

## Inevitability 931

### Chapter 931 Inquiry

Lumian stepped back two paces and sat down on the waiting bench outside the classroom across the hall.

His fingers moved deftly as he accessed Anderson Hood's Moments feed.

“Yesterday: Other people's failures are my successes.

“August 14: Everyone has different talents. Some have a talent for language, some for art, some for being ordinary.

“August 13: My roommate really died. He got Game Over in this game called life.

“August 12: Love is also a kind of war. Hunters can also cull. To Da Nizi.

“August 11: As long as you don't get angry, others will get angry.

“August 2: Friend, you really scrolled down this far? Respect my privacy a bit!”

Lumian continued scrolling down expressionlessly, with no further content afterwards. Then, he saw a familiar yet slightly different prompt:

“—Only 30 days of Moments are visible—”

Lumian chuckled, brought the phone close to his mouth, and sent Anderson a voice message, briefly introducing himself to see if Anderson would respond and whether his reply might have a hidden meaning.

After sitting for another two minutes, he saw someone approaching from the direction of the reception desk.

The person was wearing a white T-shirt, blue jeans, and light-colored sneakers. His short black hair was neatly combed, and he had deep brown eyes behind a pair of half-rimmed, light gold glasses. His facial features were gentle, with a hint of handsomeness. He was carrying a black shoulder bag and was the main target of Lumian and his team's journey into the dream—Zhou Mingrui, the dream manifestation of Mr. Fool.

Lumian looked up as if he had just noticed the footsteps, directing his gaze towards Zhou Mingrui.

He realized that the current Zhou Mingrui was more distinct from Gehrman Sparrow: both had originally come from the same Zhou Mingrui, but their paths had diverged significantly—one leaning towards a gentle and handsome style, the other emphasizing sharpness and coldness.

Zhou Mingrui noticed Lumian's gaze and looked in his direction.

Lumian smiled and nodded slightly.

Zhou Mingrui paused, unsure why this stranger was greeting him, but he politely nodded back.

Lumian withdrew his gaze and refocused his attention on the still-dark phone screen.

He noticed that while his reflection could still be considered handsome, it no longer had the kind of allure that would attract a celebrity scout's attention.

He had adjusted his appearance with Lie, toning down his looks to blend in more naturally.

Zhou Mingrui gave him a puzzled glance before turning and entering the Business English class.

After a few more minutes, Ai Nana, the principal of Dream Tutoring Classes, entered the Business English classroom with her lesson plan, while a man wearing a floral bow tie went to the Beginner English class to assist Anderson Hood.

Lumian glanced at the camera on the ceiling, then, like most of the parents waiting in different areas of the hallway, he spent time on his phone.

A few of the parents who knew each other chatted.

“My Zihan can have conversations in English now.”

“Really? Ours started Beginner classes too late; still working hard on it.”

“Look at that kid; he hasn't stopped talking.”

“Probably his first day of class. It happens. My Zihan was a bit unsettled at first too. This is when parents need to step in more.”

“...”

Lumian paid no attention to these conversations, focusing intently on the photos he had taken of the frost-covered blackboard, once again immersing himself in the conspiratorial world of analyzing details.

Occasionally, he also checked local news and trending videos to stay updated on major changes in the dream city.

The Beginner English class took two breaks, during which Ludwig took the opportunity to come over and replenish his food supplies, soothing his wounded spirit.

The Business English class only took one break, but Lumian didn't approach Zhou Mingrui, merely watching him from the corner of his eye as he briefly went to the restroom and returned.

The Business English class ended ten minutes earlier than the Beginner class, and Lumian quickly stood up, blocking Zhou Mingrui's path.

With a smile, he said, “Hello, how do you find the Business English class? I'm curious.”

Seeing the confusion on Zhou Mingrui's face, Lumian explained further, “I'm here for my kid's Beginner English class, but after listening in on your Business English class from outside, I thought it was pretty good. I'm considering joining too, so I won't waste time waiting.”

“Here with your kid?” Zhou Mingrui instinctively questioned.

No matter how he looked, this man appeared much younger than him, like a college student.

And he already has a kid?

“Yes, my son,” Lumian replied with a smile.

Son... a son old enough for a Beginner English class... Zhou Mingrui resisted the urge to twitch the corner of his mouth.

He had been out of college and in the workforce for two or three years now, and he didn't even have a girlfriend yet. Meanwhile, this guy who looked like a college student already had a four or five-year-old son!

Did he have a high school romance that led to a child?

Indeed, good-looking people have all the luck...

Zhou Mingrui sincerely replied, “Principal Ai is highly skilled, but the Business English class itself requires a certain foundation.”

He suspected that this young man across from him might have dropped out of high school to get married and never attended college, so he kindly reminded him that the Business English class required some background knowledge.

“I see...” Lumian nodded thoughtfully, then sincerely said, “Thank you.”

He took a step back and didn't ask Zhou Mingrui anything else.

For a first encounter, moderation was key!

Then, he would observe any subsequent developments.

Zhou Mingrui was curious but wasn't one to pry into others' private lives. He stood at the doors of different classrooms, observing.

After a while, the Beginner English class ended, and Lumian quickly handed Ludwig a lollipop, taking his hand and leading him out of Dream Tutoring Classes.

Ludwig looked to be around seven or eight years old. If Zhou Mingrui saw him, he would definitely be left with a deep impression—an eight-year-old son with a father who seemed to be in his early twenties. Someone in this family must have broken the law!

Leaving a deep impression on Mr. Fool's dream manifestation wasn't part of Lumian's plan today; it wouldn't help in ruling out options.

After buying a bunch of steamed buns and pickled vegetables to fill Ludwig's stomach, Lumian had a proper dinner with the boy and then checked into a cheap hotel.

He turned on the TV for Ludwig, randomly picked a cartoon, and scrolled his phone, his thumb hovering over Anderson Hood's WeChat avatar.

Ultimately, he didn't send another message to this “foreign teacher” who seemed to perceive the true nature of the dream, opting to see if Anderson would take the initiative to contact him and provide any clues.

In the rental apartment.

Franca was leaning against the bed, scrolling through her phone, but her thoughts weren't entirely focused on it. She was worried about how things were going on Lumian's end.

Formally engaging Zhou Mingrui could bring about unwanted changes!

Jenna felt the same, pacing back and forth in the room from time to time.

Suddenly, Franca sat up straight, frowning.

“I keep feeling like I've forgotten something...

“Is this my spiritual intuition reminding me?”

The next second, without needing divination, she quickly remembered what she had forgotten.

“Right! Today's the day for the Double Color Ball lottery draw!

“I completely forgot!”

She hurriedly checked the results, her mouth slowly opening in disbelief.

“We won?” Jenna asked, both curious and excited.

“We won... we won!” Franca was first dazed, then overjoyed. “We won the second prize which had twenty bets, with a total prize of more than 150,000 yuan.”

She then rubbed her face.

“Do I really have this kind of luck?”

“No, could Lumian's ability to influence fate still have this effect?”

“Over 150,000?” Jenna was stunned.

These past few days of living frugally had made her quite content with even a few thousand yuan, and now, all of a sudden, it was in the tens of thousands, with two digits in front of those zeros!

Franca got off the bed and started pacing.

“If we save a bit more, we could rent some of those intriguing items from Star Dream Provisions Store.”

“Shouldn't we first think about paying off the micro-loans?” Jenna reminded Franca.

“We haven't reached the due date yet.” Franca's excitement was tinged with worry.

“Winning such a large sum at once, won't it attract the lottery department's attention? Or even the Celestial Worthy's gaze...”

Before Jenna could respond, Franca continued speaking to herself.

“It's only a little over 100,000. What is that? The person who won the first prize had made more than thirty bets, each worth 5 million! We're just nibbling on the crumbs that slipped through someone else's fingers...”

In Binzhi Hotel.

After supper, Ludwig had fallen asleep on the other bed, while Lumian lay awake, leaning against the pillow, silently watching the dark screen and the room faintly illuminated by moonlight.

So far, Anderson hadn't sent him any messages, and directly interacting with Zhou Mingrui hadn't led to any noticeable abnormalities—his actions were unrestricted, and he hadn't been ejected from the dream.

As time ticked by, Lumian suddenly heard a booming thunderclap and saw the night sky outside the curtains briefly illuminated by a flash of silver lightning.

The thunder rumbled continuously, and rain poured down all night, only easing at dawn.

Lumian stayed awake the whole night, greeting the daylight with a clear mind.

He checked his phone and saw numerous reports of flooding and waterlogged areas, with some subway lines suspended for the day.

Is this symbolic? And if so, what does it symbolize? After stuffing Ludwig with a bunch of steamed buns, Lumian took him out for noodles nearby.

He ordered pea paste noodles for himself and tomato and egg noodles for Ludwig.

The peas were stewed until soft and tender, absorbing the sauce, making the noodles fragrant and flavorful. Lumian ordered two small bowls, ate one and a half, and left the remaining half for Ludwig.

After breakfast, he leisurely took public transportation back to the rental apartment with Ludwig.

Seeing that Lumian and Ludwig were fine, Franca, Jenna, and Anthony sighed in relief.

Lumian smiled and said, “The preliminary result of the experiment is that simple daytime contact with Mr. Fool's dream manifestation, Zhou Mingrui, without leaving a strong impression, doesn't attract the Celestial Worthy's attention, result in being ejected from the dream, or impose restrictions.

“Of course, maybe I've been deceived, and the Celestial Worthy is deliberately not targeting me, waiting for me to regroup with you before kicking us all out of the dream.”

#### Chapter 932 Dreamscape Tendencies

Hearing Lumian's words, Franca and the others couldn't help but tense up slightly, as if they were already witnessing the arrival of something terrifying.

Lumian pulled up a chair and sat down, casually scanning every corner of the room. With a smile playing at the corners of his mouth, he said, “I wonder what it feels like to be kicked out of a dream. The Major Arcana card holders didn't provide any details.

“Will it be like leaping out of the deep sea, or getting booted into an endless spiral tunnel...”

He mused about how he might be ejected from the dream, his tone light, as if he were simply describing what he had for breakfast.

Franca suddenly felt a bit sentimental.

“Are all you Hunters like this? Facing danger without fear, and even joking about it?”

“Of course, I'm scared, but what good is pure fear?” Lumian chuckled. “No matter how frightened I am inside, I'll act like it's no big deal, and I certainly won't let my words betray any weakness.”

Franca laughed.

“No wonder they say the toughest thing about a Hunter is their mouth.”

Both Lumian and Jenna turned to look at Franca without saying a word.

“...” Franca froze.

Damn it, I didn't mean to make a crude joke!

She quickly added, “In this dream city, they say that those who can keep their composure amid great turmoil are worthy of being generals!”

Lumian's lighthearted comments eased the tension in the group.

Then, Lumian smiled again.

“Getting kicked out of the dreamscape isn't scary. We can try again. What's frightening is if the Celestial Worthy restricts us, sends his subordinates, and kills us in the dream. Then there's nothing left.”

Jenna pondered his words and asked, “So you're saying that if things really go wrong, we should leave the dream early?”

“Pretty smart.” Lumian leaned back in his chair, took out his phone, and swiped the screen twice before stopping, staring at it for a long time without moving.

Franca glanced at the screen and noticed it displayed the WeChat friend request interface.

“Thinking of adding Mr. Fool's QQ and WeChat with an alternate account?” she guessed immediately.

Lumian smiled wryly. “Yeah, but I can't think of a good reason. I'd be rejected instantly.”

“Maybe I should use, ‘Do you want to learn the truth about the world and the secrets of supernatural powers?’ as a request?”

“Mr. Fool—or rather, Zhou Mingrui—right now is just an ordinary person who's recently taken the Assassin potion. He's felt the allure of supernatural power but doesn't know much about mysticism. He desperately needs guidance.”

Anthony, who had also taken a seat, shook his head.

“If Zhou Mingrui discovers on his own that you can teach him real occult knowledge, even if it costs him money, he might add you. But if you actively and enthusiastically try to guide him, it'll have the opposite effect.”

“Exactly.” Franca nodded emphatically. “He might block you immediately. He could even call the police, like, ‘Hello, officer? There’s someone here promoting superstitions. Might be a cult member.’”

Lumian fell silent, deep in thought, muttering to himself, “Maybe I should create a mystery-themed video account, build a reputation, and wait for Zhou Mingrui to come to me.

“But that would risk exposure to the Celestial Worthy’s gaze. If the account gets too popular, we’ll be targeted. If it’s too obscure, Mr. Fool won’t notice. Unless... we use targeted ads?”

Franca twitched slightly.

This guy’s adapting to the dream city and online society faster than I expected!

She spread her hands. “I don’t have the technical know-how.”

Lumian continued brainstorming. “Maybe we could stage a minor mysticism incident involving Mr. Fool’s friends or colleagues, then solve it ourselves. Word would get back to Zhou Mingrui through them.

“It’s also a way to test the Celestial Worthy’s surveillance patterns. But we’d need to prepare for the person responsible for this to be detected and targeted. We should have them move out in advance and maintain contact with us using more discreet methods.

“Hmm, it’s feasible. Worth a try.”

Instead of assigning a specific team member to carry out the plan, Lumian turned to Franca.

“Time to submit our resumes.”

To the Intis Group.

“Okay.” Franca pulled out her phone.

She’d already prepared the resumes.

She applied for an administrative role, while Lumian applied for security.

Among the four of them, Franca was the only one with formal qualifications, but her field was far removed from Zhou Mingrui’s, so she couldn’t apply to the same department. She had to choose a position that would allow frequent contact with him.

The other three? Anthony’s cover was that of a retired soldier, Jenna was an arts student majoring in drama, and Lumian was a high school dropout who had learned some martial arts.

It wasn’t that Madam Justice didn’t want to forge academic credentials that could be verified online; even if she did, they’d be exposed during the interview.

They wouldn’t be able to answer professional questions, and they might not even understand the questions!

For that reason, Franca chose to apply herself instead of sending Jenna, who, in theory, would have a better shot at an administrative position as an arts student.

After submitting the resumes, Franca looked at Lumian with a smile and asked, "I've got some good news. Can you guess what it is?"

"Stop! No eye color changes!"

Lumian pondered for a few seconds.

"Did we win the lottery?"

There weren't many things that could be considered good news and could be shared in front of Anthony, so it had to be that.

"Guess how much?" Franca wasn't disappointed that Lumian had guessed it right away.

Lumian couldn't help but laugh.

"Miss, you bought so many tickets with the same number, and I've already looked up the minimum for the second prize. What do you think? Can I guess how much you won?"

Franca smiled sheepishly and said, "That's not the point. The point is, didn't you notice anything strange?"

"When we fought the revived corpse, the hidden Marionettist didn't intervene. When we were outside Star Dream Provisions Store, someone warned us about technological methods of eavesdropping like devices and hidden cameras. And now, we've won a lottery ticket we staked twenty-plus times on.

"What's this called? Some force is helping us!"

Jenna, who had already discussed this with Franca, added, "We think it's an expression of Mr. Fool's subconscious tendencies within the dream. It's symbolic.

"Neither he nor the Celestial Worthy holds absolute dominance right now. During the day, he's stronger; at night, the Celestial Worthy is more powerful. But even at night, he's not entirely powerless."

Lumian nodded slowly.

"I did notice that fate thread was special but didn't think it would lead to a lottery win. Maybe 'special' itself was the hint from fate."

He found nothing in Franca and Jenna's theory that needed correction.

"Praise The Fool!" Franca stood up abruptly, placing her hand over her heart in a gesture of sincere reverence.

She continued, "Who's going to claim the prize today?"



She had already looked up the prize collection process online.

Lumian and Jenna both looked at Anthony, who nodded calmly.

If it were the three Demonesses, they would have to put on more disguises, but Anthony didn't need any.

Anthony nodded calmly. "I'll go."

At ten in the morning, when none of them had encountered any abnormalities, Lumian headed to the bedroom to catch up on sleep.

Franca drove the gray sedan, with Jenna, Anthony, and Ludwig in tow, following the navigation to the lottery center in the dream city.

As she drove, Franca gradually grew agitated, muttering, "Why do we hit a red light at every intersection?"

Jenna, in the passenger seat, pondered for a moment,

"Could this be the Celestial Worthy's dream tendency manifesting, symbolizing that our actions won't go smoothly?"

Franca calmed down, focusing more intently on her driving. She even relied on her Demoness's spiritual intuition to avoid accidents on the way to the lottery center, determined to avoid a "misadventure on the way."

Due to the unfortunate timing of red lights and traffic jams, they arrived nearly half an hour later than planned.

Before Franca could hand the lottery ticket to Anthony, she saw a figure leap from the rooftop of the lottery center and crash onto the ground with a sickening splat, blood pooling everywhere.

"Was that really necessary? All I won was the second prize..." Franca was dumbfounded.

Anthony got out of the car and mingled with the crowd to find out what had happened.

He returned shortly after and reported what he'd learned to his companions, "The person who jumped was the head of the lottery center. Fifteen minutes ago, the anti-corruption department showed up."

"To stop me from claiming the second prize, they sacrificed the head of the lottery center?" Franca didn't know what expression to make.

Undeterred, Franca sent Anthony into the center with the lottery ticket, but the staff informed him that prize claims were suspended for the day and to return tomorrow.

Back in the gray sedan, after a brief silence, Franca gritted her teeth. "I was this close to winning big, and now they won't let me cash in!

"We'll bring Lumian tomorrow. Maybe we'll need to influence fate!"

When they returned to the rental apartment, Lumian was already awake.

After Franca recounted their ordeal, she asked concernedly, “Why are you up before noon? Shouldn't you sleep a bit longer?”

Lumian chuckled. “I was woken up by a phone call.”

“Wow, you just got this number a few days ago, and you're already getting spam calls?” Franca joked knowingly.

Lumian shook his head. “No, it was from the Intis Group. They want me to come in for an interview tomorrow morning.”

“An interview call this quickly?” Franca blurted out in surprise.

Why haven't I gotten one yet?

My resume is way better than Lumian's!

Lumian took out his phone, unlocked the screen, and handed it to Franca. “Maybe this is why.”

Franca took the phone curiously, only to find a news article on the screen.

“During last night's thunderstorm, a car was struck by lightning, leaving one dead and three injured...”

“The deceased and injured were all security personnel from the Intis Group...”

Chapter 933 New Residence

“What the hell? Can it really be this much of a coincidence?” Franca blurted out after extracting the key points from the news article.

Yesterday afternoon, Lumian made his first contact with the dream manifestation of Mr. Fool, Zhou Mingrui, and last night, during a thunderstorm, the Intis Group's security department suddenly lost four people?

Was this a chain reaction caused by the contact, or was someone pulling the strings behind the scenes?

“I wonder if this is a good sign or a bad one...” Jenna whispered worriedly after reading the news.

Lumian was quite composed. “Whether it's good or bad, becoming employees of the Intis Group and Zhou Mingrui's colleagues is something we have to do. If there's no problem, we go; if there is, we still go!”

Since the interview with the Intis Group was imminent, Lumian and the others went out after lunch to find a real estate agent and started looking for a new place to stay.

According to their plan, the next steps would involve working individually or in pairs to avoid interference and minimize risk. That way, if one of them was compromised, the others wouldn't be dragged down.

During the observation phase, the risks were minimal, so they could act together. However, once they entered the contact and probing stages, every move could draw the Celestial Worthy's attention.

This time, Lumian and his team chose Dechuang Garden, a community district three bus stops away from their current location. Only five years old, the complex had new facilities, and the area boasted a mix of well-known brands and trendy stores.

They picked this place because the information provided by the Major Arcana card holders indicated that Luo Shan, an employee in the Intis Group's administrative department with a real-world counterpart, lived here.

She was also a target for contact and probing.

The lobby of the community district had a clean, bright, and slightly luxurious feel, with sunlight reflecting off the marble floor and a few gray sofas arranged tastefully.

“A one-bedroom apartment costs two thousand a month,” Jenna grumbled, heart aching, after the real estate agent and landlord left.

That's nearly as much as what they were paying for their current three-bedroom unit.

The rent differences between various locations and building ages were staggering!

“It's expensive, but we have to rent it!” Franca gritted her teeth.

Tomorrow, we must claim that lottery prize!

This will be another six thousand in expenses!

Although both the landlord and the real estate agent were men, Jenna hadn't used Charm during negotiations. Instead, she relied on Lie and makeup to make herself appear more ordinary. With only a bit of help from her Instigation ability, she managed to negotiate two hundred off the rent and a prepayment of one month.

Lumian nodded slightly, agreeing with Franca's attitude.

In his view, as long as it was within their abilities, any necessary expenses should be made. No matter how much it hurt, they couldn't be stingy!

As his gaze swept the lobby, he noticed a vending machine in the corner. The bottles inside had a particularly sleek design.

Recalling the hints in their information, Lumian walked over and saw that aside from a few displayed bottles, the rest of the items were in gacha boxes.

And the names of these new drinks were all too familiar:

Seer, Assassin, Bard, Sleepless...

“They're all potion names...” Franca followed him over, inhaling sharply. “Do you think they're the real thing?”

She also recalled the dossier's mention of the Fully Automated Vending Machine and Fully Automatic Wishing Machine.

Lumian studied the vending machine for a few seconds, then chuckled.

“The highest is only Sequence 7, and the selection isn't vast. If there were something like War Bishop or Demoness of Unaging, I'd be tempted to empty this machine for a few thousand.”

“Even if they were available, you couldn't digest them.” Franca pulled out her phone, ready to scan the QR code on the screen.

She eagerly said, “Let's see what I get.”

“Based on the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Convergence, you'll probably get something related to Demoness or Hunter.” Jenna calmly reminded her.

Franca laughed. “The point isn't what I get but pulling one out to test on a rat to see if it's a real potion.”

As she spoke, Franca completed the scan and paid five yuan.

With a click, a gacha box was ejected into the pickup slot.

Franca retrieved and opened it, revealing a bottle with a deep black surface and raised areas outlining a snarling wolf's face: “Sleepless!”

“Huh, one from the Evernight pathway?” Franca was surprised. “It's neither Hunter nor Demoness?”

She quickly figured out the reason.

“My Sequence isn't high enough, nor do I possess godhood. The convergence effect isn't that strong.”

After storing the Sleepless drink in her Traveler's Bag, Franca suddenly burst into laughter.

“You know, a Sleepless drink could probably be made with enough caffeine and theophylline!”

The group didn't linger by the vending machine. They crossed the lobby and headed towards Building 5—where their new apartment was located.

Before leaving the lobby, Lumian had a sudden impulse and instinctively glanced back at the vending machine.

The corner it occupied was now empty.

The vending machine that sold potion beverages had vanished!

“As expected...” He wasn't surprised at all.

Franca and the others followed his gaze and shared the feeling that the inevitable conclusion had finally arrived.

In the evening, after settling into Dechang Garden, Jenna sat in the lobby of Building 5, patiently waiting for their target to appear.

She didn't know how long it took, but eventually, through the glass entrance, she spotted the figure she'd been observing earlier.

Jenna stood up naturally, tucking a stray lock of hair behind her ear.

She paced back and forth until a twenty-plus girl walked in. She had brown hair and a pleasant face, wearing a light green dress and carrying a white handbag.

Jenna "coincidentally" found herself face-to-face with her and asked, feigning a shy and surprised expression, "Hello, do you know how to get to the activity room in this district?"

The girl in the green dress was indeed Luo Shan, Zhou Mingrui's colleague and an employee of the Intis Group's administrative department. She kindly pointed in a direction. "Go out the East Gate, and it's on the left."

"Thank you." Jenna expressed her gratitude sincerely with a slight smile.

She had removed her previous makeup and used Charm, suppressed to a Sequence 7 level, to enhance her appearance.

The smile, like a bloom of flowers, caught Luo Shan's eye.

Luo Shan blinked, showing an expression of admiration. "You're so beautiful..."

Before Jenna could modestly decline, Luo Shan asked enthusiastically, "Would you model for me?"

"I'm learning to paint in my spare time, and I'm pretty good at it. I especially love painting beautiful people and landscapes.

"I'll pay you!"

Painting... Jenna's temples throbbed, stirring unpleasant memories.

To her, a "painter" was a terrifying occupation.

She had once killed her painted self in a painting world.

Has Luo Shan in this dream been corrupted or influenced by that evil god of the Fantasy Association? Jenna instinctively shook her head.

"Sorry, I'm not interested in modeling at the moment."

"That's such a shame. I'm pretty good, you know. I'll show you my work sometime, and maybe you'll change your mind." Luo Shan pulled out her phone, smiling as she asked, "You just moved in, right? I've lived here for years and never met anyone as beautiful as you. Can I add you on WeChat?"

Jenna had planned to find an excuse to add Luo Shan on WeChat, but not this quickly. Moving this fast seemed off!

After a few seconds of deliberation, she said with hesitation, "I'm just a tenant."

"So what? I was a tenant too." Luo Shan didn't mind.

“Alright.” Jenna deliberately made herself appear a bit meek, someone who wasn't good at rejecting others' kindness or enthusiasm.

When adding her on WeChat, Jenna selected the “Chat Only” option.

This was to make it seem like she wasn't too willing to add strangers, avoiding giving the impression that she was actively seeking out Luo Shan.

After taking a walk around the activity room outside the East Gate and grabbing a meal at a nearby restaurant, Jenna noticed that it had grown dark.

She returned to the 23rd-floor apartment and locked the door.

For the next day or two, she would be staying there alone.

After turning on the star-shaped main light, Jenna's gaze swept over the gray and orange sofa, the minimalist yet stylish decor, the metallic sheen of the window frames, and the bed with light-colored sheets, just visible through the bedroom door.

Compared to the three-bedroom unit Lumian and the others were renting, this one-bedroom apartment was obviously newer, better furnished, and simpler in design yet still elegant.

Jenna walked towards the window, her fingers brushing over the white dining table, the textured wallpaper on the walls, the artistic table lamp, the tall vase with plastic flowers, and the cold edge of the window. She gazed outside.

Buildings of varying heights dotted the crisscrossing roads, with most windows glowing warmly, blending with the lights from the endless stream of cars on the streets below.

“How beautiful...” Jenna admired the view from above with heartfelt appreciation.

She returned to the sofa area, her steps a little lighter.

When we have more money, let's rent a place like this for Lumian, Franca, and the others!

Jenna sat down, peacefully waiting for any anomalies that might arise from her contact with Luo Shan.

Time ticked by as she scrolled through her phone.

She came across a review of the movie *The Great Pirate 3*: “Three beautiful female pirates surrounding him, each with some history of flirtation, yet he only took the dumb sailor with him? What the hell! I want my money back!”

Jenna was momentarily puzzled by the comment.

She didn't see anything wrong with that scene.

From the start, she knew how it would end: Gehrman Sparrow was an incarnation of Mr. Fool, his Oracle, who naturally met up with Mr. Fool's other Oracle, Danitz, before leaving together. Wasn't that the logical conclusion?

Besides, in reality, Gehrman Sparrow didn't end up with any of the three female Pirate Admirals!

Jenna felt the real flaw in that scene was how Danitz, the Oracle, didn't play a significant role, as if he were a mere side character.

After spending nearly two hours on her phone with no sign of anything unusual, Jenna checked the time and stood up, heading towards the bathroom to freshen up.

As soon as she switched on the bathroom light, a buzzing sound suddenly filled the room.

The entire apartment was plunged into darkness.

All the lights went out.

#### Chapter 934 Guardian

Faced with the sudden darkness, Jenna's first instinct was to conceal herself or hide in the shadows. But ultimately, she controlled herself and refrained from immediately displaying her Beyonder powers when an anomaly occurred after nightfall.

Utilizing her acting skills, she pretended to be an ordinary person. Despite being able to see clearly, she groped her way out of the bathroom and towards the window.

Upon reaching the living room, thanks to the light pollution seeping in from outside, the outlines of the coffee table, sofa, and other furniture became visible. Jenna immediately quickened her pace, reaching the window in seconds. Looking outside, she found that not only were the distant buildings of varying heights still brightly lit, but the other buildings in the same complex had not been completely engulfed by darkness either.

Jenna glanced downwards, feeling that the other floors seemed to have their lights on as well.

“Is it just my place with the problem? Hmm, a power outage?” Jenna took out her phone from her jeans pocket, intending to call Franca to ask how to handle this situation.

She then remembered that she was supposed to act independently for these two days and couldn't contact her teammates. So instead of making a call, she decided to search online.

Somewhat clumsily, she used voice-to-text to input the phrase “what to do if there's a power outage at home” and pressed the search option.

Then, remembering Franca's advice, she skipped the first few search results and went straight to the ones further down.

“First, check the fuse box during a power outage...”

“The steps are as follows...”

Jenna read for a while, her brow gradually furrowing.

This is so difficult!

These were all areas she didn't understand.

As she scrolled, she came across an answer: “Contact property management!”

“...” Jenna was stunned. “You can do that?”

She had registered with property management when she moved in that afternoon and added their number to her contacts list.

She tried calling, reported her room number and the issue. The on-duty property management staff immediately said that an engineering department employee would come to address the problem right away.

Soon after, the doorbell rang. The property management staff from the engineering department arrived on this floor, carrying a toolbox.

Upon seeing Jenna, the staff member's eyes lit up, and his attitude became quite enthusiastic.

Jenna, extremely vigilant, let him into the room.

She remained on guard for any anomalies.

After a quick inspection, the property staff said, "It was just a tripped circuit breaker."

With that, he flipped the switch, and light was instantly restored to the room.

That simple? Jenna didn't let her lack of knowledge show.

After seeing off the property staff and closing the door again, she couldn't help but remark, "Life in this dream city is so convenient... Just that the property management fees aren't cheap..."

Jenna quickly washed up and lay down on the bed, falling asleep like an ordinary person would, but that string in her spirit remained taut, never relaxing.

In her hazy state, her spiritual intuition brought a warning.

She suddenly became alert and found herself floating above the residential complex in her Spirit Body form.

Many spirits were wandering around, seemingly residents of Dechuang Garden. Layer upon layer of storms were frozen in the high air, completely enveloping this area, forming a semi-transparent barrier around the perimeter.

Near the barrier stood a figure—it was Luo Shan, wearing her light green casual dress with dyed brown hair. In front of Luo Shan, strange figures emerged one after another from the depths of darkness, constantly lunging at the frozen storms and semi-transparent barrier, trying to enter the "residential district".

Some of these figures were half-human, half-snake, with the upper body of an alluring woman and the lower body a thick python tail covered in slick scales. Some looked like miniature humans embedded between an owl's wings, growing sharp talons. Others were young, naked women with long hair, freely displaying their voluptuous figures...

Facing the invasion of these strange creatures, Luo Shan took out a rather thick oil painting brush and quickly began sketching patterns on the semi-transparent barrier.

She was drawing suns surrounded by flying birds.

As soon as this simple painting took shape, the suns within lit up with a golden, brilliant radiance, causing all the monsters to simultaneously close their eyes.



Then, each of the birds burst into golden flames, flying out of the semi-transparent barrier towards different monsters.

Seeing this scene, Jenna was shocked and deeply puzzled.

The current situation was quite different from what she had imagined.

Luo Shan seemed to be fighting against those strange creatures, preventing them from entering the spirit world corresponding to Dechuang Garden. She looked like a guardian.

But the abilities she displayed clearly belonged to a Painter, which was a boon from that evil god of the Fantasy Association!

Luo Shan should be cooperating with those strange creatures to invade the spirit world of the residential district, so why is she protecting the barrier instead?

Moreover, back at Xinhong District, neither I, Lumian, Franca, nor Anthony discovered anything like strange creatures invading... Is this a change brought about by Lumian's formal contact with Mr. Fool's dream manifestation, or does Dechuang Garden itself have some special properties? Amidst her confusion, seeing that Luo Shan was guarding steadily enough, Jenna suppressed the idea of offering help and pretended to wander aimlessly within the barrier like the astral projections of other residents.

This continued until daybreak.

At Xinhong District, in a rented apartment.

Franca, who had woken up early out of concern for Jenna, saw Lumian, who had been on night watch, bring a small cage from atop the shoe cabinet to the dining table. Inside was a gray and white rat.

Ludwig's presence had eradicated rats, cockroaches, and other such creatures from the apartment. To test the effects of the potion beverage, Lumian and the others had specifically wandered around the complex before dark yesterday and finally caught one.

Franca sat down and watched as Lumian put on gloves and grabbed the rat, which was cowering in fear under Ludwig's predatory gaze, and began to pour the Sleepless beverage into it.

The rat only took one sip before the rest of the drink flooded into its body, completely disregarding whether it could contain that much.

In the blink of an eye, the rat suddenly swelled up, its short gray-white fur standing on end like a hedgehog's quills and turning black.

In its armpits and across its chest and belly, flesh writhed as if new limbs were about to sprout.

Has it lost control? This thought flashed simultaneously through Lumian and Franca's minds.

Ludwig opened his mouth in delight and swallowed the mutated rat in one gulp.

Chew, chew, chew. He squinted his eyes in satisfaction.

"Is it okay to eat it like that?" Franca looked at Ludwig with some concern.

This food has Beyond characteristics!

Ludwig replied with a muffled voice, “No problem, digesting characteristics, for now, just storing them...”

Lumian nodded, picking up the now empty Sleepless drink bottle and said, “This really is a potion.”

Franca sighed emotively. “It's only at times like these that I truly feel this is a dream.”

Everyday life is too real!

Looking up at the morning sky, Franca carefully asked Lumian, “You'll go for the interview in the morning, and we'll go claim the lottery prize together in the afternoon?”

“You go claim it in the morning,” Lumian said with a smile, cutting off Franca before she could voice her question. “But I'll keep the lottery ticket.”

Franca was enlightened.

“You mean, the bad luck of difficulty in claiming the prize, or rather the dream's resistance to this, is focused on the ticket itself, not on us?”

“That makes sense. If the Celestial Worthy's resistance could precisely target us, we'd have been kicked out of the dream already.”

“I see, Anthony and I will go to the lottery center without the ticket, as if we're just visiting. When we get to the step where we need to provide the ticket, you'll send it over through the mirror world, completing the claim before any resistance event occurs?”

“Exactly, and this is also to verify whether your speculation about the dream's tendencies really exists, and if it does, what are the rules of its operation.” Lumian nodded lightly.

After breakfast, Lumian changed into a white shirt and black trousers, took the resume and other documents he had printed out yesterday, along with the lottery ticket, and took public transport to the Tech Building where the Intis Group was located. Franca drove Anthony and Ludwig to the lottery center.

In front of the Tech Building, Lumian looked up at the somewhat old-fashioned sixteen-story building, mixed in with the white-collar workers heading to work, and walked in openly.

His journey had been smooth, with no accidents like bus breakdowns or traffic jams due to carrying the lottery ticket—his destination was in the opposite direction from the lottery center.

Lumian didn't rush to go up for the interview. He came to the display board showing information for different floors and surveyed the company composition of this building.

The property rights of this building belonged to the Intis Group. The first to fifth floors were allocated to some subsidiaries of the Intis Group. The sixth to ninth floors were rented out to other companies. Half of the tenth floor belonged to the Intis Group's headquarters, while the other half was leased to Aurora Company. The eleventh and twelfth floors were also rented out. The thirteenth to fifteenth floors were other departments of the Intis Group's headquarters. The sixteenth floor was exclusively for Mr. Huang, the dream manifestation of Emperor Roselle.

It's indeed as Franca said, this building has obvious issues... The Intis Group could have recalled some departments and subsidiaries to occupy all sixteen floors, so why rent out some of them? Moreover, the headquarters' administrative and technical departments actually share a floor with the Aurora Company... In Franca's words, it's not right; a 120% chance of things being not right... Lumian pondered seriously.

When she got the information about this Tech Building, Franca had sensed the abnormality after just one look.

This didn't quite match the situation in her memory.

Lumian mulled it over for a dozen seconds, then silently said to himself, Is this a symbol?

Does this building symbolize the Intis Republic, with some floors being rented out symbolizing the infiltration of cults and different forces into the Intis Republic? Is this Mr. Fool's impression of the Intis Republic?

Lumian didn't linger too long. He withdrew his gaze and walked into the elevator area.

He occasionally glanced at the mirrored metal surface, waiting for Franca or Anthony to ring his phone a few times.

As the numbers indicating the elevator's floor slowly changed, someone else joined Lumian.

It was a very handsome and trendy middle-aged man with chestnut-dyed hair.

Mr. Huang? Lumian caught sight of the figure from the corner of his eye and recognized who it was.

It was the dream manifestation of Emperor Roselle, the boss of the Intis Group, Mr. Huang Tao, who often chose not to use his private elevator and instead joined the crowds in the employee elevator!

#### Chapter 935 Interview

Lumian didn't try to greet Huang Tao, still looking ahead until one of the elevators opened its doors.

The rush hour had already passed, and only a handful of people were waiting in the elevator area, entering in sequence.

Today, Lumian only wanted to succeed in the interview, hoping for no other incidents. He didn't plan to observe Mr. Huang or make further contact, so he chose the position furthest from Huang Tao, only politely nodding when their eyes met.

Mr. Huang was a celebrity among celebrities. It was impossible for those working or planning to work in this building not to recognize him. The others in the elevator had already greeted him in various ways, so Lumian couldn't completely ignore him.

Huang Tao, hands in his pockets, was casually chatting with a middle-aged man who seemed to be a department head from the Intis Group headquarters, showing no air of authority as a big boss.

As the elevator ascended, the others, including Lumian, got off at their respective floors, while Huang Tao went to the sixteenth floor.

His CEO office was actually near the administrative department on the tenth floor. The sixteenth floor had been arranged as a luxurious club for entertaining VIP guests and for his own relaxation.

There was even an indoor swimming pool there.

The beautiful secretary standing guard at the private elevator turned and said with a helpless smile,

“Mr. Huang, why are you competing with the employees for the elevator again?”

The four employee elevators generally couldn't reach the sixteenth floor, but Huang Tao could make them go up using card swipes, fingerprint recognition, or facial recognition.

Huang Tao didn't speak, smiling as he looked at the mature and beautiful female secretary, his gaze sweeping over every detail of her face.

The female secretary's heart trembled, and her voice lowered as she asked,

“Mr. Huang, is my makeup not done well?”

Huang Tao smiled.

“Beautiful things are worth appreciating.”

Without waiting for the secretary's response, he walked directly towards the swimming pool, silently saying to himself,

My aesthetic taste hasn't changed, yet I actually thought a man looked quite good just now...

Parking lot attached to the lottery center.

Franca, who was five minutes late due to traffic, turned to Anthony and said,

“No accidents so far.”

She didn't say things like “This time it's really going smoothly” or “We should be able to claim the prize successfully today.”

It's not too late to be happy when the money is in the account!

Anthony, who had been repeatedly educated by Franca about the prize-claiming process seven or eight times, nodded, opened the door, got out of the car, and walked towards the lottery center.

Franca, feeling a bit uneasy, tossed a lollipop to Ludwig.

“You wait for me in the car, don't go anywhere.”

“Mm!” Ludwig bit down on the lollipop, first gnawing off the outer wrapper and swallowing it.

Franca left the vehicle in a running state to ensure the air conditioning continued to work.

She got out of the car, muttering,

“This is not good behavior. Parents, please don't learn from this. Don't leave children alone in the car. It's dangerous if you take out the key, and even more dangerous if you don't...”

But with Ludwig left in the car, it wasn't the child who was in danger, but the car and the surrounding pedestrians.

Franca then used the shadows cast by the morning sun to sneak into the lottery center, hiding behind an obstruction not far from Anthony.

She listened intently to the conversation between Anthony and the staff member, holding her phone, ready to call and correct his statements at any moment.

The staff member said to Anthony,

“First prize can't be claimed yet, but other prizes can be.”

Is it really possible? The method of separating the ticket from the person really works... Or maybe the dream's tendency is actually targeting the person who won the first prize? Franca, hiding in the shadows, felt a surge of excitement as she listened.

After a few more exchanges, when the staff member asked for the lottery ticket, Anthony pretended to have something to do and took out his phone to call Lumian.

Tenth floor of the Tech Building, Intis Group headquarters, outside the “West Lognes” conference room.

Lumian sat on a chair with three other job applicants, waiting for the interview.

Suddenly, his phone rang.

Seeing that the caller was “An Ruide”, he rejected the call and put his right hand into his trouser pocket.

There was a mirror about half the size of a palm and the second-prize winning lottery ticket.

Lumian first wrapped the ticket in layers of spider silk, then formed a layer of frost on the outside of the silk, and finally ignited Flames of Destruction on the surface of the frost.

After quickly completing these preparations, he pressed the ticket into the mirror.

The lottery ticket immediately fell into a tunnel of void darkness, plummeting towards the corresponding mirror.

Along the way, the quietly burning black flames, constraining destruction, slightly illuminated the depths of the mirror world, as if warning all unknown entities that dared to set their sights on the lottery ticket.

When the ticket reached the mirror carried by Anthony, the Flames of Destruction had already extinguished, melting the frost and the spider silk.

The intact lottery ticket emerged from inside the mirror, just as Anthony's extended hand pressed against it.

Anthony took out this lottery ticket and handed it to the staff member.

After receiving it, the staff member's hand retracted slightly, and he muttered to himself,

“It's been kept in a fridge all this time?”

Tenth floor of the Tech Building, outside the West Lognes conference room.

Lumian quietly breathed a sigh of relief.

It seems now that the dream tendency interfering with our prize claiming indeed comes from the Celestial Worthy. If Mr. Fool thought this matter was problematic and wanted to prevent Franca from claiming the prize, with the lucky coin for positioning, he wouldn't have been bypassed so easily...

After a while, Lumian's phone vibrated a few times.

He picked it up and saw that a friend with the WeChat name "True Hidden Blade" had sent several messages in a row:

"Successfully claimed the prize!

"We're rich now!

"Oh, by the way, the first prize can't be claimed yet."

First prize can't be claimed yet... Lumian suddenly felt puzzled, Is the first prize winner an ally or an enemy? Does the dream's obstructing tendency come from the Celestial Worthy or Mr. Fool?

His previous deductions suddenly became less certain.

Because it was also possible that Mr. Fool was obstructing Franca's prize claiming, but the purpose was to affect the person who won the first prize. He and his team were just caught in the crossfire. Today, whether the lottery ticket was separated from the claimer or not, it would have succeeded anyway.

As Lumian pondered, from the corner of his eye, he saw Zhou Mingrui passing by from afar, but Zhou Mingrui didn't pay attention to the interview here, engrossed in discussing something with Luo Shan.

"Next, Li Ming," the interviewer called Lumian into the conference room at this time.

Lumian entered calmly, politely greeted the two interviewers, one male and one female, and sat down in the chair designated for interviewees.

After asking a few routine questions, the female interviewer, about thirty years old, looked Lumian over.

"Why did you drop out of high school?"

"Puppy love," Lumian answered without any shame.

"Puppy love shouldn't lead to dropping out, right?" the male interviewer, who had also experienced puppy love, asked puzzledly.

"We had a child," Lumian calmly added.

The two interviewers were momentarily speechless, both lowering their heads to write down a paragraph about this with their pens, for later evaluation reference.

Lumian's eyes suddenly took on a silver-black hue.

He discreetly extended both hands, touching and amplifying the streams of fate favorable to him.

The two interviewers then wrote down similar words:

“Decent image, height exceeds standard, young and strong, married and had a child early, needs to support a family, values money quite highly...”

After writing this, the female interviewer further asked,

“How old is your child?”

“7 years old,” Lumian answered truthfully.

“7 years old? Aren't you only about 22?” the male interviewer blurted out in surprise, “Didn't you say you had puppy love in high school?”

“I only said I dropped out of high school because of puppy love, not that the puppy love started in high school,” Lumian explained seriously. “I had a child in the third year of junior high. By the second year of high school, both my parents had passed away, and I needed to support myself, my girlfriend, and our child, so I had to drop out.”

The two interviewers looked at each other, not knowing how to evaluate this situation.

After about ten seconds, the male interviewer asked,

“Have you learned martial arts?”

“Do you need me to demonstrate?” Lumian inquired sincerely.

As he asked, his whole demeanor became slightly sharper.

“No need, I can sense it,” the male interviewer felt that the applicant looked quite capable of fighting.

After asking about expected salary and other questions, the female interviewer said to Lumian,

“That will be all. Wait for our notification. If you don't receive a call in the next day or two, it means you haven't passed.”

She spoke very frankly because this young man seemed approachable. Although he had dropped out of high school and had puppy love and a child early, he was very polite and had the looks for the job.

Lumian, who had lightly used Charm, stood up and politely said goodbye.

“La la la, la la la, I'm a little newspaper seller...”

Franca hummed a nursery rhyme cheerfully as she drove.

She had received the prize money of over 156,000 yuan, and because each bet didn't exceed 10,000 yuan, no tax was required.

Now, the team temporarily had no financial worries. Next, apart from contacting and probing relevant individuals, they would find ways to earn more money to rent one or two items from the Star Dream Provisions Store.

However, the idea of buying similar lottery tickets would have to be postponed for a while, as the hidden struggle behind winning and claiming prizes seemed quite intense!

Of course, they could continue to buy scratch cards, but they would have to frequently change lottery stores.

While envisioning the future, Franca's phone suddenly rang.

Wearing earphones, she chose to answer.

The call was from the human resources department of the Intis Group, asking Franca to come for an interview tomorrow morning.

Haha, when things go well, everything goes smoothly! Franca muttered to herself, extremely happy.

Later, she would have to use Lie and makeup techniques to make herself moderately less attractive, to avoid catching Mr. Huang's attention and being forced to resign and leave, unable to complete the task of contacting Zhou Mingrui.

But making herself less attractive didn't mean becoming truly ugly, just reducing her beauty to a certain extent. Otherwise, if the appearance-focused Mr. Huang happened to wander into the administrative department one day and felt this employee wasn't good-looking, he might fire her on the spot. What then?

Dechuang Garden, Building 5, 23rd floor.

Jenna, who hadn't encountered any abnormal situations all day, leaned against the window, watching Luo Shan return to her residence wearing a women's shirt, pencil skirt with stockings and high heels, change into a casual dress, and leave the building again carrying a white handbag.

## Chapter 936 Contradictions

Jenna didn't follow Luo Shan, knowing she would call a ride-hailing service. Whether using shadow stealth or invisibility, Jenna couldn't keep up with a car by running for long—unless the target encountered repeated traffic jams. In this respect, Demonesses excelled at bursts of speed but lacked endurance.

As for taking a taxi herself and having the driver follow the target, leaving aside whether a taxi would happen to pass by or if a booked ride could arrive within a minute, the biggest problem was finding a reasonable excuse.

Jenna believed that if Franca were here, with her understanding and familiarity with the dream city, she could easily find a convincing reason. But Jenna herself couldn't yet—she might say the wrong thing and cause the driver to call the police on the spot.

Of course, this problem could be solved using Charm, but after she got out of the car and the effect gradually faded, the driver would recall what happened and likely feel something was off, possibly



reporting it to the police. Jenna couldn't repeatedly Charm someone over such a small matter, making them fall in love with her for an extended period.

Leaving the window, Jenna made a bowl of noodles and enjoyed eating it completely, drinking all the soup.

When night truly fell, she took out the Ice Mirror Charm made by Lumian and held it in her palm.

As she uttered the word “mirror” in ancient Hermes, the mystical charm carved from frost lit up with a somewhat dim glow.

Jenna placed her hand on the mirror she had put on the coffee table earlier. Her entire body suddenly dematerialized and entered it.

Using the Ice Mirror Charm's ability to sense surrounding mirrors, she quickly locked onto a mirror-like object in Luo Shan's home and traversed through a dark, illusory tunnel.

She wanted to take advantage of Luo Shan being out to search her home from within the mirror, seeing if she could discover anything.

The reason she didn't do this while Luo Shan was at work during the day was that such probing had to be gradual. She first needed to confirm whether last evening's level of contact with Luo Shan would attract the Celestial Worthy's attention or provoke investigation by hostile forces.

After waiting a day and night, she now tentatively confirmed it wouldn't, so she could proceed with further contact and investigation.

Jenna didn't leave the dark, illusory area behind the mirror. Through the hard, cold glass, she surveyed Luo Shan's home.

This apartment was also a one-bedroom, with the same layout as the one she rented. She was currently positioned at the living room window immersed in the night.

Above the window, Jenna's face faintly and indistinctly appeared, her gaze sweeping over the coffee table, TV, refrigerator, and other items.

She quickly noticed easels, canvases, paper, palettes, paint tubes, various brushes, and small palette knives scattered in different places. Paintings hung on the walls—vibrant oil paintings, pencil sketches, and black and white freehand landscapes.

Jenna's gaze suddenly stopped on one of the oil paintings.

It depicted a strange half-human, half-snake creature—the upper body a voluptuous woman, the lower body a giant snake with lifelike scales.

The monster I saw last night... Jenna's heart tightened as she successively recognized other paintings depicting bizarre creatures she had seen invading the “spirit residential district” woven from psychic energy during her astral projection last night.

Almost simultaneously, she noticed a common element in these paintings: All the strange creatures were confined in iron-barred cages.

What does this represent? Does it symbolize these monsters being kept out of the world? This is close to the scene I saw during my astral projection walk last night... Did Luo Shan paint the iron-

barred cages, while the monsters came from someone else's hand? Or did Luo Shan paint these monsters but then lock them up? As Jenna pondered seriously, her gaze fell on a sketch.

It was Luo Shan's self-portrait, her face smiling, eyes spirited, quite charming.

For some reason, Jenna felt the Luo Shan in this self-portrait was intently observing the dark living room.

This made her abandon the idea of leaving the window glass and truly entering the room.

As Jenna continued observing, the fingerprint lock on the front door made a sound, and Luo Shan returned home carrying her white handbag.

After placing the handbag on the dining table, Luo Shan walked lightly to her sketch self-portrait and looked at it for a few seconds.

Then, she picked up a brush, dipped it in some silver paint, and walked towards the living room window.

Jenna had retreated a bit before the door opened, allowing the glass window reflecting the night to return completely to normal.

Luo Shan stared at the glass window for a while, then raised her brush and outlined a simple door on its surface.

In the area behind the mirror, Jenna suddenly saw a silver light shine on the hard glass surface, forming a very real, strange door connecting reality and the mirror world.

She immediately left a few Demoness black flames to burn away any residual traces, then traversed the illusory dark tunnel herself, returning to her rented place and emerging from the mirror.

Where Jenna had originally been hiding, the not-quite-real silver door was pushed open, and Luo Shan entered the area behind the mirror.

The girl in a casual long dress looked around with a gloomy expression, finding nothing unusual in the area.

Luo Shan gazed at the dense spider web-like tunnels in the mirror, unable to think of what to paint to utilize them.

After two or three minutes, she exited the area behind the mirror and wiped away the silver door outlined on the glass window's surface with her palm.

23rd floor, Room 3.

Jenna sat on the sofa and silently muttered to herself, Luo Shan is indeed a Beyonder of the Painter pathway... Has the deity worshiped by the Fantasy Association also infused some power?

Is He also at Mu Shu Hospital, or does He have His own stronghold?

Did He give Luo Shan Beyonder power to control this colleague of Zhou Mingrui and contact Mr. Fool's dream image?

Just as she thought of this, Jenna's phone on the coffee table began to vibrate.

Jenna picked it up and saw that Luo Shan had sent her a message with an image.

This girl, whose WeChat nickname was “Always Wanting to Go on Vacation”, said with a smiley face emoji: “This is my work, you can take a look.”

The content of that image was precisely the sketch self-portrait Jenna had seen earlier in Luo Shan's home.

Jenna opened the image and suddenly had the illusion that Luo Shan had come to life on her phone screen.

She had an idea and just left her phone on the coffee table without locking the screen.

Then, she stood up, walked to the bathroom, and closed the door.

As soon as Jenna sat on the toilet, she immediately turned her gaze to the vanity mirror.

Using a Demoness's mirror magic and the mirror on the coffee table, she peered at her phone's situation.

A few seconds later, Jenna saw the sketch portrait displayed on the screen seem to make a tiny movement. The Luo Shan outlined in pencil lines tentatively reached out a hand beyond the screen, then withdrew it.

As expected... Jenna pressed the toilet's flush button, washed her hands amid the rushing sound, and exited the bathroom.

She picked up her phone again, closed the image, and used voice-to-text to reply to Luo Shan: “It looks so lifelike!”

She hadn't checked Luo Shan's Moments last night because they were set to “Chat Only”.

“Want me to sketch you too?” Luo Shan quickly replied to Jenna's praise.

I wouldn't dare let you Painters draw me... Jenna silently muttered, using voice input to respond to Luo Shan: “No need, no need.”

She quickly changed the subject.

“You might not believe this, but I had a very strange dream yesterday, and you were in it.

“You seemed to be guarding the neighborhood, fighting a group of monsters, while we couldn't help at all.”

If a man had said something similar to her, Jenna would definitely think he was trying to flirt, feeling their relationship was too shallow for such intimate talk, clearly inappropriate. But now, relying on the fact of both being women, she dared to probe a little.

“Did I leave such a deep impression on you?” Luo Shan sent a “smug” emoji.

After a few seconds, she sent a second message: “Your dream is very interesting. I'm also very happy to play such a role in your dream—really, extremely happy.”

Just as Jenna was about to reply, Luo Shan sent a third message: “Because my father was a true guardian, as were his colleagues.”

Jenna suddenly recalled the background introduction of Luo Shan in the files:

In reality, Luo Shan's father was a Nighthawk of the Church of Evernight Goddess, who died in an accident brought about by a mystical case. His father's colleagues included the Nighthawk team captain Dunn corresponding to Officer Deng, Officer Deng's fiancée Miss Daly, Old Neil from Interpol, and others. They all died in disasters brought by Beyonder powers but also protected their corresponding cities.

One of Mr. Fool's incarnations is Klein Moretti, a member of that Nighthawk team back then, so when Mr. Fool subconsciously wove his dream image, did he add a similar background to Luo Shan, making her admire and aspire to the spirit of protection?

Although Luo Shan has now been influenced by that evil god of the Fantasy Association and received an illusory boon, has the protective obsession deep in her heart not been completely erased by the contamination? Is this the reason for her many contradictory behaviors currently?

Painting strange creatures on one hand, wanting to make them real, while adding cages to these invaders on the other... Constantly creating monsters on one hand, while guarding at the barrier on the other, not letting those monsters in...

Could this be considered Mr. Fool's subconscious projection onto Luo Shan fighting against the corruption of that evil god of the Fantasy Association?

If this is really the case, in a sense, this is a confrontation between a small part of Mr. Fool's subconscious and that evil god of the Fantasy Association... Jenna pondered with some understanding how to reply to Luo Shan.

After about ten seconds, she used voice input to say: "Have you ever created any paintings with a protective theme?"

It took Luo Shan twenty to thirty minutes to reply to this message: "Not yet. Failed."

If you haven't, then why did you fail? This answer is too contradictory... Jenna's pupils suddenly froze.

## Chapter 937 Another Night

Jenna held her phone, wanting to reply to Luo Shan several times, but not knowing what to say.

Although she felt she should respond with something, to avoid appearing impolite, her spiritual intuition told her that saying the wrong thing at this moment could lead to unexpected consequences she didn't want to face.

In the end, Jenna put down her phone and watched TV, pretending not to have noticed Luo Shan's new message.

She alternated between immersing herself in the TV drama's story and instinctively criticizing some of the actors' performances.

This continued until eleven o'clock, when Jenna took a shower and washed her hair. She froze her wet hair with frost, then let the frost crack and fall to the bathroom floor, quickly drying her thick long hair this way.

Finally, she used a hairdryer to make her hair a bit fluffier, lay down on the bed, turned off all the lights, and slowly drifted off to sleep.

She wasn't used to falling asleep quickly through Cogitation. She preferred to let her thoughts wander freely before sleep, allowing them to fly unrestrained, to reminisce, to imagine.

In the dark room, Jenna's breathing finally became long and gentle.

The screen of her phone placed beside her pillow suddenly lit up.

The lit screen showed no incoming calls, messages, or system updates to run.

It only lit up for two or three seconds before going dark again, not triggering Jenna's spiritual intuition.

Not long after, the phone screen lit up again, still without any information displayed.

After alternating between lighting up and going dark three or four times, Jenna's phone returned to normal, with no more unusual activity.

Jenna's astral body once again saw the layers of frozen storms and the semi-transparent barrier formed by the storms. She saw numerous human shadows wandering in the virtual image of Dechuang Garden district, and strange creatures trying to enter this "spirit world residential district".

Like last night, Luo Shan guarded the semi-transparent barrier, sometimes using painting to create different supernatural effects to repel invaders, sometimes creating totem-like objects combined with strange chanting to directly affect various strange creatures...

After a while, the strange creatures retreated into the darkness. Luo Shan sighed in relief and flew to the area where Jenna and other astral bodies were wandering.

Jenna tensed mentally, employing her acting skills to make her eyes show obvious bewilderment, losing their proper focus.

She allowed herself to be guided by spirituality, drifting about like a kite.

Luo Shan quietly observed her for twenty to thirty seconds, then descended beside her, following her unconscious "wandering" and said casually, "The monster with a human upper body and a python lower body is called Lamotte. They prey on humans, feeding on human spirits, internal organs, and blood..."

"The monsters that look like offspring of owls and humans are called Morna. They like to kill children, especially human children..."

"Those naked women and men are also monsters, subordinates of the Spirits of Lust, who like to suck the energy and life force of the opposite sex..."

"Those Spirit Bodies also murder humans because they particularly love to cook and eat human internal organs..."

After introducing them one by one, Luo Shan's voice became low, as if talking to herself, "Don't ask me why I know these things..."

Jenna maintained her performance but took note of these words.

Luo Shan exhaled slowly and deeply, with a sense of relief from finally speaking out some of the things weighing on her heart, no longer as tormented as before, and not having to worry about revealing her own secrets. She flew back to the barrier, waiting for a possible second wave of invaders.

At Xinhong District, in a rented apartment.

Franca looked at Ludwig, who had changed into bear pajamas, and asked curiously, “What abilities did you gain after eating that Sleepless mouse?”

Ludwig yawned. “I can see things clearly in pitch darkness, sense dangers hidden in the dark, and my spirituality and strength have increased...”

“You didn't gain the ability to be energetic with only two hours of sleep each day?”

Franca asked for confirmation.

Ludwig shook his head. “No.”

That's good, that's good. Sleepless hunger sounds terrifying... Not sleeping and being bored, you can only eat... Well, you could also preview, study, review... Franca sighed in relief without hiding it, then said thoughtfully to Ludwig, “Because you haven't digested the Beyonder characteristics and truly completed the absorption, your utilization of the Beyonder characteristics is still very rough, with great limitations?”

Ludwig nodded. “That should be the case.”

“Then do you think you'll still have these changes when you return to reality?” What Franca really wanted to ask was whether the dream potions, represented by the Sleepless drink, contained real Beyonder characteristics that had been “grafted” over.

Ludwig answered honestly, “I don't know.”

“If you get kicked out of the dream, remember to confirm this point,” Lumian reminded Ludwig.

The authenticity of potions was related to some of their subsequent strategies.

Ludwig reluctantly agreed.

Lumian thought for two seconds and asked again, “If I don't force you, compel you to stay in this dream, would you want to leave now, and would you be willing to enter again if you were kicked out of the dream?”

Ludwig hesitated for a moment and said, “I-I quite like it here.”

Your attitude wasn't like this before, especially after knowing you still have to study, do homework, and take exams constantly in the dream... Franca grumbled inwardly.

“What do you like about this place?” Lumian asked with interest.

Ludwig pondered seriously and said, “The food tastes good, and some of it is real. I can also watch cartoons, and all of you have become a bit nicer to me...”

As if we were terribly abusing you before... Franca didn't say this out loud.

After Ludwig entered the second bedroom and lay down on the bed, Lumian turned his head towards Franca and chuckled. “Still not asleep at this time?”

“Can't I be nervous? Tomorrow is the interview, the first real interview in my life, and I can't fail!” Franca paced back and forth anxiously, muttering, “Normal makeup won't do, but looking too ugly won't work either. How do I strike the right balance... When to use Charm during the interview, shallow Charm or full Charm, then have Anthony find a chance to Hypnotize the interviewers to make them forget about it... Thinking about all this keeps me awake...”

Lumian chuckled in response. “It's not a big deal if you fail; you can find other opportunities.

“Besides, if you're already thinking about having Anthony Hypnotize the interviewers to make them forget about being Charmed, why not have Anthony directly induce the interviewers to choose you?”

“Wouldn't that make me seem useless?” Franca mumbled quietly.

After Lumian's consolation, thinking about how her companions would back her up, she finally calmed some of her anxiety and nervousness. She clenched her fist and cheered herself on, “It's just a try, no big deal!

“It doesn't matter if I fail, failure is the mother of success!”

Seeing Franca's behavior, Lumian suddenly recalled his younger self.

He stood up, walked in front of Franca, and gave her a hug.

“Hey...” Franca was startled.

Lumian said with a smile, his voice slightly low, “Aurore used to often tell me, just go for it, whether you succeed or fail, I'll give you a hug...”

Franca's expression changed, she opened her mouth, then closed it.

After two seconds, she smiled and said, “Shouldn't I, as the older sister—no, older brother, be saying these words to you?”

She broke away from Lumian's embrace and chuckled.

“Next time, when you're nervous, I'll say this to you too, and I'll give you a hug.”

“A Hunter's nervousness won't show.” Lumian shrugged.

“Tch!” Franca made a disdainful sound and entered the master bedroom.

Rest well to face the interview!

The next morning, on the tenth floor of the Tech Building, outside the “White Maple” conference room.

Franca found that nearly twenty people had come for the interview, each a stylishly dressed, attractive female urbanite.

Of course, with a Demoness's beauty, even at just Sequence 7 level, she was much more beautiful than these women. But today, Franca wore slightly old-fashioned black-framed glasses, hiding her bright eyes, and had let down her ponytail to fall naturally, appearing less carefree.

She also used the Lie earring, combined with makeup techniques, to modify some details of her features, making herself look like a conservative, average-level beauty.

“Next, Luo Fu.”

Hearing her name, Franca straightened her fitted white women's shirt and loose-legged gray trousers, and walked into the White Maple conference room.

Inside the conference room were three interviewers, one man and two women, with an impressively beautiful woman sitting to the side.

That woman wore azure-colored contact lenses, her slightly curled long hair dyed chestnut brown. Her features had a somewhat exotic feel. She appeared to be only eighteen or nineteen years old, her face showing a hint of youthfulness, like a freshman or sophomore college student, yet she had an air of long-standing authority.

Princess Bernadette, Emperor Roselle's eldest daughter? No, now she's Miss Huang Beibei... Why has she come to observe Intis Group's interview? What does she want to do... What does she dislike, what does she like... As thoughts raced through her mind, Franca decided to abandon her plan to naturally Charm the interviewers later.

She answered the interviewers' questions normally according to her background setting, without standing out in any way or revealing her true personality.

After all candidates had been interviewed, the male interviewer looked towards Huang Beibei and asked flatteringly, “Young Miss, do you have any preferred candidates?”

“Just call me Miss Huang,” Huang Beibei said in an even tone. “Some of those interviewees were too showy, some dressed too revealingly, some put all their energy into makeup and dressing up. How can they work like that?”

But Mr. Huang likes that... The male interviewer didn't dare say this out loud.

Huang Beibei continued, “I choose the most conservative one, Luo Fu.”

“Got it.” The interviewer didn't dare oppose Miss Huang.

Even if Mr. Huang himself were here, he would say, “Right, right, right, my daughter has such good judgment!”

## Chapter 938 Salary

At noon, Zhang Qing, the deputy director of the administrative department who had overseen the earlier interview, walked out of the Tech Building, heading to a nearby mall to meet a friend.

Inside a gray sedan parked by the roadside, Franca turned her body slightly and nodded seriously at Anthony, her expression stern.



Anthony immediately got out of the car, mingled with the crowd, and hurriedly approached Zhang Qing from the side.

Bump! He “accidentally” bumped into the man in his thirties, causing Zhang Qing's phone to fall to the ground.

“Sorry, sorry,” Anthony apologized repeatedly, bending down to pick up the phone. He wiped it on his clothes a few times before handing it back to Zhang Qing.

Zhang Qing, with a dark expression, angrily scolded Anthony, “Are you blind? How can you walk like that?”

“Sorry, really sorry,” Anthony responded sincerely, with an attitude full of remorse.

Zhang Qing stared into Anthony's eyes, which had been adjusted to a deep brown color using the Lie earring, as if trying to determine whether the apology was genuine or just a perfunctory excuse.

After a few seconds, he took back his phone and suddenly felt a moment of confusion.

Zhang Qing shook his head and carefully inspected his phone, finding no significant damage.

“Forget it, just watch your step next time!” The deputy director of the administrative department of Intis Group's headquarters, showing some class, waved his phone dismissively, no longer pursuing the matter.

“Really, I'm sorry. How about I buy you an iced coffee to make up for it?” Anthony suggested, pointing to a coffee shop in the corner of the Tech Building's first floor.

Zhang Qing's expression softened. “No need. I'm in a hurry.”

“You look around my age; be more careful in the future,” Zhang Qing added before heading towards the mall at the intersection, braving the scorching sun.

Anthony noticed that there was a long line at the coffee shop, so he quickly ran into the convenience store next to the Tech Building's main entrance and bought a canned coffee.

Holding the coffee, he jogged to catch up with Zhang Qing. “I'm really sorry about earlier. This is to show my apology.”

He handed over the coffee.

Zhang Qing glanced at Anthony with some suspicion, met his eyes for a couple of seconds, then took the canned coffee and said, “You're pretty considerate.”

Zhang Qing didn't intend to drink the beverage from a stranger, but he felt it was acceptable to accept the apology.

Just as he took the coffee, Zhang Qing had another brief moment of confusion. Then, he felt that Anthony's apology was incredibly sincere, and with his proactive actions, combined with the fact that they seemed to be around the same age, Zhang Qing suddenly felt a sense of closeness.

Seeing this, Anthony felt a bit of relief.

This was his second attempt at Hypnosis, and it finally succeeded.

The first attempt was when he returned Zhang Qing's phone, but unfortunately, it failed.

After becoming a Sequence 6 Hypnotist, Anthony's Psychological Cue” or Hypnosis, no longer required the assistance of candles, extract, or other mediums. He only needed the target's attention to be genuinely focused on something, especially his own eyes, to open the door to their Body of Heart and Mind. If the process involved actions of giving and receiving, the effect would be even better, and the success rate would be higher.

Later, when Anthony advanced to Sequence 5, his application of Hypnosis improved even further.

But now, he was suppressed to Sequence 7 in the dream, so while he could still perform Hypnosis without the help of candles, extract, or pocket watches, the success rate was much lower. It was rare for him to fail when hypnotizing an ordinary person, so he had to urgently make up for it.

“I just finished an interview and was in a hurry to get to the next one, so I was rushing,” Anthony explained further.

“Just finished an interview?” Zhang Qing, who had been influenced, smiled and said, “I just finished one too, but I was the interviewer.”

“Are you with Intis Group?” Anthony pretended to be curious.

Seventy percent of the office workers coming out of the Tech Building were likely from Intis Group.

“Yes, with the headquarters. We were hiring for an administrative position.” Zhang Qing, for some reason, felt unusually relaxed and ended up saying what was on his mind, “We've chosen someone, but I don't know if Mr. Huang will reject it later. Although hiring for an administrative role doesn't require a report to him, the HR Director can decide, but he likes to visit the administrative department..”

At this point, Zhang Qing suddenly shut his mouth, realizing he shouldn't be gossiping about Mr. Huang in front of an outsider.

“Your boss, Mr. Huang? He's well-known nationwide,” Anthony said, pretending to suddenly realize.

Zhang Qing smiled.

“Yes, well, the person we hired this time doesn't quite fit Mr. Huang's aesthetic. Uh, mainly in style, though her figure is up to standard. But since Miss Huang personally selected her, it's a done deal.

“Actually, this is a good thing. Half of the employees in the administrative department spend their days focused on makeup and gossip, waiting for Mr. Huang to drop by. Sometimes, I feel like a head eunuch—no, the assistant to a head eunuch—managing the emperor's harem, like something out of Empresses in the Palace. But now, with a capable person joining, my stress will be much less. Otherwise, I'd consider that slacker Luo Shan a model worker..”

Talking about these things, Zhang Qing was full of complaints.

Anthony played along perfectly, letting Zhang Qing vent a bunch of frustrations, making him feel completely at ease.

After a while, Zhang Qing checked his watch.

“I have to go. I'm in a hurry.”

He hesitated whether to add Anthony on WeChat, thinking it was rare to meet someone he could chat with so effortlessly at this stage in life.

In the end, Zhang Qing decided not to, out of a sense of self-importance.

Anthony hesitated as well. Adding Zhang Qing on WeChat could provide significant convenience for Franca and Lumian's operations within Intis Group.

But in the end, Anthony refrained, feeling that it was unwise to tie all their connections to Intis Group, as it might be easier for the Celestial Worthy or His subordinates to catch them all at once.

After parting ways with Zhang Qing and waiting for him to walk away, Anthony turned and walked towards the gray sedan parked by the roadside.

He didn't get in but, as he approached the car, subtly raised his right hand and made an “OK” gesture.

Then, he walked past the gray sedan and headed towards another intersection.

From now on, he would have to stay alone until tomorrow.

This was because he had closely interacted with Zhang Qing and used Beyonder powers on him. And Zhang Qing was someone close to the dream manifestation of Mr. Fool, even if not directly.

Seeing Anthony's gesture, Franca slowly nodded, then calmly drove the gray sedan onto the road.

Once they were far from the Tech Building, she allowed herself a satisfied smile and, feeling triumphant, said to Lumian in the passenger seat, “The moment I saw Miss Huang in the conference room, I knew we had to scrap all our original plans.

“In a flash, I figured out exactly what to do!

“What do you call that? Quick thinking, the ability to adapt!”

After Franca finished boasting, Lumian chuckled and said, “Maybe that was the real Princess Bernadette, who entered the dream specifically to help you infiltrate Intis Group.”

“...” Franca quickly adjusted her mindset and said doubtfully, “Can Princess Bernadette actually enter the dream and control Huang Beibei's dream manifestation? How many times has she been kicked out?”

“The Major Arcana card holders are unsure. They only know that she was kicked out once after commissioning Zhou Mingrui to investigate the quality of Dream Tutoring Classes. Whether she had been kicked out before that or how many times, she hasn't told anyone,” Lumian recounted from the data. “What is certain is that the Major

Arcana card holders have synchronized our situation with her and believe she's trustworthy and willing to help."

Franca concurred succinctly, "I hope it's true. If Mr. Huang really has an eye for talent and comes to bother me, I can ask her to rein her dad in."

Neither Franca nor Lumian had any faith in Emperor Roselle's or his dream manifestation's restraint when it came to women.

Xinhong District, in the rented apartment, afternoon.

Lumian received a phone call.

After finishing the conversation, he turned to Franca with a smile and said, "I got the job!"

"Phew..." Franca exhaled in visible relief.

With this, even if her own job offer ended up being vetoed by Mr. Huang, they could still move forward with their plan to access the dream manifestation of Mr. Fool, Zhou Mingrui, through the Intis Group—though it would be more challenging.

Franca, now curious, asked, "What's the salary?"

"It's 3,500 yuan a month during probation, and once confirmed, it's 4,500. For now, it's just rotating between guarding the front and back entrances of the building, patrolling different floors, and monitoring the surveillance cameras. If I get assigned to a more important post in the security department, the pay will go up significantly," Lumian repeated the details from the call. "Plus, the job comes with two uniforms."

"The Intis Group is quite generous. Given the salary standards in this city, that's decent for a security job," Franca said, feeling happier now that their team would have a stable source of income.

Before she could start worrying about her own offer, her phone rang.

After listening for a few moments, Franca's smile slowly blossomed. She raised her free hand and gave Lumian a thumbs-up, signaling success.

Her offer had come through too!

"Yes, yes. No problem." After a series of confirmations, Franca's smile suddenly froze.

After she hung up, Lumian, who had heard the conversation clearly thanks to his Hunter's hearing, remained silent, waiting for her to speak.

With a wooden expression, Franca said, "The probation is also one month, with a salary of 6,000, and once confirmed, it's 7,000, plus an allowance for clothing. The Intis Group is indeed generous.

"But..."

She paused, her lips moving slightly, her expression turning a bit dazed, before continuing, "But there's a dress code: summer attire requires a blouse, skirt, stockings, and heels..."

"Can you opt out of that?" Lumian asked, keeping his laughter in check.

“No.” Franca shook her head. “This must be one of Mr. Huang's rules.”

After a moment of silence, she quietly asked, “Can I not go? Maybe Jenna can apply instead.”

“Do you think she'd get the job?” Lumian countered.

Franca thought for a few seconds and said, “No.”

Immediately, she gnashed her teeth. “I can't let Mr. Huang harass her!”

Dechuang Garden, Building 5, 23rd floor, Room 3.

Jenna stood by the window, contemplating whether to sneak into Luo Shan's room tonight for a more thorough search.

She hesitated for a while before deciding to wait. Luo Shan's current state was odd, still retaining her role as the neighborhood's guardian. Jenna worried that her actions might provoke Luo Shan, shattering that balance and causing her to lose her protective instincts entirely.

Even though Luo Shan was merely a dream image, Jenna couldn't bring herself to destroy the last traces of goodness within her.

That dedication to protection had touched her.

Maybe she can still be saved? Maybe, as long as she doesn't advance further and endure more severe pollution, she can retain her sense of self? Hmm, having a boon from an evil god doesn't necessarily mean turning bad, just like Lumian... Jenna mused as these thoughts crossed her mind.

#### Chapter 939 Virus

Jenna left the window and sat back on the couch, temporarily pushing thoughts of Luo Shan out of her mind.

If the interview went well today, Lumian or Franca would move in with her, and their group would proceed with subsequent actions in pairs—Ludwig was temporarily an accessory.

Sometimes Jenna hoped it would be Lumian, other times she prayed it would be Franca. During their time in the dream city, she wanted to spend more time with Franca, to encourage her, treat her better, and show how much she valued her, making her feel needed, not alone.

Though Jenna hadn't explicitly discussed this with Lumian, she felt they shared an unspoken understanding, as some of their daily behaviors were very similar.

As her thoughts wandered, Jenna suddenly chuckled at herself.

Actually, the best option would be for Lumian and Franca to live here together.

That way, Franca wouldn't lack the feeling of being needed, Lumian could do more, and Jenna would inevitably find herself wondering what Lumian and Franca were talking about, how they were interacting, whether they had grown closer, or if their relationship had evolved.

This made her feel a little bitter, a bit uncomfortable, but it also helped her further digest her Affliction potion.

When it came to causing others pain, Jenna's potion digestion was progressing rapidly thanks to Ludwig's presence; it wouldn't be long before she completed it. But when it came to her own pain, she still had a long way to go.

She murmured softly, "Imagination and suspicion are more painful than reality, and they eat at the soul even more."

This was a principle she had developed for her role-playing, more refined than "causing others pain" or "causing herself pain." If she were an evil Demoness, she could use this principle to subtly manipulate someone, appearing normal on the surface while fostering jealousy in their wife or girlfriend, gradually driving them both into a pit of pain.

Of course, she also hoped that Lumian and Franca's relationship would improve, that they could save each other to some extent.

She was all for it, as long as she wasn't left out.

Jenna gradually reined in her thoughts, unlocked her phone, and opened her photo gallery.

She looked at the sketch of a self-portrait Luo Shan had sent her yesterday, zoomed in on it, and selected the "Delete" button.

She felt that keeping a Painter's artwork on her phone was risky.

She hadn't deleted it yesterday because she wanted to see if anything would happen, but nothing did. However, she couldn't stay on alert about the picture on her phone forever; she still needed her phone to contact Lumian, Franca, and Anthony!

After deleting the photo, Jenna idly scrolled through her phone, flipping through news stories, novels, funny videos, and shopping tips.

Time passed quickly. Jenna straightened her back slightly and stretched without moving her hands.

She felt it might be a good time to message Franca and check on their situation. But before that, she cautiously checked her phone for any strange apps or statuses.

Suddenly, Jenna froze.

She found Luo Shan's sketch still sitting quietly in its original spot in the gallery, lifelike, with a smile on its lips and eyes full of spirit!

For a moment, Jenna felt uncertain.

Did I really delete it earlier?

Was I influenced and hallucinating?

Jenna quickly calmed herself down and deleted the photo again.

She spent the next few minutes staring at the gallery, watching to see if Luo Shan's sketch would reappear.

After a while, the phone screen naturally dimmed, and Jenna quickly reached out to reactivate it.

The photo with Luo Shan's sketch was back in its original spot.

Jenna confirmed there was a problem but didn't know how to solve it. She didn't even dare to use her phone to search for a solution online.

At that moment, she heard the doorbell ring.

Startled, Jenna quietly stepped behind the door and looked out through the peephole.

She saw Lumian and Franca.

With a sigh of relief, Jenna opened the door.

During this process, she remained somewhat cautious until Lumian and Franca appeared vividly before her eyes, with no warning from her spiritual intuition.

“Perfect timing,” Jenna said in a hushed voice.

Franca immediately showed concern, slipping the key card into her loose pants pocket as she walked into the room and asked in a serious tone, “What's going on?”

The elevator in the Dechuang Garden required a card to access, and the landlord had provided two cards. Jenna kept one, and Franca had the other.

Once Lumian closed the door and set up the Bottle of Fiction, Jenna carefully recounted everything about Luo Shan.

She concluded, “I remember the Purifiers telling me that one of their colleagues once encountered a painter undergoing mental treatment. The painter always claimed to Spirit Body walk at night, entering a space similar to but distinct from the spirit world, where they fought monsters and enemies trying to invade reality from that space, protecting the peace of their neighborhood.

“This is very similar to what I saw with my Astral Projection when I was asleep.”

“You mean Luo Shan's protective actions might just be another aspect of her corruption by the boon?” Franca understood what Jenna was getting at.

Jenna tersely acknowledged. “That was my initial guess. But after talking to Luo Shan and hearing her describe those monsters to my Astral Projection, I think she genuinely holds a belief in protection. This likely stems from Mr. Fool's subconscious perception and expectations of her.”

“So you think Luo Shan's protective behavior is not only a requirement of the boon but also a reflection of her humanity and will, a result of Mr. Fool's subconscious clashing with the Fantasy Association's evil god's influence?” Lumian's gaze flickered as he made the connection with his own experience.

Jenna nodded. “What I'm worried about now is that if our investigation agitates Luo Shan, it might push her into complete corruption, plunging her into the abyss. And that could also signify a small defeat for Mr. Fool in this particular matter. The loss is minor, but if enough minor losses accumulate, it could irreversibly tip the scales.”

Lumian agreed, “Our priority now is to delete that photo.”

“Right. If it stays on your phone, it's like a ticking time bomb,” Franca said as she took Jenna's phone and focused on trying to delete the sketch, but it stubbornly reappeared.

Franca frowned. “Do we really need to use one of those nuclear-option antivirus programs?”

Lumian glanced at the gallery on the phone, reached out, and tried to enter the screen to see if he could find Luo Shan's sketch in the world behind the screen and destroy it in both physical and mystical senses.

At that moment, Franca stopped him.

“Hold on. Even if you can enter the phone's internal world, that would be like facing Luo Shan's sketch head-on. It would likely alert Luo Shan, agitate her, and confirm our suspicions.”

Franca then smiled. “Didn't you add that Stiano on WeChat? Since he's a dream manifestation of a high-ranking member of the Church of Steam, and his WeChat nickname has ‘Information Technology’ in it, and he's studying at a university, maybe he knows how to delete a mystically infected photo.”

“I'll ask.” Lumian nodded thoughtfully.

He dismissed the Bottle of Fiction and had Jenna send Luo Shan's sketch to his WeChat.

Then, Lumian messaged Stiano:

“Can you help? My phone has a weird virus.”

Within seconds, Stiano, whose nickname was “Electric Power Energy and Information Technology,” replied: “Send me a screenshot.”

“He responded quickly. Does that mean he's interested in this kind of thing?” Franca muttered.

Lumian opened the photo, had Franca take a screenshot, and sent it to Stiano.

“This photo won't delete; it keeps reappearing.”

A moment later, “Electric Power and Information Technology” sent back a compressed file.

“There's a small program inside. Use it to load the image and delete it, and you should be fine.”

Is there really a way to solve this? Franca and Jenna both wondered as Lumian followed the instructions, extracting the file and launching a program called “Information Shredder.”

He used the program to load Luo Shan's sketch, pressed the built-in “Delete” button, and then exited the program, locked his phone for a couple of seconds, and reopened it.

He saw that the photo was gone from the gallery, not reappearing.

After testing it several times, Lumian sent the compressed file to Jenna.



Jenna also successfully deleted Luo Shan's sketch, without it returning to her gallery.

“He's really an expert...” Franca said, gazing at Lumian's WeChat contact, “Electric Power and Information Technology,” with genuine admiration.

Lumian used voice input to thank Stiano.

“Electric Power and Information Technology” replied: “This virus is worth studying. If you encounter similar problems again, feel free to contact me.”

Only with similar problems? Lumian mused as he sent a nodding emoji in response.

Finally, Jenna relaxed.

Suddenly, Franca hissed, “In modern society, or rather, in the dream city, some Sequences and Beyonders powers have become even more terrifying and harder to guard against...”

“As we've seen, if a Painter's artwork has mystical powers, then the corresponding photo can carry some of that too. And if it spreads online, seen and downloaded by thousands, how horrifying would that be...”

“Even the surveillance world we encountered before isn't something we'd face in reality.”

Before Lumian and Jenna could respond, Franca had another idea.

“Computer viruses and phone viruses are still viruses. Can they be controlled by a Demoness?”

“Probably not... But a higher Sequence of the Mystery Pryer pathway should definitely be able to.”

#### Chapter 940 Repaying the Loan

Lumian and Jenna could deeply relate to Franca's concerns.

They had encountered a Pixie in reality before, a higher Sequence Beyonders of the Painter pathway, but they had never imagined that something as simple as a photo sent through the information network could carry such terrifying supernatural power.

“Yes.” Jenna nodded. “We need to think more about what different pathways of Beyonders can achieve in the dream city that they couldn't in reality and prepare accordingly.”

Though the dream city suppressed all Beyonders powers to the level of Sequence 7, its unique characteristics and the details of its social functioning had brought about possibilities that exceeded their previous expectations.

Of course, Lumian and the others had already begun to discuss how certain Beyonders powers from the Demoness and Hunter pathways could interact with the dream city in unexpected ways.

However, they had yet to thoroughly explore the potential changes other pathways might undergo as a result.

Their current conclusions were:

The Hunter and Demoness pathways, which symbolized calamity, could exploit the unique features of the dream city positively, like using the abundance of mirrors to set up Mirror Mazes and cast different mirror spells at any time and place, or utilizing screens as a medium to access previously unreachable or nonexistent surveillance worlds and other dimensional spaces.

On the negative side, there were many more uses, which, as Franca put it, involved actions that would violate criminal laws, and not just any violations, but those that would warrant severe penalties. Examples included using the Internet to seduce others and spread pleasure, amplifying the destructive power of a Pyromaniac by triggering natural gas explosions, or leveraging the dense buildings and population to better and faster spread diseases, among others.

There were countless other more detailed and everyday uses as well.

After discussing this for a while, Lumian said to Jenna, "For now, Franca will stay here for a while. She can observe Luo Shan during the day and approach her as a colleague."

Jenna had already had a hunch, and she looked at Franca with a delighted expression, asking, "Have you joined the Intis Group?"

Franca smiled nonchalantly. "Of course."

She then recounted how she had prepared for the interview and how she had adjusted her plan upon seeing Miss Huang also participating.

"When do you both start officially?" Jenna asked with concern.

Franca replied with a hint of pride, "I have three days to sort out my affairs. Lumian has to report tomorrow."

The identity that Madam Justice had created for Franca was that of a 25-year-old white-collar worker with three years of experience, someone who had changed fields right after graduation and no longer worked in her original profession.

Franca had been worried that the work experience on her resume might be an issue since it was fabricated. However, when she pretended to be a background checker from a certain company and made a phone call, she was surprised to find that there really was someone named "Luo Fu" who matched her profile closely.

This led her to suspect that the company might be secretly connected to Madam Justice or other Major Arcana card holders in the dream city. Alternatively, before Madam Justice was expelled, she might have used her ability to weave the dream and pre-embedded some identities that could be utilized. After identifying the bearer of the five lucky coins, she might have painstakingly and time-consumingly altered the names, appearances, and other information.

"Anything you need to prepare?" Jenna asked, intending to find out if she could help in any way.

Franca's expression suddenly fell. "I need to buy a skirt, stockings, and high heels..."

It had been a long time since she had consumed the Witch potion, and the most she had worn was a skirt-pants combination. She had never actually worn a skirt, let alone the other items!

“It's part of the dress code,” Lumian explained on her behalf.

Jenna understood Franca's reluctance and, with a flicker of her eyes, said, “Have you forgotten the acting method? Forgotten the roles you've played before?”

“This is just another form of acting. It's not about digesting the potion this time but about getting close to Mr. Fool's dream manifestation and secretly dealing with the lurking subordinates of the Celestial Worthy and the evil gods' followers, thwarting their schemes.

“Remember, you're just acting.”

Franca had already made up her mind, and now she was just finding more reasons to justify it. So, Jenna's Instigation easily worked, and Franca's expression softened.

Jenna looked at her and smiled slightly. “I'll wear the same kind of outfit as you. If we're all dressed the same, there won't be any awkwardness or shame.”

Franca's eyes lit up. “Sure!”

Since she had decided to make this sacrifice, getting some perks was a welcome bonus!

Lumian stayed silent, letting Franca and Jenna continue their conversation, wary of being roped into making a similar promise.

He checked the time on his phone and reminded the two Demonesses, “Even though we didn't confront Luo Shan's sketch directly, the fact that we managed to delete that kind of photo itself is suspicious. If Luo Shan notices it's gone, she'll likely test us again or even take more drastic action. You two need to stay vigilant.”

“Mm, I was thinking the same thing just now,” Franca and Jenna responded almost in unison.

Lumian waved them off and left.

Once he was gone, Franca plopped down on the couch, relaxing as she smiled at Jenna.

“Let's go shopping for clothes tomorrow. We have money now; the lottery winnings are in!”

Jenna visibly breathed a sigh of relief at this news.

She cautiously suggested, “Should we pay off those micro loans first?”

She had seen many people in Quartier du Jardin Botanique and Le Marché du Quartier du Gentleman who borrowed from loan sharks, only to eventually destroy themselves and their families, dragging down the ones they loved most. So, even after entering the dream city, she was always extremely cautious when it came to taking out micro loans.

“I was hoping to save up some money to rent those good items from Star Dream Provisions Store...” Franca hesitated for two seconds before saying, “Fine, let's pay off the loans first. This might even increase the credit limit, which could come in handy at critical moments when we need to go all in.”

Before transmigrating, she had seen many cases of people borrowing micro loans and having their lives ruined as a result.

Now, as a fairly experienced Beyonder, she knew that money could be used to rent the magic mirror Arrodes, and she understood that in the dream city, money was likely a symbol representing valuable resources. The “offense-defense battle” that occurred during the prize redemption process further solidified this theory.

From this perspective, carrying outstanding micro loans indeed seemed risky. While it could serve as an emergency solution in the short term, dragging it out over a long period or relying on them to sustain daily life was not a wise choice.

Jenna also sat down on the couch and urged Franca to repay the online loan on the spot. She then transferred some money to her teammates to help them repay their loans as well.

“Only 120,000 left...” Franca sighed.

Jenna changed the subject, and the two of them chatted about their recent experiences, sharing their thoughts on daily life.

In the end, Jenna couldn't help but ask again, “How exactly can we awaken Mr. Fool?”

They had discussed this question many times before, but still had no concrete ideas. They could only observe and make contact, hoping to find clues and inspiration.

Franca shook her head and sighed.

“I don't know. The Major Arcana have tried everything they could think of, from directly reminding him of the existence of Beyonder powers to filming a movie that fully depicted his experiences in the hope of triggering his memory. None of it worked, and they were quickly expelled from the dream as a result...”

She hadn't known before, but now she understood that the movie they shot was *The Great Pirate 3*.

“It seems like no one has tried directly telling Zhou Mingrui the truth...” Jenna recalled.

“We're not sure if that would work, but it would certainly lead to being expelled from the dream quickly,” Franca replied with a self-deprecating smile. “Still, if we have enough attempts left, we could isolate someone and let them give it a shot.”

Late at night, the two Demonesses washed up and went to bed, each occupying a pillow.

They had already discussed how to deal with any probes Luo Shan might carry out next. Now, without saying much, they exchanged a glance and tacitly pulled up their blankets, closing their eyes in the cool air brought by the air conditioner.

Using ice to cool the room would be too easily detected by any potential watchers as an indication of Beyond powers.

Once again, Jenna's Astral Projection ventured out and saw many spirits wandering around, along with the blurry, illusory buildings, the frozen storm, and the semi-transparent barrier.

She didn't immediately check on Luo Shan's situation. Instead, she kept her eyes unfocused and her gaze blank, floating and moving back and forth naturally under the guidance of her spirituality.

During this process, she saw Franca, who was also in a similar state.

Finally, Jenna's body turned toward the semi-transparent barrier adjacent to the deep darkness.

There was no one there.

Luo Shan wasn't there fighting off the monsters trying to invade!

Jenna's heart tightened, but she maintained her previous state, continuing to wander in her Astral Projection.

After a while, her gaze naturally rose, and she saw Luo Shan.

Luo Shan, dressed in a pale yellow skirt-pants combination, was floating high up, quietly watching her and Franca with deep eyes. It was impossible to tell how long she had been watching.

Jenna's nerves instantly tightened, but thanks to her acting skills, she showed no signs of abnormality. Franca remained just as natural.

After a long, intense stare, Luo Shan flew toward the area where strange creatures were attempting to invade. From behind the semi-transparent barrier, she blocked their attacks and drove them back repeatedly.

Neither Franca nor Jenna let their guard down. Like background characters, they dutifully repeated simple actions and irregular movements.

Suddenly, both felt a sense of danger and woke up instantly from their sleep.

They smelled a sickening, foul odor and saw a pair of brown-yellow eyes staring at them from the night clinging to the ceiling.

In the darkness, a pair of wings covered in brown feathers, like those of a giant owl, spread out.