hurried over to support him.

Zhuang Qingyan breathed a sigh of relief; he was nearly at his limit. He obediently relaxed, leaning against Song Ke.

Song Ke complained, "I was looking for you and couldn't find you. It's so dark in here, and I couldn't get out."

Zhuang Qingyan pinched her puffed cheeks lightly and playfully tugged them from side to side.

In response, Song Ke shook her head from side to side, mimicking his actions.

Zhuang Qingyan chuckled, "Alright, stop acting cute. I'm fine."

Acting cute? Song Ke's face remained expressionless as she punched him in the face, causing his head to tilt.

"Hiss, you're so fierce," Zhuang Qingyan exclaimed softly.

"Zhuang... Qing... Yan."

Lu Xiaoyu suddenly called his name, repeating it with a strange tone.

His pair of pure ice-blue eyes locked onto Zhuang Qingyan, and Zhuang Qingyan returned the gaze.

Across a distance of ten meters, both remained silent, yet their expressions were remarkably similar, right down to the slight chin lift as they observed one another.

Transcending the vast expanse of time and space, a long time ago, two equally brilliant and proud young men, neither willing to yield to the other, constantly challenged each other and ultimately had to shake hands and make peace.

Song Ke belatedly remembered that Zhuang Qingyan had once said that Lu Xiaoyu was his "friend."



Were they really friends, these two oddballs?

Lu Xiaoyu awkwardly tugged at the corners of his mouth, trying to form a “smile.”

“Long time no see, Zhuang Qingyan.”

\*\*TN

Oh~ The last team member is here~ And he looks like Gojo Satoru~Kyaa kyaa <3

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 78: Sin City (12)

Have you heard of synesthesia?

“Long time no see, Zhuang Qingyan.”

Lu Xiaoyu raised his hand, and a small cluster of glowing data branches followed his movement, silently standing up, with the leaves making a “swish” sound.

Zhuang Qingyan dropped the makeshift crutch in his hand and sat against the wall with the help of Song Ke.

His current appearance was extremely disheveled, with torn and tattered prison clothes, bloody blisters on his palms, and several scratches on his face. These were just the visible injuries; who knows how many hidden wounds he had. After all, his wheelchair was completely destroyed, and it was impossible for him to be unscathed.

After Zhuang Qingyan sat down, he had to tilt his head up to speak with Lu Xiaoyu. He made a faint “tsk” sound and said, “Come down.”

Lu Xiaoyu muttered silently, "I am a tree, and a tree only grows taller..."

Zhuang Qingyan interrupted him, "Quit the nonsense and come down."

"Why?"

"It's hard to look up."

"...You're still so finicky."

The flowing data formed the shape of a tree trunk, and Lu Xiaoyu slowly descended to the ground. Zhuang Qingyan's gaze finally met his.

He raised his chin slightly, indicating another direction, "Since you're Lord Hades, what is he?"

Song Ke belatedly realized that there was a fourth person at the scene. From the very beginning, this person had been standing still, not moving a muscle or even breathing. Her attention had been solely on Zhuang Qingyan, so she had overlooked the presence of the other person.

Upon arriving in a well-lit area, the appearance of this prison guard seemed even more bizarre. While his gaze was rational and clear, his facial features and limbs were extremely stiff, like a marionette covered with human skin. No matter how realistic it was, it couldn't hide the strangeness.

Song Ke's intuition told her that he was most likely not a "human."

"He is the warden here," Lu Xiaoyu said in a casual tone. "When I arrived, he was on the verge of death, but he seemed to want to live and not let others know he was dying. So he found me and said he wanted to do the same as that visionary, to separate his consciousness from his body and transfer it to a new body. He asked me if I could do it."

“I extracted all of his memories and prepared to transfer them into a new body he had improved himself. However, there was a parameter error in the middle of the process, and I couldn’t fix it using my abilities. In the end, the experiment failed, and only a part of his consciousness was barely preserved. The current him is no longer considered a complete person; he only mechanically repeats residual commands.”

“Well... that’s all that’s left,” Lu Xiaoyu said, moving his fingers, and the blank wall projected fragments of the former Lord Hades’ memories.

He had once been a passionate young man who, as an adult, had willingly entered the prison industry. Starting as a low-ranking officer, he had climbed his way up to become the high-ranking chief warden. He possessed extraordinary talent and a deep sense of strategy, and through centralization, reform, and new policies, he had elevated the existence of the Death Prison to its zenith, becoming a revered and feared Lord Hades.

However, in this world, there was the “Law of Extreme Reversal”—when something reaches its zenith, it tends to transform in the opposite direction.

When a person reaches their peak, they also rapidly decline.

Plagued by illness, growing old, the former Lord Hades gradually became incapable and had to relinquish his power, sinking into the bottommost layer of the Death Prison, where one could never be reborn. While the wardens above him changed continuously, he became increasingly mysterious. It wasn’t that he didn’t want to leave, but his broken body and depleted energy could no longer sustain his ambitions.

Zhuang Qingyan looked at the silent prison guard, witnessing his grandiose history, but the guard seemed indifferent, as if he were a complete stranger. He had once built the glory of the Death Prison with his own hands, but he had also succumbed to his obsession. Lu Xiaoyu was right; he was no longer a “human” but a mere puppet.

“What’s his name?”

“I don’t know,” Lu Xiaoyu replied emotionlessly. He had never cared about it and had never asked.

Apart from the code name “Lord Hades”, his entire life had remained unknown to others. Now, even that title no longer belonged to him.

A sigh was all that remained.

The stripping of memories, extraction, transformation, and injection into a new body... These words that Lu Xiaoyu casually mentioned were enough to make one’s heart race. If the former Lord Hades’ experiment had succeeded, he would have achieved immortality in a different way, shaking the entire Alliance.

Lu Xiaoyu’s expression turned regretful, “In the end, it was because the body he chose was too fragile to contain a complete soul.”

He wasn’t fond of conducting such experiments; in fact, he had no interest in them. He wasn’t even proficient in this area, and his only attempt had been at the former Lord Hades’ request. However, that failure had left a lasting impact on him, as geniuses often couldn’t tolerate their own imperfections.

Song Ke listened intently, her fingers unconsciously grasping something nearby.

Lu Xiaoyu’s icy gaze suddenly turned to her, “You’re touching me.”

Song Ke: “Huh?”

She lowered her head in bewilderment, only then realizing that she had been grabbing onto an extended branch. She quickly let go.

The branch closely followed and wound around her wrist a few times, its tip touching her forearm affectionately.

“I can let you touch me because I’m the one who called you down,” Lu Xiaoyu said.

Lu Xiaoyu's gaze returned to Song Ke, and his eyes sparkled like the branches. "I really like your body. How about letting me modify you? I promise it will succeed this time."

"No," Song Ke said, expressionless, as she shook her hand to get rid of the branch, but it clung.

Lu Xiaoyu persisted, "Or let my consciousness enter yours. We can learn to share one body. Have you heard of synesthesia? It's when you have me in you, and I have you in me. You can feel me, and I can..."

"Don't even think about it," Zhuang Qingyan grabbed the tip and pulled it away, saying coldly, "Get lost."

Lu Xiaoyu faced successive rejections, retracted the branches, and pursed his lips in annoyance.

He lost the desire for further social interaction and lazily leaned against the tree trunk.

"Why did you come to the Death Prison? Is this your latest research achievement?" Lu Xiaoyu asked.

"I came here specifically to find you."

"Find me?"

"Yes, before we have a formal conversation, you need to take care of this first." Zhuang Qingyan removed Song Ke's Crime Record and threw it together with his own with a "clink" sound.

Lu Xiaoyu's branches rolled up the two Crime Records on the ground, returned them to his side, and then paused, his gaze resting on Song Ke for a moment.

Song Ke felt inexplicably nervous, fearing that he might say something startling.

"Don't worry, she won't," Zhuang Qingyan suddenly spoke, his tone calm and his gaze confident.

Song Ke looked at him with confusion, won't what? His words seemed disjointed.

Lu Xiaoyu responded with a brief "hm," tapped his fingertips a few times, and then crushed the badges.

Song Ke's mental state suddenly shifted, and she realized that the feeling of being constantly monitored had disappeared. Was this what unlocked it?

"Did you create the Crime Record?" Song Ke asked, surprised. She recalled the information she had received from Cheng Yi, stating that the crime records were a technology passed down from District B. Could it be that Lu Xiaoyu had casually created them?

"Not entirely. Its original form was a monitoring device and didn't have punitive functions. After I connected with it, I casually broke through its firewall and felt it was a bit of a waste, so I added some things and made some improvements," Lu Xiaoyu replied offhandedly.

Even without special abilities, Lu Xiaoyu was a genius-level hacker, and this was certainly something he could do.

"Tell me, what do you need me for?"

"I need your help to hack into the citizenship system and forge a few new identity records. We need to go to District C55."

Lu Xiaoyu chuckled, "Did you... also get a brain transplant? This new one doesn't seem to be working very well."

Zhuang Qingyan remained expressionless, "I'm serious. You're a gene optimizer who awakened your hacking ability over a decade ago. Something like this should be a piece of cake for you."

"I'm in a place where using abilities is forbidden," Lu Xiaoyu reminded, implying that he couldn't use his hacking ability here.

"I know. You didn't understand what I meant. I want you to leave with us.

"Before coming in, the biggest difficulty we encountered was how to find you; at least we've succeeded in that step. As for how to get out, we can figure that out later."

"I'm not leaving," Lu Xiaoyu immediately refused, "Once a tree takes root, it won't easily move. I'm fine here."

Zhuang Qingyan sneered, "Yes, you are Lord Hades here, the heart of the Death Prison, and the life and death of all the prisoners depend on your whim. But stuck here, you have no idea what changes are happening in the outside world."

"I don't care..."

"Lu Corporation's supercomputer isn't dead. It can be reactivated soon."

"Impossible!" Lu Xiaoyu raised his head abruptly. "Even if she's not dead, there's no way she can return to normal."

"What's impossible about it? Lu Corporation has found an alternative power source for her."

"Who?" Lu Xiaoyu's voice grew colder.

"A super AI with a complete personality and powerful abilities. Before we arrived in Sin City, they had already begun capturing it. Let me think... it might even be operational by now."

Song Ke made a surprised sound. Zhuang Qingyan was talking about Ilya, right? But Ilya hadn't been captured, and instead, he had taken down Lu Xinglan...

She opened her mouth to speak, but Zhuang Qingyan pinched her knuckles at that moment, causing Song Ke to react belatedly.

Oh... Zhuang Qingyan was lying again, and this time it was even more absurd, lying even to his friend.

Lu Xiaoyu's branches hung down dejectedly.

Zhuang Qingyan continued, "As early as Year 8 in the New Calendar, the Lu family's starship was born. But for over twenty years thereafter, it remained obscure, overshadowed by other flying terminals. It wasn't until Year 32 in the New Calendar, after a certain technological innovation, that a new model emerged and became famous overnight in the Alliance, earning the nickname 'Eternal Soaring Bird.' No one knew that the person who wrote the core code at that time was none other than you, Lu Xiaoyu.

"You flawlessly integrated the critical energy source, 'Yiyu,' into the central calculations, achieving high-altitude supersonic flight under absolute safety conditions. It was you who single-handedly propelled the Lu family starship to its peak."

Song Ke was left dumbfounded.

Lu family starship, Yiyu, Lu Xiaoyu... So, Lu Xiaoyu was the true creator of the starship!

"The Lu family amassed countless wealth through the starship, becoming the sole owner of District B8. But, do you know that the starship has now completely collapsed."

Lu Xiaoyu frowned, "The code I wrote, even if it runs for another 100 years, couldn't possibly go wrong."

Zhuang Qingyan shook his head slowly, "It's not the code that went wrong; The Lu family starship reclaimed Yiyu."

No matter how perfectly a program was designed, without a power source, the starship couldn't function.

Lu Xiaoyu's branches gradually tightened.



“Even after learning all this, do you still intend to stay here and be your Lord Hades in peace?” Zhuang Qingyan asked.

Lu Xiaoyu remained quiet for a moment and then suddenly said, “You’re deliberately provoking me. You haven’t changed at all. You may pretend to be all nice on the surface, but deep down, you’re full of evil. As soon as you find someone’s soft spot, you relentlessly go after it.”

Zhuang Qingyan chuckled, “I did it on purpose. I know you have Asperger’s Syndrome. Maybe this place is better suited for you than putting on a mask and pretending to be a normal person in social situations.”

Lu Xiaoyu snorted, “You, a psychopath, have no right to talk about me.”

Song Ke looked at one, then the other, with countless question marks appearing over her head. What are you guys talking about? What’s “A”... and what’s “P”?

Both of them had a cold smile on their lips, not giving an inch as they stared at each other.

“Are you leaving or not? Waste.”

“Shut up, trash.”

Song Ke: “...”

Wait, weren’t they getting along just fine a moment ago? Why are they arguing now?

“Uh...” Both of them looked at her at the same time.

Song Ke’s voice got smaller and smaller, “If you have something to say, please say it nicely. Don’t fight.”

After a while, Lu Xiaoyu twitched his branch and said, “I can’t leave.”

Zhuang Qingyan's expression turned cold. Lu Xiaoyu shot him a sideways glance and said before he could speak, "Shut up."

"...Leaving the tree would kill me."

He moved forward a bit, slowly turning around, and Song Ke could clearly see that there were various data conduits in his head, shoulders, and back. Some of these data conduits were even plugged into the nerve endings of his severed legs. If pulled out hastily, he would likely die instantly from blood loss.

Lu Xiaoyu's eyelashes drooped, and his expression remained unexpectedly indifferent.

Song Ke felt her heart ache. She didn't know the full story of the conflict between Lu Xiaoyu and the Lu family, but it was brutal. Severing his legs and throwing him into the depths of the Death Prison wasn't enough; they had to nail him within this pile of data, making his senses and countless sins interconnected, subjecting him to endless torment. Was it necessary to go this far?

"Even so, do you still want to take me with you?" Lu Xiaoyu asked quietly.

After a moment of silence, it was Song Ke who spoke first, "We do, we will definitely take you out."

Zhuang Qingyan suddenly asked, "How far are we from the boundary where the use of abilities is prohibited?"

Lu Xiaoyu replied, "As long as we leave the super abyss area, it's fine. It's about 12,000 meters in a straight line."

Zhuang Qingyan lightly tapped the ground with his fingertip, a usual gesture when he was deep in thought.

"I have some ideas... Let's first get Fang Zhixu down."

“Never mind, let’s get all of them down.”

\*\*TN

Song Ke was confused with the A and P because they said Asperger’s Syndrome and Psychotic in English.

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 79: Sin City (13)

Prison Break

These past few days, the Death Prison has been far from peaceful.

Warden White met a violent end. It’s said that his death was gruesome, with someone stabbing him through the throat. Floors 7 to 12 were put on lockdown, and a large number of inmates seized the opportunity to escape amidst the chaos. She Liang was busy dealing with the aftermath, his hands full, and the management of the original cell blocks appeared somewhat lax. As a result, Lin Youyou and a few others were able to meet on the activity area.

Su Cha had already informed them of what had happened below.

“Both of them went down?” Lin Youyou nervously tapped the table.

“Yes,” Su Cha said with a grave expression.

Song Ke was absent, and Xu Xing couldn’t be bothered with being coy. The little boy sat there, his brow furrowed.

Lin Youyou felt a headache coming on. Among the six of them, it had never been her role to make decisions. However, in the current situation, if they didn’t decide quickly, the situation for Song Ke and the others would become more perilous.

“I’ll take the lead in making a decision. I want to go down to find them,” Lin Youyou sighed.

“I agree.” Surprisingly, Fang Zhixu was the first to speak up. They had come to the Death Prison because of him, and now with Song Ke and Zhuang Qingyan in danger, he couldn’t stand by and do nothing.

“I agree too.” Xu Xing bravely raised his little hand. He was determined to save his sister.

Su Cha nodded in agreement with Lin Youyou.

With a unanimous decision to stick together, Lin Youyou gained some assurance. “Well then, let’s first think of a way to get down...”

While the four were discussing their plan, the Crime Record device on their shoulders suddenly lit up with a red light. Lin Youyou looked at the badge in surprise. How was this possible? They hadn’t committed any crimes now, so why was it glowing? Could it monitor their psychological activities as well?

A secret message suddenly flashed into their minds.

Lin Youyou listened quietly, and her expression became strange. She noticed that the others’ faces were similar to hers.

“The content we heard... should be the same, right? Good news, Song Ke and Zhuang Qingyan are safe, and they’ve even found Lu Xiaoyu.”

Fang Zhixu, Su Cha, and Xu Xing nodded, confirming her statement.

Lin Youyou paused for a moment and couldn’t help but smile lightly. “You received the second part of the message too, right? Song Ke, you really are... always a source of surprises, no, shock.”

...

She Liang hurriedly moved through the administrative area, busy arranging various matters. An underling approached him and reported, "Warden, a notice has come from the 18th floor, requesting the transfer of four inmates down below."

"The 18th floor? Are there still living prisoners there? Who issued the transfer order?" She Liang asked, surprised.

The subordinate's legs were trembling as he replied, "...It's a direct order from that esteemed person."

She Liang abruptly stopped, a cold snort escaping his lips. "That old coot always knows how to stir up trouble. I'll reject it outright."

She Liang had never met Lord Hades. Since his first day as warden, he had been shrouded in the shadow of this person. There were always people criticizing him, pointing out where he fell short of Lord Hades' standards, and how he couldn't do things according to the rules set by Lord Hades. He was tired of it all.

"But, Warden... From the perspective of your authority, you don't have the right to refuse," his subordinate stated plainly.

She Liang glared at him with a cold expression, slowly crumpling the papers in his hand. "Is that so? I don't have the right, huh?"

Although he was furious to the extreme, She Liang didn't let anger cloud his judgment. White was dead, and the immediate priority was to bring the escaped inmates under control. He needed to secure authority over floors 7 to 12 before the official transfer order came from the Alliance. Then, he would hold all the power, and no one could oppose him. As for that old coot, Lord Hades... he would be replaced sooner or later. In the future, the Death Prison would only have him, She Liang, as the warden.

Once She Liang had calmed down, he asked, "Which four inmates have been selected for the transfer?"

The subordinate quickly handed over the four inmates' files. She Liang glanced at them briefly and said, "Retrieve the inmates' surveillance footage."

In real-time surveillance, Lin Youyou, Fang Zhixu, and Su Cha were seen laboring honestly in their prison uniforms. Xu Xing, who had already served his sentence but was still in confinement due to unpaid fines, sat in his cell drawing, looking carefree. The last one was a tall man who had been placed in a temporary cell and hadn't been reassigned yet.

She Liang didn't have much of an impression of Lin Youyou and the others, but the moment he saw Su Cha, he frowned and recognized him immediately.

Why wouldn't this person go away? He had just been sent down, and now he was back again. Seeing him brought back memories of the ten billion he had lost. She Liang's good mood disappeared, and he impatiently said, "Since Lord Hades wants them, then send them down."

Half an hour later, the prison guards responsible for transporting the inmates had set the destination floor and pushed the inmates into the elevator. "Get in and behave."

As the elevator doors closed, Lin Youyou smiled sweetly and discreetly slipped something into the elevator wall.

The same subtle actions occurred with Xu Xing on the 1st floor, Fang Zhixu on the 4th floor, and Su Cha on the 6th floor...

The four tracking devices left behind by Song Ke were concealed discreetly inside the moving elevators.

...

Zhuang Qingyan extracted a usable light screen from Smail's cell and connected it to the data port on Lu Xiaoyu, beginning to study the structure of the entire Death Prison.

"Did you send the one-way signal? This is such a minor task; you don't need an ability for it," Zhuang Qingyan remarked.

“Quit your yapping; I’ve already sent it,” Lu Xiaoyu’s branches flowed smoothly, his pale fingertips tapping the leaves as he monitored the elevator’s movements in real-time. “Your people are coming down.”

“Give me the balance vector data for the particles.”

“Why don’t you calculate it yourself?”

“I’m working on the gravity parameters. You should be thanking me; this was originally your job.”

The two of them made progress while bickering back and forth, occasionally arguing like they used to when working on projects together in their youth.

Lu Xiaoyu rolled his eyes and swiftly completed the calculations. Out of the corner of his eye, he caught sight of a figure.

In the nearby shadows, a person stood quietly, with a straight posture and stern demeanor.

“Wait for me,” Lu Xiaoyu used his data leg to “stand” up and “walk” a few steps in the person’s direction, stopping in front of him.

“I’m leaving,” Lu Xiaoyu said.

“Congratulations,” he replied.

Lu Xiaoyu’s tone remained indifferent. “When I leave, there might be some commotion. The Death Prison might be destroyed, and it will cease to exist.”

The prison guard paused for a moment, not fully comprehending his words, and unable to respond effectively.

But Lu Xiaoyu's words seemed to trigger something in his consciousness. He replied calmly and mechanically, "The Death Prison... The Death Prison is a necessary product of the Alliance's development at a specific stage, emerging with the creation of classes and districts."

His missing consciousness prevented him from dealing with a more advanced linguistic environment, causing him to repeat meaningless phrases.

After he finished speaking, Lu Xiaoyu spoke again. "You are one of my few failures."

"I also don't understand your pursuit of immortality."

"But if you're willing, when I leave, I can use my ability to write an operational program for you, to complete the missing part of your consciousness. But let's be clear, you won't be able to return to your previous state. At most, you'll be a kind of artificial intelligence with built-in factory memory."

The prison guard remained silent for a long time, then slowly raised his arm and gave Lu Xiaoyu a standard salute, his voice low but firm.

"Staying in the Death Prison is my lifelong mission."

"Thank you," Lu Xiaoyu responded absentmindedly, turning to leave. Unexpectedly, he met Song Ke's wide eyes.

She hadn't eavesdropped; she had been standing there openly, listening.

Song Ke blinked her eyes, her thoughts swirling. How to describe Lu Xiaoyu? He appeared to have a scattered mind, hard to communicate with, but he had his own set of standards for doing things. How did that saying go again? Oh, right, he's fiercely loyal.

Song Ke looked at Lu Xiaoyu and smiled, a faint dimple appearing on her cheek.



Lu Xiaoyu's ice-cold pupils narrowed slightly, and his branches secretly touched Song Ke's shoulder as he lowered his voice. "While that guy isn't looking, do you want to try synesthesia with me?"

Song Ke's entire body bristled. "No!"

Up ahead, Zhuang Qingyan's finger tapping on the light screen stopped abruptly, and his voice turned icy. "Lu Xiaoyu, get back here and get to work!"

...

When Lin Youyou and her group exited the elevator, someone was already waiting for them.

A prison guard with gray hair, wearing a uniform, spoke in a deep voice, "Follow me."

The group silently followed him as they descended further from the 18th floor. They passed through a dark corridor and arrived at a spacious area, where they saw the illuminated data tree and Lu Xiaoyu. They stared in disbelief, deeply awed by the sight.

Xu Xing ran over and hugged Song Ke's thigh. After a brief exchange of information, Fang Zhixu was called away by Zhuang Qingyan.

"These tubes, can you deal with them?" Zhuang Qingyan crouched down and carefully examined the data interfaces on Lu Xiaoyu's body. They already knew that levels below the 7th floor were designated as abilities restricted areas.

"I can quickly remove them, but stopping the bleeding and suturing requires special abilities, which are challenging to use here," Fang Zhixu explained.

"For now, let's forget about suturing. I'll give you an additional 30 seconds of ability time. You can use it to stop the bleeding for him. Can you do it?" Zhuang Qingyan asked.

"I can."

The seven of them sat in a circle, and Zhuang Qingyan activated a projection. A clear schematic of the Death Prison's structure appeared before them.

"Let's go through the plan once more. We're preparing to leave this damned place."

...

At five o'clock in the afternoon, the work shift came to an end.

All the internal elevators in the Death Prison suddenly became restless without anyone controlling it.

"Ding," "clank," the sounds of impacts echoed continuously as these massive structures seemed to have an agreement to rush in the same direction, toward the same floor.

"The Death Prison is an inverted cone. The quickest way to escape is to turn it upside down."

"What we need to do is use enough weight to forcibly alter the gravitational field."

Zhuang Qingyan switched to a three-dimensional map. After rotating it 180 degrees, their current 19th floor became the top floor.

"Do you know what's the heaviest thing in the Death Prison?"

"The elevators!" Xu Xing eagerly raised his hand to answer.

"That's right. Every internal elevator is made of high-density metal structures with astonishing mass. If we gather all of them, we can achieve the goal of flipping the Death Prison."

The operating programs of hundreds of elevators simultaneously came under attack from an unknown virus. They all piled up in the corner on the 1st floor's oil reservoir, the ground began to tilt, heavy objects fell uncontrollably and rolled out, causing the inmates to stumble and fall, their vision spinning. Steel frames in the factory broke, showering countless sparks, and the Death Prison started sinking into the seabed.

"But what if they use elevators to capture us?" Song Ke raised a question.

"Right, so just in case, we need to cut off the possibility of being pursued," Zhuang Qingyan concluded.

On the 19th floor where V587 was located, they sliced through the waves, rapidly ascending. 12,000 meters... 10,000 meters... 8,000 meters... 6,000 meters!

The moment they left the super abyss zone, their awakened energy was restored, and they could use their abilities!

On the 6th floor of the Death Prison, She Liang struggled to support himself against the wall and shouted, "What's going on?"

The prison guard trembled as he reported, "It seems to be the 18th floor. Inmates have escaped from the 18th floor, and there's commotion..."

Again, it's the 18th floor, and it's another escape! In an instant, She Liang thought of the culprit who had cost him ten billion, that bastard named Su Cha. If he had known, he wouldn't have let him go no matter what. That Lord Hades is also useless, unable to even control his own inmates.

"Special Police Team, arm yourselves and follow me down." She Liang was furious, swaying as he headed towards the elevator. In that case, he would personally resolve it, regardless of what Lord Hades said, or any rules. He would deal with the person completely and be done with it.

Inside the crowded elevator, the four kunai suddenly began to glow. Powerful awakened energy kept pouring in.

“Boom!”

All the elevators exploded into ruins. She Liang took a step into the flames, and he was blown out, his face scorched and he fell unconscious.

...

On the 19th floor of the Death Prison, the tip of the cone-shaped structure was just a few hundred meters away from the sea surface.

“Song Ke!” Zhuang Qingyan shouted.

Lin Youyou’s singing voice echoed, empowering Song Ke.

Song Ke was enveloped in blue light, transforming a massive five-meter-long battle-axe. She activated her core powers and swung her arm, smashing the tip of the 19th floor.

“Bang, bang, bang!”

The sturdy outer wall crumbled, black seawater surged in, and Song Ke was drenched in it, choking on a mouthful of seawater.

“Xu Xing!”

Xu Xing nodded solemnly, and his awakened ability was released, instantly freezing the incoming seawater into an escape passage.

“Fang Zhixu.”

Fang Zhi Xu was fully focused, sweat forming on his forehead. Only a few dozen tubes remained on Lu Xiaoyu's severed leg, and he swiftly removed them with his left hand while using his awakened ability to stop the bleeding with his right hand. His movements were so fast that they were almost imperceptible.

Lu Xiaoyu shivered all over, his face as pale as snow. Intense pain surged through all his nerves, but he didn't utter a sound.

"The mass is starting to deviate," Su Cha reminded them.

Sure enough, the Death Prison had started to descend again. Forcibly altering the gravitational field could only be sustained for a short time, and with Lu Xiaoyu losing control over the elevator, their time was running out.

Everyone's gaze was fixed on Fang Zhixu.

Ten tubes... Seven tubes... Three tubes... the last one! Fang Zhixu, racing against the clock, pulled out the final tube and swiftly treated the wound.

Lu Xiaoyu was finally free!

"Hurry, let's go!"

Several kilometers away, the citizens of the underground city looked up in disbelief toward the direction of the Death Prison.

The once calm underground sea churned with colossal waves, and the surface roiled and stirred. This soon triggered a massive tsunami, rushing out and submerging the entire trading street. Rain poured down like a torrential downpour, leaving everyone astonished.

Could it be that the Death Prison is in trouble?!

“The Crime Record has disappeared!” Amid the crowd swimming around, a joyous shout suddenly echoed.

Others quickly lowered their heads to check and, indeed, all the bars on the sign had disappeared, rendering the Crime Record a useless piece of scrap metal.

Cheng Yi, in a state of chaos while trying to salvage crystals from her store, suddenly remembered something. She rushed to grab the terminal that the group had stored with her and dashed towards the direction of the underground sea.

...

“Hey,” shouted Lu Xiaoyu just as they were about to escape, stopping the prison guard.

Pale fingertips streamed with data, touching the guard’s forehead. An icy, dominant superpower surged in, like an epiphany, as a foreign code entered the guard’s consciousness, filling in the missing fragments of his soul.

“I, Lu Xiaoyu, never make defective products.”

Song Ke waited for him to finish speaking with a proud expression, then picked up his collar, turned around and ran away.

The ice seawater gradually melted, and the 19th floor, one step away from freedom, fell into the sea again. The prison guard’s vision became narrower and narrower, and finally he vaguely saw a woman with a strange hairstyle meeting Lu Xiaoyu and the others at the beach.

Zhuang Qingyan pulled out two wheelchairs from his spatial storage. He chose a premium one for himself, but handed Lu Xiaoyu a basic one.

Lu Xiaoyu was furious, “I want your chair!”

Zhuang Qingyan sneered, "There are only two left, take it or leave it."

"Stop arguing, let's go."

The girl with shoulder-length hair pushed the heads of the two in opposite directions and, with a strong pull, lifted them up and ran off.

"Boom."

There was another round of spinning, and the Death Prison fell back into the abyss, then turned back up.

The silent prison guard sealed off the 19th floor and slowly walked back to the 18th floor, sitting alone in the darkness for an unknown amount of time.

Until the noisy voices rushed in.

"We've arrived at the 18th floor, the escaped prisoners... Lord Hades, Lord Hades!"

Several middle-aged prison guards with panicked expressions saw his face and exclaimed in shock.

The former Lord Hades slowly stood up and spoke in a deep voice, "Liao Yi, Liu Er, long time no see."

In reality, he didn't remember the names of these two individuals at all; the implanted memories had informed him of their names.

"Lord, are you planning to come back and manage the Death Prison again?"

The two of them asked with excitement. With one of the wardens dead and one severely injured, the Death Prison was in chaos. If Lord Hades could return at this moment, it would be a powerful reassurance to everyone.

“Yes, I’m back,” the former Lord Hades nodded solemnly. His mind, however, couldn’t help but wonder: he could remember everyone else’s names, but what was his own name? He couldn’t recall it, and that didn’t matter. He could start anew.

“From today on, don’t call me Lord Hades. There is no Lord Hades in the Death Prison anymore.”

“I am Hu Yong, the moderate Yong.”

\*\*TN

The character “庸” (yong) means to adapt to changes and use the right person at the right time, emphasizing the importance of balance and moderation in one’s actions.

Doomsday Spiritual Artifact Master

Chapter 80: Sin City (14)

You are famous now

“How is he?”

Lu Xiaoyu lay pale on the bed, his silver hair falling over his shoulders. Even in deep slumber, his brows were tightly furrowed.

Song Ke anxiously gazed at him.

After escaping from the Death Prison, Lu Xiaoyu only managed to hold on until they reached the safe house before losing consciousness.



“There is no immediate life-threatening danger, but he needs some time to recover.” Fang Zhixu continuously inputted white energy into his body, and the surgical procedure went very smoothly. Hundreds of injuries on Lu Xiaoyu’s body were treated properly.

“Why did he go into a coma?” Song Ke asked.

Fang Zhixu looked serious. “All the tubes you see are connected to his nerves. While he can manipulate the data in the entire Death Prison, his own life force is also being absorbed and lost. So when the connection is severed, he becomes even more fragile than an ordinary person.”

No wonder Lu Xiaoyu called himself a “tree.”

Trees absorb nutrients from the soil and then transport the stored nutrients to various branches and leaves. If he weren’t a powerful awakener, he might have already been depleted of his life force in the daily torment.

The pain Lu Xiaoyu endured when those tubes were pulled out could be imagined.

Equally sensitive, Lin Youyou sighed deeply by his side. “Is there hope for his legs to heal?”

Lu Xiaoyu lay under the blanket, and where his two legs should have been, there was nothing.

Fang Zhixu shook his head slowly. “We can only consider using prosthetic materials or mechanical replacements.”

A silence fell, and after a while, a faint sigh could be heard.

Zhuang Qingyan spoke with a cold, clear voice. “Lu Xiaoyu is a hacker-type awakener. Even without his legs, it won’t affect his abilities.

“However, I still suggest you put away your sympathy and compassion. He doesn’t need them. He’s a strange person by nature. Your excess emotions will only disturb yourselves and won’t cause any fluctuations in him.”

Lin Youyou sighed, “You’re right, but I’m not sighing out of sympathy for him. I’m sighing as I look up to the big shot. Just thinking that the Crime Record where you get zapped into oblivion was his doing gives me the shivers.”

“You’ve never been zapped,” Su Cha unexpectedly chimed in, causing a disruption.

When it comes to unlucky individuals who have been zapped, the one among them who was most deeply affected by the Crime Record is Su Cha. The coldness that penetrated his mind is unforgettable for him. Fortunately, Lu Xiaoyu removed it for them; otherwise, if he had been zapped a few more times, he might have ended up like Jorik, confused and dazed.

“I’m using a metaphor here, highlighting how strong he is. Do you understand?” Lin Youyou shot him a glare. Today, she had finally put on a full face of makeup, and with that one glance, the aura of a female celebrity instantly radiated, simply dazzling and captivating, too bright to look at directly.

Su Cha paused and casually turned his head away, acting as if nothing happened.

Speaking of the Crime Record, it reminds them of awakened abilities. Song Ke tugged at Zhuang Qingyan’s sleeve and asked, “What level is he?”

“Lu Xiaoyu awakened before the apocalypse. In his mental power test as an adult, his potential is 97%, just one step away from S-level.”

Zhuang Qingyan continued in a solemn tone, “Even if he wasted a few years in the Death Prison, he should have no problem breaking through to S-level.”

S-level, mystical hacking-type awakener. Song Ke’s eyes sparkled, “Wow.”

Xu Xing pursed his lips and, with a serious expression, calculated how much time it would take for his 90% potential to break through.

“So who’s more powerful, him or Ilya?”

Song Ke immediately ruled out Lu Xinglan. Judging by the colors of their irises alone, Lu Xiaoyu’s pure ice-blue eyes were more dominant. Among the people she knew, the one with the most formidable data manipulation abilities was Ilya, the lord of Ferrara.

“Never had a chance to cross paths, so I can’t say... but AI naturally fears his abilities. Don’t forget, just before Lu Xiaoyu escaped, he created an artificial intelligence.”

The fact that Lu Xiaoyu could create AI was enough to shock the world. He could create AI, but of course, he could also destroy it. S-level hacker-type awakeners were the number one nemesis of all artificial intelligence.

Song Ke couldn’t help but let her mind wander. If Lu Xiaoyu had gone to Ferrara in the first place, she wondered how Ilya would have dealt with it. Could he have easily dealt with it like he did with Lu Xinglan, taking over his body? No, Ilya wanted an “unrestricted body,” and with both of Lu Xiaoyu’s legs broken, he clearly wouldn’t meet the requirements. Moreover, he and the Lu family were sworn enemies and probably wouldn’t do any favors for them.

After thinking it through, the addition of S-level awakener, Lu Xiaoyu, to V587 represented a significant boost in their overall strength. As the captain, she had a responsibility to protect this valuable asset.

Song Ke turned to Zhuang Qingyan with a sly smile, “Or maybe you should give him the wheelchair?”

Zhuang Qingyan squinted his eyes, his tone gradually became colder, “Song, Ke, Ke.”

“Do you really have such a fickle heart? Do you like the new and dislike the old?” He hummed softly.

Song Ke nervously cleared her throat and shook her head repeatedly.

“Is there something you’re not satisfied with about me?”

“No, no, I’m not... you, don’t talk nonsense!”

Song Ke quickly waved her hands, feeling very wronged. After all, she was the fairest captain!

“Knock, knock.”

Cheng Yi entered the room just in time, rescuing Song Ke who was sitting on pins and needles.

Thanks to Cheng Yi’s timely support, they were able to evacuate quickly. She had provided this safe house, but of course, Song Ke had also contributed a substantial amount of crystals. After all, businessmen never took a loss.

Song Ke turned her head to greet her, and Lin Youyou asked, “By the way, Boss Cheng, I’d like to go out and purchase some supplies. Do you have any suggestions?”

Cheng Yi immediately stopped her, “No, please don’t go out!”

Song Ke was taken aback, “What’s wrong? Is something happening outside?”

Cheng Yi laughed heartily, “You guys have become famous! It’s all over the streets. V587, mighty and domineering, demolished She Liang’s ten billion, defeated Warden White, rescued a mysterious Death Prison inmate, turned the Death Prison upside down. Now the entire Sin City knows your notorious names!”

Song Ke nervously asked, “Are we going to be hunted down?”

Cheng Yi chuckled as she shook her head, “On the contrary, thanks to you, the Crime Record is now ineffective, and both She Liang and White have been toppled. With the new Warden taking office, the Death Prison is thriving, and people outside are raving about you. You might be swamped by fans if you go out.”

“But there’s something I’m really curious about...” Cheng Yi stroked her chin, her eyes scanning the group, “You caused such a huge commotion, turned the Death Prison upside down, and repairing the damage and cleaning up the mess are substantial tasks. Why hasn’t the Death Prison issued an arrest warrant until now?”

Zhuang Qingyan suddenly asked, “Who is this new Warden you’re talking about?”

“He just emerged these days. His name is Hu Yong. White has been defeated, She Liang is critically injured, and... Lord Hades, who has been in seclusion for a long time, is no longer overseeing the situation in the Death Prison. This Hu Yong is quite capable. For some reason, even the prison guards willingly obey him. In any case, he quickly cleaned up the mess, and now the entire Death Prison follows his orders.”

“I heard that he has already ordered a reevaluation of the inmates’ records, releasing some and arresting others. It seems that the personnel in Sin City will undergo a major reshuffling in the near future.”

Song Ke and Zhuang Qingyan exchanged a look, silently thinking of the same person.

That silent prison guard was indeed a formidable individual. Even after forgetting his past personality and memories, he had still, in another form, fulfilled his long-standing wish.

“Thanks for giving me a free show. In return, let me handle the procurement of supplies,” Cheng Yi said as she stood up, flipping her half-dyed purple hair with a shrewd and cunning smile. “As for the service fee, I’ll give you a discount~”

In her smile, Song Ke quietly clutched her money pouch.

...

Early the next morning, Song Ke went to visit Lu Xiaoyu.

To her surprise, he was already awake, sitting alone in a wheelchair, with electronic sounds from various key adjustments constantly ringing.

Curious, Song Ke leaned in for a closer look. To her amazement, Lu Xiaoyu had built himself a pair of mechanical legs. They had a shiny, silvery texture that blended seamlessly with the basic wheelchair. When he wanted to “stand,” the mechanical legs automatically extended and fastened around his waist to help him stand up. With these legs, he stood at over 2.5 meters tall, exuding an imposing and powerful presence.

Song Ke gazed up in awe, watching Lu Xiaoyu proudly demonstrate his new legs.

“How do you like it? With the materials available, this is the most perfect state I can achieve.”

“Amazing!” Song Ke applauded enthusiastically, truly impressed. She didn’t expect that, in addition to being a top-tier hacker, Lu Xiaoyu had such remarkable talent in mechanics.

“My GPA in ‘Practical Theory of Mechanical Design and Engineering Structures’ is 5.0, hmm, he’s only 4.2.”

Lu Xiaoyu lifted his chin slightly, appearing casual but taking the opportunity to subtly take a jab at someone.

That “he” naturally referred to Zhuang Qingyan.

Song Ke thought of something: Lu Xiaoyu had just mentioned “with the materials available.” She asked, “Where did you get the materials for this?”

He had been unconscious just yesterday and hadn’t even left the safe house. Where did he find the materials to modify his wheelchair?

“Oh,” Lu Xiaoyu’s expression remained unchanged, his tone casual. “I disassembled Zhuang Qingyan’s wheelchair.”

Cough, cough! Song Ke choked on her own saliva, coughing violently.

Lu Xiaoyu spoke confidently, “He has two extra legs compared to me, he’s just limping. Why should he use a higher-grade wheelchair? Does he deserve it?”

Song Ke: “...” Whether he deserves it or not, you can’t just disassemble his wheelchair!

She felt that this was a major problem, and if Zhuang Qingyan, who was quite petty, found out, it would not be good. She needed to check on the situation quickly.

“You should rest...”

“Wait,” Lu Xiaoyu stopped her. “Can I borrow your terminal?”

He had been imprisoned in the Death Prison for over five years, mostly cut off from the outside world. He urgently needed to catch up with the current state of the world. As for the F180 District not having internet access? What a joke. He was a hacker-type awakener; as long as there was data, as long as he wished, there was no information he couldn’t access.

Song Ke rummaged through her backpack, frantically searching for her terminal and the old-fashioned light screen she carried. She handed them over to Lu Xiaoyu.

Then, she hurriedly ran to Zhuang Qingyan’s room and eavesdropped on the door for a while. No sound could be heard; he was probably still asleep.

Hurry! She needed to get a new wheelchair.

Song Ke donned her full disguise, wearing a hat and mask, and rushed outside.

The overall atmosphere of Sin City was indeed different from the past, with more law enforcement personnel on the streets.

“Azhen!” A thin man ran past Song Ke, scooping up a woman in front of him.

“Aqiang, how did you get out?” The woman was surprised and delighted.

“I was released; I’m innocent!”

A special police officer in Death Prison uniform passed by the two embracing, crying people and entered the adjacent Red Willow Hotel.

“Jade, is it? You are arrested on suspicion of intentional homicide.”

Trading Street was still bustling, but there were people both rejoicing and worried.

As Song Ke walked past the restaurant where Su Cha had been arrested before, it was business as usual inside.

“Have you seen V587?” someone asked excitedly.

“More than just seeing them. They even robbed me of my crystals!” The burly Gaida climbed onto a table, spouting exaggerated stories, his words flying like spit and making the ceiling fall apart. “It was a scorching afternoon, and my brothers and I were hunting mutant zombies in the desert...”

“What kind of people are V587?” someone in the audience asked impatiently.

“I only know the most famous one is called Su Cha. It seems... there’s also a woman who plays with curved knives, but I don’t have much impression of the others.”



Song Ke tugged the brim of her hat down low and discreetly walked past, keeping her achievements and identity well hidden.