

## Inevitability 941

### Chapter 941 Recognition

It was a human being seemingly embedded within an owl. His eyes were perfectly round, with pupils that gleamed in brown and yellow, filled with undisguised malice.

Anyone who made eye contact with those eyes would inevitably experience a jumbled mind, tense emotions, and a soul-deep fear.

The half-owl, half-human abomination flapped its wings and, with a foul stench, swooped down toward Jenna and Franca, who were lying in bed.

Its mouth opened, releasing nearly tangible sound waves.

The sound waves struck the two Demonesses, passed through them, and hit the bedsheets, dispersing in all directions.

The bed was now empty. The air conditioner panel's screen, the glass top of the bedside table, and the dark glass embedded in the wardrobe doors all flickered with a dim, eerie light.

Behind the half-owl, half-human abomination, Franca's figure sprang up, clutching an almost invisible Wintry Blade and stabbing at the target with the speed of a gust of wind.

The transparent triangular spike pierced the abomination's body with precision, freezing it in an instant as if it had encountered an icy spell.

At the bedroom door, Jenna's figure appeared, holding a mirror that reflected the enemy's now stuttering movements.

With her other hand, she ignited a silent black flame and quickly ran it across the surface of the mirror.

The half-owl, half-human abomination ignited with an evil black flame from the inside out, but due to the Wintry Blade's effects, it couldn't even let out a wail or scream.

Soon, the abomination burned to ashes, leaving nothing behind.

“A type of spirit creature...” Franca understood that a Demoness's black flame mainly targeted spirituality and life, making it difficult to ignite a physical entity.

She gently descended from midair, as weightless as a feather.

Jenna quickly and quietly said, “That was a Morna, the creature from Luo Shan's painting, and the invader Luo Shan has been fighting.”

“Luo Shan's aggressive probe?” Franca responded without hesitation. “We need to go to Luo Shan's room now and try to subdue her as soon as possible, or we might be kicked out of the dream.”

Jenna had clearly considered this as well. She nodded and said, “You head to Luo Shan's room. I'll go to that spirit-world-like space. If necessary, I'll take Luo Shan's place and guard the barrier to prevent those invaders from getting through.”

She thought Luo Shan might not be in her room and could still be at the semi-transparent barrier. She was also worried that without Luo Shan's protection, the invaders might break through the defense line and cause a disaster.

Franca didn't waste time and, with a slight nod, slipped to the other side of the curtains, opened the master bedroom window, and jumped down to the 15th floor.

She didn't use the Ice Amulet to cross through the mirror world, fearing that Luo Shan, who had sensed Jenna's previous probe, might have set some traps afterward.

Franca's body was as light as a feather, yet the wind didn't push her off course. She landed precisely on Luo Shan's bedroom windowsill and pried open the window with a thin layer of frost.

Franca didn't rush in. Using the faint pre-dawn light, she quickly scanned the room.

The bed was empty, and paintings of various subjects hung everywhere.

Hiding? Franca pulled out a mirror from the Traveler's Bag.

She intended to divine the level of danger and create an illusion of herself using the mirrors inside and outside the room to see if she could lure Luo Shan into making a move.

In the spirit-world-like space shrouded by the frozen storm, Jenna's Astral Projection emerged and immediately looked toward the nearby semi-transparent barrier adjacent to the deep darkness.

Luo Shan wasn't there.

Mornas and other bizarre creatures were attacking the barrier, gradually thinning it and causing the frozen storm to show signs of disintegration.

Jenna looked around, scanning up and down, but still didn't spot Luo Shan.

She sighed inwardly and floated to the area under heavy assault by the monsters. Dangerous black flames and crystalline ice spears formed around her, shooting outward and smashing many of the invaders.

After holding the line for fifteen minutes, the monsters retreated into the depths of the darkness, their attack fully repelled.

After a while, sunlight began to filter into the area, and both the frozen storm and the wandering spirits and illusory buildings faded away.

Jenna's Astral Projection also returned to her body.

Morning had arrived.

Franca had already returned, her expression serious as she told Jenna, “I couldn't find Luo Shan. She either hid early or left.”

“Could she have hidden inside one of the paintings?” Jenna quickly suggested a possibility.

Franca gently shook her head in response. "I checked all the paintings. None of them had any human shadows, but the sketch portrait you mentioned is missing.

"There's a painting of a bridge that stretches from the edge of a cliff near the foreground over a bottomless dark abyss to another cliff in the distance, where there's a black forest.

"I suspect Luo Shan entered the painting and escaped into the black forest via the bridge. I couldn't pursue her, and I have a strong sense of danger about that painting. It probably wasn't painted by Luo Shan herself."

Jenna was about to say something when she suddenly realized. "We haven't been kicked out of the dream!"

"Nor have we been restricted," Franca noted, having kept an eye on this matter.

She mused, "Luo Shan was corrupted by that evil god from the Fantasy Association, not controlled by the Celestial Worthy. While that evil god might assist the Celestial Worthy in some matters, it certainly has His own agenda and won't help with everything.

"Perhaps He wants us to stay in the dream to hinder the Celestial Worthy at a critical moment, so it's concealing this matter?"

"This is what Lumian meant when he said that the goals of the evil gods and the Celestial Worthy sometimes align, but sometimes they don't," Jenna agreed with a nod. She then added, "It's also possible that Luo Shan hasn't been completely corrupted and hasn't fully fallen, choosing to deal with us on her own without informing that evil god."

"Struggling and resisting..." Franca sighed before saying, "Let's wait a bit longer and see what happens."

After waiting for more than an hour, the two Demonesses saw Luo Shan leave Building 5, dressed in the standard Intis Group administrative department uniform, heading off to work as usual. It seemed as if everything that happened last night had been just a dream.

Franca and Jenna still hadn't been kicked out of the dream, nor had they faced any restrictions.

"She must have hidden in that painting with the bridge," Franca concluded, withdrawing her gaze. "I'll send a message to Lumian, letting him know what happened last night and that we might be at risk of being kicked out of the dream soon."

"Won't that get him kicked out too?" Jenna worried that contacting Lumian now might leave a hidden danger.

Franca let out a soft laugh. "Isn't there that little app Stiano gave us? The 'Information Shredder.'

“I figure WeChat messages are also information, so they should be shreddable without leaving a trace. I'll shred the message when sending it, and Lumian will shred it when receiving it.

“Although I can't be sure the Information Shredder will definitely fool the Celestial Worthy's subconscious tracking, I think it's worth a try. If it really works as we hope, we'll have more room to maneuver in certain situations.”

Jenna pondered for a moment and then said, “Okay.”

Franca immediately composed a WeChat message, detailing Luo Shan's probe, her and Jenna's response, and the subsequent developments, finally reminding Lumian to use the Information Shredder to delete the chat record.

At the entrance of the Tech Building.

Lumian stood in the lobby, casually reading the message from Franca.

Then he made his way to the first-floor restroom, entered the men's section, and found a stall where he activated a Bottle of Fiction.

He then brought his phone close to his mouth and whispered, “You can try more probes. Franca should also start work as early as possible and get in touch with Zhou Mingrui.

“We can't rely entirely on Luo Shan's struggle or the selfishness of that evil god from the Fantasy Association. They could change their minds in half a day or a day, so you need to gather more information before that happens to prepare for the second or third time we enter the dream.”

After sending the message, Lumian waited a few seconds before pulling up the Information Shredder app and selecting the chat history with Franca and Jenna, then clicked delete.

Once he finished, he terminated the Bottle of Fiction and took the elevator to the 13th floor, where the Intis Group's security department was located.

After completing the necessary paperwork, he was led into the security department chief's office.

The office was large, almost the size of a private gym, with space for practicing boxing.

The security department chief was a foreigner with black hair and blue eyes, of medium height, and a muscular build that seemed understated but exuded power.

His name was Grimm. According to the Major Arcana card holders, he had been one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse who served Emperor Roselle faithfully. He died early, before he could witness Roselle's great achievements, and this was his dream manifestation.

“Have you practiced martial arts?” Grimm asked in broken local dialect.

“Yes.” Lumian nodded sincerely.

“Then let's have a sparring match,” Grimm pointed to the boxing ring on the other side of the office.

Still not in his security uniform, Lumian didn't refuse. He entered the ring and waited for Grimm to approach.

Grimm took off his light suit jacket, rolled up his sleeves, and stood in front of Lumian.

Suddenly, he threw a punch, the wind whistling as it cut through the air.

Lumian, appearing nonchalant, seemed to have anticipated the move. He sidestepped, avoiding the punch.

Snapping his waist back, he swiftly closed in on Grimm, unleashing a barrage of attacks with his elbows, fists, knees, and toes in a relentless onslaught.

Grimm maintained a tight guard, blocking Lumian's fast but underpowered strikes without allowing them to break his defense or land on his body.

Bang! Bang! Bang! After a few dozen seconds of furious assault, Lumian suddenly stepped back, panting heavily as he raised his hand in surrender.

“I'm out of strength.”

Of course, he couldn't knock out his department head on his first day at work. It wasn't just a matter of workplace etiquette—he was concerned that revealing his combat prowess would expose him as a Beyonder.

“Not bad.” Grimm nodded.

He walked straight to his desk.

As he passed Lumian, he suddenly lowered his voice as if not wanting the others waiting in the office to overhear and said, “Give my regards to the Mother.”

Mother... Lumian's pupils dilated.

Grimm then added in a hushed tone, “I've recognized you, Honorable Child of God.”

Chapter 942 Storm in a Teacup

Child of God... Has he sensed the Omebella bloodline in me? This dream of a great existence is truly remarkable, even capturing the smallest details... Lumian had now realized the truth, and he gently nodded in response to Grimm's greeting.

He turned and took a few steps, then said to Grimm, “Director, I'll be heading out first.”

Grimm's full title was “Director of Security for the Intis Group.”

Grimm's face broke into a satisfied smile as he gave a barely perceptible nod.

“I'm quite pleased with your fighting skills. You should now follow Team Lead Xu to familiarize yourself with the different positions and procedures in the security department.”

This was his way of subtly indicating to Xu Xinyang, the current team lead of Security Team 2 who was also in the office, that he valued this young man and did not want Xu to give him a hard time.

“Yes, Director.” Lumian responded with a slightly excited tone.

As he followed Xu Xinyang out of the office, his expression gradually settled, and thoughts about Grimm flashed through his mind.

As one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse who served Emperor Roselle, Grimm had died on a primitive island in the Fog Sea, but later seemed to have been corrupted by the power of the Great Mother, and his corpse had been revived in a strange state...

The Omebella bloodline in me can only be sensed by those directly created by the Great Mother or obtained Her boon, and they would have to be ones that lack the necessary intelligence to mistake me as a Child of God...

The Grimm in the dream city is constructed based on Mr. Fool's subconscious perception, so the Great Mother's corruption hidden within him is understandable, but why did he mistake me for a Child of God? Is it because, as a dream manifestation, he fundamentally lacks the necessary intelligence?

I wonder if the Great Mother has truly, covertly corrupted the dream Grimm and is using this connection to have him help with her own matters...

Lumian found the situation somewhat amusing.

He truly was like a detonator for calamity, having triggered some issues that the Major Arcana card holders had been unable to uncover, and he had only been here for a few days.

After changing into the navy-blue security uniform, Lumian was assigned by Security Team 2's Team Lead Xu Xinyang to guard the main entrance, with the primary duty of maintaining order in the lobby, preventing suspicious individuals from entering the building, and stopping delivery personnel from taking the elevator, instead directing them to leave packages in the drop-off area.

Lumian and two colleagues replaced the previous security guards responsible for these tasks, standing at the entrance with their backs ramrod straight.

At this time, it was still before the official start of the workday, and employees from various companies were still arriving.

Some of them had a surprised reaction.

The new security guard is quite good-looking...

Is he new?

With that appearance, he shouldn't be a security guard, he should go do live streaming, auditions, or be an extra in movies!

Soon, a male employee from an MCN company on the 7th floor and a female employee from an Intis Group subsidiary company consecutively walked up the stairs and headed toward the entrance.

The latter's eyes suddenly lit up.

The security guard at the door is so handsome...

She picked up her phone, intending to take a photo and share it with her best friends.

The former, on the other hand, immediately became excited.

A handsome security guard, not at all sleazy... Handsome... Security guard... That's great material! It might even become a hot topic and miraculously attract eyeballs!

While a level of handsomeness that would only be considered average or slightly above average for regular people, when contrasted with identities in the lower strata of society, such as security guards, beggars, farmers, herdsman, delivery workers, or construction laborers, it had the potential to generate a lot of attention online.

The MCN company employee quickly grabbed their phone, intending to record a video.

Sensing their actions, Lumian stepped forward, blocking their phones with his hand, and said sternly, "Please don't take photos of me without permission. Please respect others' privacy!"

The man and woman were both taken aback, not expecting to be stopped.

The male employee blurted out, "I think you have the potential to go viral, and I want to post a video online."

"No need." Lumian stopped them, not wanting to become an Internet celebrity.

The MCN company employee was dumbfounded.

Who doesn't want to go viral these days?

Lumian said seriously, "Did you happen to take any photos just now? If so, please delete them."

Hearing his words, Lumian felt the surrounding office workers all looking towards them, and the man and woman's faces flushed red, feeling a bit indignant.

"What right do you have to tell me to show you my phone? If you've got the guts, call the cops!" the woman retorted angrily.

The male MCN company employee suddenly had an idea and began shouting, "The security guard is beating me up! The security guard is trying to take my phone!"

I'll make you go viral in another way!

Lumian seemed amused by their actions, a smile appearing on his face.

This smile immediately calmed the man and woman, making them feel guilty for having yelled at someone so pleasant.

Maintaining his Charm, Lumian said sincerely, "I appreciate that you want me to go viral, but I really don't need that. Could you please delete the photos or video?"

The man and woman, forgetting about the people around them, dazedly showed Lumian their phones and deleted the photo and video in front of him.

"Thank you." Lumian kept smiling.

The man and woman reluctantly left for the elevators, glancing back at him every few steps.

Once they entered their own company and gradually regained their composure, one felt the security guard was handsome and cool, as well as polite, while the other suspected they might have awakened some remarkable inclination.

At the lobby entrance, many white-collar workers were looking towards Lumian due to the recent incident.

Lumian spotted Zhou Mingrui, who had changed into a dark polo shirt and was carrying a black briefcase.

Zhou Mingrui also seemed to recognize him, with a hint of surprise on his expression.

Lumian gave him a slight smile and gestured towards his security uniform.

Zhou Mingrui composed his expression and politely nodded.

Beneath his calm exterior, his heart was racing with shock and suspicion.

Why is it him, that young man who had an early romance and became a father at a young age?

How did he end up as a security guard at my company?

I only saw him a couple of days ago, and now he's a security guard... Isn't that too coincidental?

Is it because of the incident with the vending machine?

After becoming an Assassin, I feel like there's been someone secretly observing me...

Is this person trying to investigate my anomaly?

Zhou Mingrui maintained his usual expression as he stepped into the elevator, waiting for it.

He began to feel like he should resign and move away from his current residence, completely escaping the hidden observers...

The reason he hadn't done so before was that his acquisition of Beyonder powers had not been discovered, and the Intis Group's salary was quite plush, at the top tier in Yangdu. If he resigned, it would be very difficult to find a similar good job.

I'll observe for a little longer. If there really is a problem, I'll have to resign and move. If that doesn't work, I'll go look for jobs in Beijing or Shanghai...

Will it implicate my family and friends...

Thinking of this, Zhou Mingrui shuddered, not daring to imagine the worst-case scenario.

He could hide, but his family and friends couldn't.

And without any evidence, even calling the police might not do any good.

Reaching the 10th floor, Zhou Mingrui, still carrying his black briefcase, did not immediately head to the tech department, but instead turned towards the administrative department across the hall.

He wanted to find Luo Shan, the administrative staff member he was most familiar with, and ask about the new security guard.

Luo Shan was not at her desk, seeming to have gone to the restroom. After greeting a few other administrative staff, Zhou Mingrui made an excuse and stood by Luo Shan's desk, waiting for her.



His gaze swept over her desk, finding some familiar items but also a sense of unfamiliarity.

In addition to the cute decorations she had before, there were now strange paintings adorning the divider, the surface of her water cup, and the outer layer of her snack bags.

Next to the computer screen was an empty bottle of a beverage that seemed to have been kept as a decorative item due to its attractive design.

Zhou Mingrui's gaze landed on that beverage bottle, looking past the colorful and diverse abstract packaging to the two words that stood out: Painter.

Painter... Zhou Mingrui's eyes narrowed slightly.

“What are you looking at?” Luo Shan's voice suddenly came from behind him.

As an Assassin, he had failed to sense her approach in advance.

Zhou Mingrui quickly put on a smile and turned to face Luo Shan, acting casual.

“I have something to discuss with you.

“I saw a new security guard downstairs just now, and he was arguing with two people, saying they were taking photos of him without permission...”

Zhou Mingrui recounted the situation he had observed, without adding any speculation.

Finally, he asked, “Is he one of our company's security guards?”

“Yes, he just started today.” Luo Shan had a look of sudden realization. “I heard from Feifei in HR that they hired a really handsome security guard, and I was thinking of finding an excuse to go check out the security department.”

Lowering her voice, Luo Shan continued, “I'll tell you a secret, but don't tell anyone else—that security guard is only 22 years old and already has a child...”

I know that; he looks younger than his actual age... Zhou Mingrui murmured inwardly.

Luo Shan continued, “Guess how old the child is? 7 years old!”

“7 years old?” Zhou Mingrui doubted if he had heard correctly.

“7 years old, a junior high school student with a child. Tsk tsk.” Luo Shan clucked her tongue.

Having a child at 15; so he did ‘that’ at 14... He's right on the edge of being illegal and criminal... I don't know how old the mother is... Zhou Mingrui suddenly felt the new security guard might not be after him.

If he had some scheme, why would he expose such an earth-shattering and attention-grabbing background?

How would he be able to carry out his covert operations?

That doesn't fit the logic of trying to be discreet!

Luo Shan rambled on, finally saying, “But he has a very ordinary, average name—Li Ming.”

Li Ming... Why not Li Hua... Zhou Mingrui muttered as he left Luo Shan's desk and headed towards the exit of the administrative department.

He didn't look back, because he felt Luo Shan might also have some issues.

She might have already become a Painter.

Zhou Mingrui remembered Luo Shan previously bringing a bunch of beverages for everyone to draw, and at that time, he had drawn Instigator and fed it to the mushrooms, while Luo Shan had drunk Reporter.

Back then, he hadn't detected anything unusual about Luo Shan or the other colleagues who had drunk similar beverages in the office.

Now, the Painter beverage and the paintings that had appeared on Luo Shan's desk were making him suspicious.

#### Chapter 943 A New Fabrication

At 4:30 pm, Lumian gathered his personal belongings, changed out of the security uniform, and prepared to leave work.

This job surprisingly had an 8-hour shift system, but he would have to take turns on night shifts later.

It had to be said that Mr. Huang Tao was not too strict in his treatment of employees, and was quite generous with the pay, even if some departments did require frequent overtime, for which Mr. Huang still provided overtime pay, and at a fairly high standard. If the overtime was too late, there were also reimbursements for late-night snacks and transportation.

So, although Mr. Huang was notorious for his womanizing, and some of the company's policies were not very friendly or respectful towards certain female employees, there were still many who were eager to join the Intis Group.

Today, Lumian had been stationed at the main entrance, not assigned to patrol the floors or monitor the security cameras. He had only encountered Zhou Mingrui once in the morning, and had not seen him since.

He was not disappointed about this, nor was he impatient—the pace was just right.

He walked towards the bus stop, braving the scorching sun, and along the way, he took out his phone to send a voice message to Franca: “I think I've left a rather strong impression on Zhou Mingrui today. Although I didn't notice any obvious changes in his expression, if I were in his shoes, I would certainly suspect that it's not a coincidence that I just happened to meet him at Dream Tutoring Classes and then immediately started working at the Intis Group—that I must be tracking him, with some hidden, sinister purpose.

“Given Zhou Mingrui's caution and prudence, he will most likely think this way.

“Since he has formed such a deep impression, I won't be going back to Xinhong District tonight. I'll find a cheap motel to stay at, and see if there are any developments at night, whether it might lead to me being kicked out of the dream.”

“Ludwig is being taken care of by Anthony.”

Soon, True Hidden Blade replied: “Doesn't this risk Zhou Mingrui resigning? That's bound to be a contingency plan for such a cautious person.”

“I haven't even started the job yet! I've already bought several sets of clothes, and spent quite a bit of money!”

Sensing Franca's concern about the money potentially going to waste, Lumian chuckled and replied: “It shouldn't lead to that for now. I deliberately didn't go and tamper with my background information or try to forge a fake identity before the interview, so that my personal life would be outrageous enough to not seem like I'm coming to investigate.”

“Sometimes, a moderate degree of high-profile behavior can actually reduce others' suspicions of you.”

“And even if Zhou Mingrui does end up resigning, you can still join the company normally. There's no rule that says Intis Group employees can't investigate Zhou Mingrui's movements after work. Plus, the Intis Group has a lot of issues hidden, like Luo Shan, and Grimm. If we can uncover them, it might give us some inspiration to find a way to awaken Mr. Fool.”

He had informed Franca and the others about the problem with Grimm earlier that day.

Finally, Lumian added: “Remember to use the Information Shredder to delete the chat log.”

He reached the bus stop and carried out the operation to eliminate any traces.

Soon, the bus arrived. Since it was not the usual rush hour, there weren't many passengers.

Lumian relaxed a bit.

When he had taken the subway earlier, there had been an incident where a man had tried to grope him in the crowded environment, nearly having his wrist twisted off by Lumian.

He wasn't afraid of such things, he just found it annoying and a waste of his time and energy.

If he was experiencing this as a male, what would happen if he switched to his Demoness state?

Dechuang Garden.

Franca played Lumian's voice message so that Jenna could hear it.

As Jenna was using the Information Shredder to delete the chat log, she was either folding the new clothes one by one or hanging them directly in the closet.

They had gone to the garment wholesale market again that morning, but this time they chose higher quality and more expensive items, spending nearly two thousand.

After washing, “baking dry”, and ironing, the clothes were now ready to wear.

“I've already applied to start work tomorrow,” Franca said contemplatively as she helped fold the clothes.

In her previous life, she hadn't even finished university, never getting the chance to experience work. After her transmigration, she had lived off the original body's savings for a while, then by chance became an Assassin, bidding farewell to a regular job.

Jenna smiled. “Just remember that you're going there to investigate the issues and interact with Mr. Fool's dream manifestations, not because you actually want the job. Then you won't care about how others view your work performance.”

“Mm, I wonder when Zhou Mingrui will resign.” Franca chuckled. “I hope I can at least get one month's salary!”

After tidying up the clothes, the two Demonesses leaned against pillows on the bed and started scrolling on their phones.

After browsing for a while, Franca clicked her tongue and said, “Mr. Huang really does have a lot of rumors surrounding him...”

Huang Tao himself rarely posted anything on social media, but it was impossible to avoid the many ex-girlfriends he had had, numbering in the hundreds, of all kinds—from famous actresses and singers to wannabe Internet celebrities who wanted to gain attention by sharing their love stories with the big company president, and even some who staged and acted out their own stories, despite having no real connection to Huang Tao.

So no matter what Franca and the others browsed, they would come across stories about Mr. Huang and his women every now and then, reinforcing the impressions they had formed from Roselle's diary and the corresponding legends.

However, Franca still wanted to say that Mr. Huang was truly generous with his money, and would not set traps to reclaim the gifts he had given, or have the women thrown in jail.

It was precisely because Huang Tao's many mistresses were verifiably from the administrative department of the Intis Group that Franca had discovered during her job interview that not many people were applying for the positions for the sake of the job itself.

Of course, she herself was not applying for the job for the sake of the job either, but to get close to Mr. Fool's dream manifestation.

Before Jenna could respond, Franca sighed again. “I can't even imagine what the state of the administrative department at the Intis Group must be, and for Mr. Huang to be able to manage such an administrative department and still have the company thrive, he must be really capable...”

Jenna also shared some of the other rumors she had come across about Mr. Huang, and by 11 o'clock at night, the two Demonesses put down their phones, turned off the lights, and fell asleep.

They once again found themselves in the strange space shrouded by a frozen storm, seeing Luo Shan, now in casual attire, floating at the edge of the semi-transparent barrier, having just pushed back the invasion of the bizarre creatures into the dark depths. Luo Shan turned and looked at them.

Franca and Jenna's planning had anticipated this scenario, so they did not immediately make a move, but instead returned Luo Shan's gaze.

Their eyes met, and Luo Shan's low voice spoke, "Are you also people with Beyonder powers?"

"Are you here to investigate me?"

Her expression was full of wariness.

"Yes, and no." Franca responded in an ambiguous way.

Jenna used a touch of Charm and smiled amiably.

"You haven't left, and you're even willing to meet with us."

Luo Shan was silent for a few seconds before speaking, "Last night, I hid away, and discovered that you had taken my place, guarding the barrier and dealing with those monsters.

"I feel, I feel, that you must be a good person, and perhaps we can talk."

Before Jenna could respond, Luo Shan pressed on, "What do you mean, 'yes, and no'?"

Franca organized her thoughts and said seriously, "We want to approach you, to figure out the issues with you, and eliminate the hidden dangers, but we are not here to deal with you. The real target is not you."

Luo Shan became a bit confused.

Franca further explained, "We are from the future, using a time machine to return to the present, in order to find that Messiah."

"Messiah?" Luo Shan was bewildered.

What the hell are you talking about?

Franca nodded solemnly.

"In the not-too-distant future, humanity is under attack by evil forces and is on the verge of extinction. That's when a Messiah suddenly appears and rescues us, mitigating the dire situation.

"The evil forces, through some means, have created a time machine and sent some monster-disguised creatures to the present in this city, trying to eliminate the Messiah while they are still weak.

"Fortunately, the future Messiah detected this and found a way for us to also utilize the time machine.

"He exhausted the machine's last bit of power to send us back here, so that we can find and eliminate those monsters, and help the young Messiah overcome the interference and obstacles, truly awakening them.

"Our contact with you is actually to get closer to the young Messiah."

Jenna listened to Franca's narrative and was momentarily dumbfounded.

Although they had briefly discussed the general storyline beforehand, she never expected Franca to be able to present it so convincingly.

The story seemed to align quite well with the actual situation, yet there was a fundamental difference.

Luo Shan's expression fluctuated for a while, finding Franca's story too far-fetched to be true, yet strangely familiar.

As her thoughts raced, she suddenly recalled something and blurted out, "Is that future Messiah Zhou Mingrui?"

Franca was not startled. She had fabricated this story precisely to probe how much Luo Shan knew and what information she had access to.

She didn't expect Luo Shan to readily accept the ridiculous plot, but to accurately guess that the target was Zhou Mingrui.

Knowing she needs to deal with Mr. Fool's dream manifestations, but not understanding why? Jenna pondered and nodded, while Franca countered, "Why do you think so?"

Luo Shan's expression suddenly twisted in anguish.

"That voice, that voice made me give Zhou Mingrui the real Instigator beverage.

"That was the first time it made a clear demand, and promised to reward me with the Painter beverage afterwards.

"I felt having Beyonder powers was great at the time, and thought if Zhou Mingrui could also obtain them, it might not be too bad..."

At this point, Luo Shan's voice suddenly choked up.

"I-I didn't mean to harm him, I really didn't..."

Franca tensed up.

"Did Zhou Mingrui drink the Instigator potion, I mean, beverage?"

The information provided by the Major Arcana card holders did not mention Luo Shan giving Zhou Mingrui the Instigator beverage.

"I don't know." Luo Shan shook her head. "But there was some incident at the neighboring company that day, I'm not sure if it's related to this or not, I'm not sure..."

Seeing Luo Shan's mental state becoming unstable, Jenna changed the subject.

"How many times have you had those beverages?"

Chapter 944 "Shaman"

As Jenna asked the question, she glanced at Franca.

Franca nodded slightly.

Luo Shan recalled her past experiences, her emotions calming a bit. "Thrice."

"When and where was the first time?" Jenna asked in a friendly manner.

Luo Shan cast her gaze towards the slightly ethereal buildings around them, seeing the glass windows representing each household glimmering in the faint light from the frozen storm.

"It was in the lobby of the apartment complex. A vending machine suddenly appeared there, filled with beautifully designed beverages. I got a random one, and it turned out to be..."

Seeing Luo Shan suddenly pause, Franca, floating in front of a building, took a step forward with an eager expression, wanting to probe further.

Several Spirit Bodies of the apartment residents were wandering beside her, some wearing glasses, some with beautiful watches, some with shiny accessories on their clothes.

Jenna grabbed Franca's arm, giving her a look to not be hasty, and asked softly herself, "What did you get?"

"Shaman," Luo Shan named the beverage.

"Shaman... What abilities did it give you?" Jenna asked casually.

Luo Shan's mood lifted a bit.

"It allows me to choose an area and, by setting up totems and performing rituals, establish it as my domain. Then I can communicate with the sky, earth, water, trees, and creatures there, borrowing power from their spirituality to cast various spells."

That sounds so powerful... It's more impressive than any Sequence 9 I know of, almost on par with some Sequence 7 pathways... Jenna thought in amazement.

She curiously asked, "Can a Shaman only fight within their fixed domain? Can't they change territories?"

"They can change, but it requires a complex process and takes a long time, about three days," Luo Shan explained enthusiastically. "Outside their domain, a Shaman's power rapidly weakens, becoming weaker the further they are from their territory."

There are still significant limitations... Is the personal domain a manifestation of spatial authority? Jenna further inquired, "You guard the barrier to prevent those monsters from invading because they would destroy your domain?"

"That's part of it," Luo Shan sighed. "Another aspect is that a Shaman's power allows me to sense different spaces, higher worlds, letting my spirit make initial contact with them. This causes my soul to be noticed by the monsters, becoming a target for their invasion."

“This place you're in now is a unique space formed by the fusion of my spiritual world, the Shaman's domain concept, and the corresponding spirit world of Dechuang Garden. Those monsters want to use it as a stepping stone to invade reality, while also attacking my spirit and mind. If the barrier is breached, my soul will be controlled or even replaced by them.”

A Sequence 9 has such high risks? No wonder Shaman sounds so powerful... Xinhong District doesn't have this issue while Dechuang Garden does because a Shaman lives here... Does Shaman essentially act as a beacon for those monsters to invade reality? Jenna roughly understood the basic situation of the Shaman sequence.

Luo Shan added with a self-deprecating smile, “I'm no longer just a Shaman. Now, even if this barrier is breached, it won't affect me much.”

“The only problem is that everyone living in Dechuang Garden would be killed in their dreams, their abdomens torn open, their internal organs ripped out...”

As she spoke, Luo Shan fell silent.

After several seconds, she whispered, “This is my doing. I have to take responsibility...”

“If this wasn't a problem you brought about, and you encountered this situation, would you choose to guard the barrier in place of the Beyonder who fled?” Jenna deliberately used this question to reinforce Luo Shan's sense of guardianship.

Luo Shan's lips moved slightly. “I don't know... Maybe... Probably...”

Jenna didn't press Luo Shan for a definite answer, instead asking with concern, “You have to guard the barrier every night and still work during the day. Isn't it too exhausting?”

“No, you can think of this as my mind world or my dreamscape. Being busy here doesn't affect my physical rest. I just need to take a nap during the day,” Luo Shan smiled.

This state made her feel like the protagonist of a novel or comic, saving humanity in an inner world at night while continuing to be a corporate drone during the day.

Jenna exchanged another glance with Franca before asking, “What was the name of the second beverage you drank? Was it also from the vending machine?”

“The second one I drank was Reporter,” Luo Shan recalled. “Once, after being injured while guarding the barrier, I woke up feeling like I had a bad cold, coughing severely. I took a day off and went to Mushu Hospital. The doctor prescribed cough syrup, but the pharmacy gave me the Reporter beverage instead. I suddenly felt it must be the follow-up beverage to Shaman, so I didn't tell the pharmacist they'd given me the wrong medicine...”



“Later I drank Reporter again, but that one was fake. Among that batch of drinks, only the Instigator for Zhou Mingrui was real... I shouldn't have listened to that voice...”

Mentioning this incident, Luo Shan's expression twisted, seeming very regretful.

Jenna didn't immediately inquire about the origin of that voice, instead discussing less sensitive matters. “What are the abilities of Reporter?”

“Observing, investigating, and uncovering the truth of the world, along with extreme speed,” Luo Shan's mood became low again, speaking vaguely without giving specific examples.

She slowly raised both hands to cover her ears, mumbling as if in a trance, “After drinking the Reporter beverage, I sometimes felt I had changed. I began to hate this world, hate the details that didn't match my imagination, hate the people and things I was dissatisfied with. I wanted them all to explode, wanted to remake them, make everything here conform to my fantasies.

“And to remake these things, I had to pray for help from the truth of the world, from the true world above...”

“Then, I heard that voice...”

Jenna pursed her lips, changing the subject once again. “After Reporter is Painter, what comes after Painter?”

“After Painter should be Literature Enthusiast, someone skilled in imagination. I haven't gotten that one yet...” Luo Shan briefly answered Jenna's question, then moved her hands up to pull at her hair. “That voice made me malicious, fierce, cruel...”

As she spoke, Luo Shan suddenly burst out, crying as if her heart was being torn apart, “I don't want to be like this! I'm not this kind of person!”

Crystalline tears were already streaming down her cheeks.

Seeing this, Jenna floated closer and said in a gentle voice, “I know you're not that kind of person.

“That kind of person wouldn't continue to guard the barrier, preventing monsters from invading Dechuang Garden and killing the adults and children here...”

“No, many of these monsters were drawn by me. Originally, they weren't so powerful...” Luo Shan was still in painful self-reproach.

She tugged at the collar of her shirt, seeming unable to breathe.

Jenna moved in front of her and continued, “Everyone makes mistakes. The difference between good people and bad people is that good people know how to make amends...”

Suddenly, Luo Shan raised her head.

The top two buttons of her shirt were undone, clearly revealing the painting on her neck and chest.

The painting looked like a tattoo, a vibrant, colorful flower.

The flower suddenly enlarged, opening its petals in a spectral form, revealing dense teeth and hidden pus inside.

The invisible scent it had been emitting, combined with the manifestation of its true form, made Jenna freeze, too dizzy to control her body.

The colossal flower suddenly enveloped Jenna's body.

Seeing this, Luo Shan's face showed a cold smile, silently mouthing, "That fool is just right for making people like you let your guard down..."

Just then, there was a cracking sound, like a mirror shattering.

Luo Shan's expression changed slightly. She was about to attack Franca and find out where the real Jenna was, when her body suddenly stiffened, as if frozen.

Stuttering, her Astral Projection quickly faded, leaving this space.

In reality, in room 1502.

Franca stood by Luo Shan's bed, thrusting the Wintry Blade into the sleeping Luo Shan's shoulder.

She had already actively left that spirit world-like space earlier, when Luo Shan answered that she had drunk the beverage three times.

The version of her before and after that moment was created and manipulated by Jenna using mirror magic, utilizing the surrounding glass windows, eyeglass lenses, and other mirror-like objects!

Upon realizing that Luo Shan's mental state was truly unstable and that she had acted against Zhou Mingrui, Franca and Jenna decided to initiate their contingency plan: one creating illusions to occupy Luo Shan, the other returning to the real world to find Luo Shan's body and fundamentally control her!

This might also eliminate the risk of them being kicked out of the dream.

After stabbing Luo Shan with the Wintry Blade, Franca immediately took out her phone and called Anthony: "Come to Dechuang Garden, Building 5, Room 1502 now. We need you to treat someone with personality alteration due to corruption.

"Remember to bring Ludwig."

Although the current plan was for Jenna, Franca, and Lumian, Anthony to operate in two separate groups with minimal contact, deleting chat and call records with the Information Shredder at all times, urgent situations called for flexibility. Anthony was the only person they could trust to treat Luo Shan now.

Of course, Franca or Jenna could use repeated Charm to make Luo Shan fall in love with them for a period of time, following their will, and do the same to her altered personality, thus controlling the stability of her mental state. But with other options available, there was no need for such distortion, which might lead to a "the disease is cured, but the patient 'died'" outcome.

After Anthony replied "Understood", Franca sighed in relief and used invisible spider silk to bind Luo Shan, who was struggling to wake up.

Then, she removed her hair tie, letting her long hair cascade down and strangely extend, touching Luo Shan's body.

This brought about a stone-like rigidity at the points of contact.

Chapter 945 New Hostel?

After a while, Jenna also came to Room 1502 by climbing through the window, and saw Luo Shan controlled by three methods.

“Were the invading monsters driven back again?” Franca asked with concern.

Jenna tersely acknowledged.

“By the time dawn breaks, they should attack again.”

She then summarized the key points of what Luo Shan had said after Franca left that space.

Hearing that becoming a Shaman would cause one's own psyche to sense another space and higher realms, thereby attracting all sorts of strange creatures to invade, Franca couldn't help but mutter, “What kind of extraterrestrial demons is this...”

Jenna could understand every word Franca said, but did not grasp the specific meaning. However, she was already accustomed to Franca occasionally blurting out some strange words, especially after entering the dream city, so she did not ask further, and continued to relay the information she had gathered from Luo Shan.

As soon as she finished, the doorbell rang.

Jenna walked to the bedroom door, and cautiously, without approaching the main entrance, took out a hand mirror to reflect the view outside the peephole.

It was Anthony and only Ludwig's head visible in the image.

Jenna then opened the door, pointed to the bedroom, and said in a low voice, “The patient is inside.”

Anthony had driven himself to Dechuang Garden—after a few days of observation, he had learned how to drive to some extent.

Then, he “persuaded” the patrolling property management to help with parking and card swiping, and pressed the button for the 15th floor.

As Anthony walked towards the bedroom, Ludwig's gaze fell on the paintings Luo Shan had done.

“Can I... eat them?” he licked his lips, looking at Jenna with longing.

Jenna hadn't seen the child in several days, and seeing him still the same, she felt a warm affection and smiled.

“These are just paintings.”

“But they still represent a certain reality.” When it came to eating, Ludwig was always mature.

Jenna thought for two seconds and replied, "Okay."

She felt that these paintings were done by Luo Shan previously, and Luo Shan's condition at the time was unknown. There might be some contamination or hints left on the paintings. If Anthony managed to help Luo Shan recover, but the patient then saw some of her old paintings and the problem resurfaced, it would be a waste of her companions' efforts.

With the permission granted, Ludwig cheered and crumpled the unframed paintings, stuffing them into his mouth.

"Will eating these give you different qualities or abilities?" Jenna asked curiously.

Ludwig replied with a muffled voice, "I can temporarily acquire them, but the duration is very short, and I don't have anyone to deal with right now.

"Eating these is mainly to increase my spirituality limit..."

Jenna nodded in understanding, then looked at the back of Ludwig devouring the paintings and asked lightly,

"How have your studies been these past few days?"

Ludwig's back suddenly stiffened for a second.

Inside the bedroom.

Anthony had learned the full situation from Franca, lit some candles, and dripped on some pure dew.

After completing all the preparations, he signaled to Franca that she could retract the Wintry Blade.

Franca, who had been holding the almost invisible triangular spike for too long, had lost a lot of body temperature, and her lips were even a little pale. Upon hearing this, she hurriedly put the weapon back into the Traveler's Bag.

Of course, she was still far from becoming an undead. The negative effects of the Wintry Blade were also suppressed to Sequence 7 in the dream.

As the Wintry Blade was put away, Luo Shan's eyeballs rolled slightly under her eyelids and slowly opened.

She quickly recalled her ordeal, her expression twisting into an extremely hideous grimace.

Then she saw a pair of deep brown eyes, like a deep lake, and the flickering yellowish candlelight reflected in them.

At the same time, she smelled a soothing aroma.

Luo Shan immediately became calm.

Seeing this, Franca clicked to enlarge the words she had previously written on a memo and showed them to Anthony.

"Do not try to guide or suppress the corruption hidden in the patient's Beyonder powers. Trying to completely eradicate them is unrealistic and very dangerous for us now.

“What you need to do is treat the patient's mental problems, resolve the personality alteration, or reduce the impact of the personality alteration.

“If the patient relapses later, we will still handle it according to the current plan, until we find a way to thoroughly solve the corruption problem or find help.”

Anthony gave an almost imperceptible nod and began to communicate with Luo Shan's mental self. Franca stood by, ready to intervene if anything went wrong with Anthony.

After Ludwig finished eating even the paintings in the bedroom, leaving only the one with the bridge, precipice, abyss, and dark forest, Anthony finally completed the treatment, extinguished the candles, and led Ludwig out of the bedroom, leaving Room 1502.

After another dozen seconds, Luo Shan's long eyelashes fluttered, and her gaze gradually recovered its normalcy.

She looked at Franca and Jenna, her expression a mix of bewilderment and as if she understood everything, and said, “I feel like I've just woken up from a long nightmare...”

“We found a professional doctor and cured the problems caused by the corruption in the potion beverage you had to some extent. Of course, this is just the end of the first treatment course, and whether there will be more courses will depend on the situation,” Franca explained vaguely, retracting her long hair and releasing the invisible spider silk bindings.

“I knew you guys would help me, even if you can't cure me, you'll deal with that demon properly.” Luo Shan's spirit and mind had returned to the lively state before she drank the Reporter beverage. She smiled at Franca and said, “Actually, I noticed at the time that you seemed to have become less real, but I suppressed that feeling and deliberately didn't look at you again, so that she wouldn't find out.”

She? Luo Shan had already started referring to the altered personality as “she”... Hmm, that altered personality also called her that... The situation seems to be more serious than we had anticipated previously, but at least we managed to control her and provide treatment in time... Franca nodded with relief.

Jenna then asked curiously, “You could tell that eh... Luo Fu became a mirror illusion, relying on the Reporter's ability to observe, investigate, and uncover the true world, right?”

They had not fully understood the Painter pathway beforehand, and their plan almost failed.

“Yes,” Luo Shan quickly nodded, looking at Franca, “Your name is Luo Fu? It's so beautiful, even nicer than my name. You're all so beautiful!”

“We all have the surname Luo, maybe we were from the same family five hundred years ago,” Franca joked.

Jenna thought for a moment, looking at Luo Shan.

“Why do you go out every evening?”

“Sometimes I go to find tasty food to treat myself, sometimes I go shopping with friends, and sometimes...” At this point, Luo Shan's expression changed slightly, “Sometimes I go to a hostel that's still under renovation and hasn't opened yet. That's the latest demand of that voice. It said that after the hotel officially opens, it will bestow the Literature Enthusiast beverage on me.”

Hearing that the voice demanded opening a hotel, Franca and Jenna simultaneously thought of a term: Hostel!

For that evil god of the Fantasy Association, the concept of a hostel has strong symbolic meaning? Reflected in the dream, it's wanting to open a hotel? Franca asked, “Is the money for opening the motel from you, or is there another source?”

“I put in part of it, spending all my savings. Fortunately, I had already bought this apartment before, so the remaining money wasn't much. But lately I've been seriously considering mortgaging the house to get a loan and get the hotel open as soon as possible.” As she spoke, Luo Shan had a look of lingering fear on her face.

Money... opening a hotel requires money... That evil god of the Fantasy Association didn't directly give money, but made the bestowed offer it themselves... In Mr. Fool's dream city, money indeed has a strong symbolic meaning, and the evil gods have to worry about it... Franca asked thoughtfully, “You only put in part of it, who provided the rest?”

“It's people similar to me, but I haven't met them. Different people go to oversee the hotel renovation every day, not contacting each other, and they're not even on the shareholder list. I'm not on it either. The hotel is owned by someone called Anderson.”

“Anderson? Anderson Hood?” Franca and Jenna asked in unison.

“How do you know?” Luo Shan was surprised.

Franca laughed. “We know a lot more than you think.”

She asked for the name of the hostel, opened her phone, searched it, and then saw the name “Colorful Hostel” with Anderson Hood's name clearly listed as a shareholder.

This was too direct and conspicuous, making Franca feel that the other party was challenging or boasting about a successful prank.

This needs to be told to Lumian, let him probe Anderson... Speaking of which, he hasn't had an excuse to communicate with Anderson... The Hunter hasn't been sending messages either... Jenna took out her phone, hesitating whether to contact Lumian now.

She was afraid of waking the other party.

After a brief consideration, Jenna still chose to step out of the bedroom and use the text input method to report the information about the Colorful Hostel to Lumian.

She couldn't let the softness in her heart hinder the communication of key issues. Perhaps it wouldn't be long before dawn, and she and Franca would be kicked out of the dream!

Luo Shan followed and came to the living room.

She looked around and asked, "Where are my paintings?"

"We've taken care of them all," Jenna honestly expressed her previous concerns.

"Okay." Luo Shan nodded in agreement, then pointed to the remaining painting and said, "What about this one? It's the most dangerous!"

Seeing Franca and Jenna both looking at her, Luo Shan's expression changed a bit as she said,

"It's not a painting I did. Soon after I drank the Reporter potion, I suddenly received this painting, I don't know who sent it. I feel that the other me, in my heart, is also in the dark forest in this painting!"

"Conventional methods can't get rid of it." Jenna did not hide anything from Luo Shan.

Franca changed the subject thoughtfully. "What about the self-portrait?"

"When you deleted all the photos, it self-combusted, so I knew you had a problem," Luo Shan said, worried and curious.

Franca immediately became eager to try, pointing to the painting with elements like the dark forest, precipice, and bridge, and asked Luo Shan, "Have you tried taking a photo of this painting? Did anything unusual happen at the time?"

If she could take a photo and the abnormality wouldn't immediately manifest, they could consider using the Information Shredder to handle it!

"I couldn't, the photos would turn out blank. I even tried throwing it away, but it mysteriously came back," Luo Shan shook her head.

As expected... Franca was not too surprised by this. She pondered and said, "Can you give us this painting? We have a way to deal with it, but we'll have to wait until morning."

#### Chapter 946 Five-Star Rating

After returning to Room 2303 with that painting, Jenna asked Franca, "Should we have Lumian contact Stiano? He should be very interested in how to deal with this kind of painting."

The previous self-portrait sketch of Luo Shan could be photographed but not deleted, while this precipice bridge painting couldn't be photographed at all.

Franca pondered for a few seconds, then smiled and said, "That's one of the backup plans, but not the first choice."

“We currently only know that Stiano is interested in mystical photos that can spread online and can't be deleted. We're not sure if he has the desire to research paintings that can't be uploaded to the Internet. Besides, always owing favors to someone or owing too many may not be a good thing. It will have to be repaid eventually. There's no such thing as a free lunch.

“It's similar to taking out micro loans. Do it appropriately and moderately, and be prepared to repay from the beginning.”

With the analogy of micro loans, Jenna immediately accepted Franca's reasoning.

“Then how do we deal with it?” she asked.

Franca's smile widened.

“Wait until dawn, then take this painting to the Star Dream Provisions Store after the morning rush hour.”

“Huh?” Jenna couldn't quite follow Franca's train of thought.

Franca, who had read extensively before her transmigration, always had a broad perspective. She chuckled softly.

“When you get to the Star Dream Provisions Store, ask the shopkeeper if She'd buy items with mystical elements, and how much She would offer.

“If She's willing to buy it, this painting probably won't be able to come back on its own.”

Can it be done like this? Jenna thought carefully and found it quite feasible.

Based on the premise that only true gods could enter Mr. Fool's dream besides those who possessed medium items or had special connections, as well as details like contacting the Major Arcana card holders by sending letters to the Church of the Evernight Goddess's high-ranking deacons through the Star Dream Provisions Store, and the dim environment of the store itself, Lumian's team could actually guess the shopkeeper's identity in reality, but they tacitly agreed not to mention it.

If the shopkeeper agreed to buy this strange painting, it meant She definitely had a way to control the corresponding anomalies and truly transfer ownership to Her hands.

Moreover, wasn't it normal for a provisions store focusing on mystical elements to purchase items with mystical elements?

After pondering for a few seconds, Jenna asked, “What if the shopkeeper doesn't want to buy it?”

“Then ask if we can put this painting in Her store for consignment. We'll pay a storage fee and give Her a cut of the final sale. It's equivalent to paying Her to handle the anomaly,” Franca said with a smile. “If She still doesn't agree, we'll contact Stiano through Lumian. If Stiano doesn't accept, you can take advantage of the daytime to



find an opportunity to throw this painting at the police station. Remember to hide your identity well.”

At this point, Franca's expression suddenly turned serious. “My spiritual intuition and mystical experience tell me that your process of dealing with this painting won't be very smooth. There will be dangers. If the danger is too great, you should actively exit the dream. We still have two more chances later, there's no need to risk your life now.”

“Understood.” Jenna nodded solemnly.

Afterwards, she and Franca entered that strange space again and found Luo Shan once more guarding by the semi-transparent barrier, in quite good condition.

Franca revealed her identity as a colleague and started chatting casually with Luo Shan, learning more details about Zhou Mingrui's situation and which employees in various departments of the Intis Group were worth noting.

The results of the conversation left Franca and Jenna very satisfied, feeling that saving Luo Shan was not only a choice of emotion and stance but also a very correct decision in the course of completing their mission.

The information obtained from Luo Shan might have taken Franca and Lumian one or two months to slowly collect on their own.

“Later on, we'll need your help to convince Zhou Mingrui that he is the future messiah,” Franca said to Luo Shan with a flattering smile. “We can't directly tell him the truth; he definitely wouldn't believe it.”

“He absolutely wouldn't believe it. No normal person would. They would just think it's a prank or a scam,” Luo Shan nodded, then added in a small voice, “I don't fully believe it myself now...”

Franca pretended not to hear Luo Shan's mumbling and changed the subject.

When dawn broke and they automatically left that strange space, Franca got out of bed and took out the clothes she was going to wear today from the wardrobe, with a heavy expression.

Before Jenna could speak, she took the initiative to say,

“There's a good chance you'll encounter danger and anomalies today, so it's better to dress in a way that allows for easier movement.”

Jenna nodded lightly, not refusing.

Franca quickly finished washing up, took off her pajamas, and while slowly changing her clothes, she muttered, “After I became a Witch and adapted, sometimes when walking on the street, I would feel pleased and happy with people's gazes, thinking how charming I am. This might be a manifestation of a Demoness's narcissism.

“But there's a difference between enjoying it yourself and being forced by others. And if you're not used to it yourself, you definitely won't like it. It's like when I was in

school, they always required us to wear uniforms on Mondays, and there would always be some rebellious kids in each class who didn't want to, preferring to accept punishment instead..."

Franca rambled on, as if trying to distract herself and reduce the sense of embarrassment.

She bent over, clumsily putting on the most conservative flesh-colored stockings, stepped into brand new low-heeled shoes, then stood up and, using the full-length mirror embedded in the wardrobe, adjusted her blouse and light gray skirt that reached just above her knees.

Looking at herself in the mirror, Franca pursed her lips, feeling quite complex.

Jenna watched the whole time without saying a word.

After applying makeup that made her look a bit less attractive, tying up her long hair, putting on glasses, and picking up a high-quality branded replica handbag, Franca walked steadily towards the door.

Just before leaving, she turned back and smiled at Jenna.

"Thank you for not saying 'you look beautiful in this outfit' or 'this really suits you'. However, you seemed a little bit amazed just now. Hmm, that made me feel a bit better."

"Yes," Jenna returned with an affirming smile.

Franca waved and walked out the door.

She really is someone who's good at self-regulating her emotions and staying optimistic... Jenna sighed inwardly, turning her gaze away and patiently waiting for the morning rush hour to pass.

Close to 9 o'clock, she carried the painting and left Building 5, coming to the residential district's lobby.

She chose to take a ride-hailing car to the Star Dream Provisions Store instead of taking the subway and then switching to a bus. She was afraid that the painting's anomalies might affect more people. If that happened, the latent dangers might not do much to her, but the widespread commotion could bring about more serious problems.

After a while, Jenna walked out of the lobby and came to the roadside, seeing a white sedan already waiting for her.

After opening the car door with one hand, she glanced towards the driver's seat, confirming that the driver wasn't wearing a monocle and had no other obvious features. It was someone she didn't recognize and didn't trigger her spiritual intuition.

Jenna sat in the back, placing the painting on her lap and holding it to her chest.

After verifying the last digits of her phone number, the driver started the vehicle.

Jenna was highly focused, vigilantly guarding against possible accidents.

Suddenly, she felt her breathing become difficult, while there was no anomaly around her.

It was as if another her was being pushed into the sea, and the feeling of drowning was transmitted through a mystical connection.

Without hesitation, Jenna took out a mirror, plucked two strands of hair, trying to stick them to the mirror's surface and burn them with a Demoness's black flames.

She was attempting to cast a black magic related to the Mirror Substitution, actively trying to transfer that mystical connection to the mirror.

At this moment, Jenna had a hallucination. She saw gently swaying emerald-green waves and her own hands flailing uncontrollably, as if struggling to swim to the surface.

However, there was a force pulling at her legs, trying to drag her to the bottom of the sea.

Almost simultaneously, a pale, swollen hand reached out from nowhere and covered her mouth.

“Mmph, mmph, mmph...”

“Glug, glug, glug...”

Jenna showed obvious signs of drowning, her nose, respiratory tract, and lungs becoming extremely uncomfortable.

She wanted to use her substitutes but couldn't sense those mirrors. She seemed to be separated from them in different worlds—even the mystical connection cut off.

Suddenly, silent black flames flowed out from Jenna's eyeballs, nostrils, mouth, ears, and other places. These black flames burned her body from the inside out, burning all the invisible things trying to influence her.

Outside the black flames, frost condensed, encasing Jenna in a thick ball of ice and snow.

On the surface of the sphere, countless invisible spider silk retracted, wrapping layer by layer, forming a huge “cocoon”.

Jenna finally no longer felt the agony of nearly drowning, but she still couldn't sense her body or substitutes.

The next second, she found herself walking on a bridge.

On the other side of the bridge was a steep cliff and a dark forest at the far end of the cliff.

Have I entered that painting? Jenna tried to turn around and return to the starting point of the bridge, to escape the world inside the painting from the entrance, but she couldn't control her body and watched helplessly as “she” continued forward along the bridge.

At this time, two people walked out of the dark forest.

One was Luo Shan with a malicious face, and the other was Jenna herself.

A Jenna with a seductive smile!

Crack!

The bridge suddenly broke, and Jenna fell towards the dark abyss whose bottom couldn't be seen.

Great fear and despair invaded Jenna's mind, her consciousness rapidly blurring, unable to save herself.

She seemed to already see the image of herself smashed into bloody pieces.

Taking advantage of her consciousness not yet completely falling into darkness, before the unimaginable pain arrived, she mustered her last clarity, about to actively exit the dream.

But it didn't work.

It didn't work!

Useless... Jenna's gaze suddenly froze.

She didn't give up; she was still trying to save herself, gritting her teeth, struggling to regain control of her body to use the Demoness's feather-fall technique.

At this moment, a ray of sunlight shone into the dark abyss, illuminating the cliff high above.

All the scenes before Jenna's eyes instantly shattered and fragmented in the brilliant sunlight.

She suddenly opened her eyes and found herself still sitting in the car, hugging that painting.

“We've arrived,” the driver turned halfway, reminding Jenna.

I arrived so quickly? Jenna felt as if she had been walking for an entire morning in a stuffy environment, her clothes soaked with sweat.

She looked out the window somewhat bewilderedly and saw the Star Dream Provisions Store.

Jenna instinctively pushed open the door and got out of the car, wanting to rush into that shop to avoid other possible anomalies that might come later.

“Remember to give me a five-star rating!” the driver called out to her retreating figure.

Jenna unconsciously turned her body sideways, looking back at the driver.

The driver had a smile at the corner of his mouth and somehow produced a crystal monocle, putting it on his right eye.

Chapter 947 Equivalent Exchange

Amon? Jenna, standing beside the car, was stunned.

She vaguely understood why she had been able to arrive at the Star Dream Provisions Store early and escape that deadly “hallucination” at the most critical moment.

In this matter, Amon had provided help, otherwise the consequences would have been unimaginable!

She and Franca had already estimated the risks to the greatest extent possible, but they still hadn't anticipated that the real situation would be so terrifying that she wouldn't even have a chance to exit the dream!

This was even with her being a Demoness, with survival abilities and life-saving skills among the top of same-Sequence Beyonders.

Indeed, Amon and His father are on the same side as us in awakening Mr. Fool, just with different desired paces of progress, so He only provided help once until now. Hmm, this help was aimed at that evil god of the Fantasy Association. If I had failed my mission today and died, would the painting have returned to Luo Shan on its own, leading to developments that Amon and His father don't want to see? In an instant, Jenna thought of many things, not even having time to feel fear in hindsight.

“Please help close the car door,” Amon, with the monocle clasped in His right eye socket, reminded Jenna with a smile, just like a real ride-hailing driver.

Only then did Jenna return to normal, closing the car door with her free hand.

Watching the white sedan drive smoothly away from the street, Jenna, hugging the precipice painting, rushed into the Star Dream Provisions Store without any regard for her image.

Feeling the light suddenly dim considerably, Jenna immediately relaxed.

Only then did she feel a surge of confusion.

How could Amon accurately accept my order?

How did He know we had obtained this painting and were going to send it to the Star Dream Provisions Store today?

With everyone being suppressed to Sequence 7, it's impossible to be so precise with prophecies and divinations...

Could it be that true gods are a bit more special in the Dream City, subject to different restrictions than us?

So, did Amon “coincidentally” save me with the help of His father?

This could also explain why this painting was so difficult for me to resist, not even giving me a chance to save myself. If we were all at the Sequence 7 level, it shouldn't have been like this. Or perhaps I actually had a chance to break free from its influence, but being my first encounter with this type of attack, I made mistakes in my response and failed to notice details that could have been utilized? Jenna looked at the oil painting in her arms, suppressing her thoughts, and walked to the cashier at the very back of the Star Dream Provisions Store.

This could also explain why this painting was so difficult for me to resist, not even giving me a chance to save myself. If we were all at the Sequence 7 level, it shouldn't have been like this. Or perhaps I actually had a chance to break free from its influence, but being my first encounter with this type of attack, I made mistakes in my response and failed to notice details that could have been utilized? Jenna looked at the oil painting in her arms, suppressing her thoughts, and walked to the cashier at the very back of the Star Dream Provisions Store.

“Do you buy items with mystical elements?” Jenna politely asked the shopkeeper who was playing with her phone.

The shopkeeper slowly raised her head, and the blazing sunlight outside suddenly appeared to be obscured by clouds.

“Yes, we do,” she said with a slight smile at Jenna.

They really buy them? Jenna's heart leapt with joy, and she quickly placed the oil painting on the counter.

“Could you take a look and see if it meets your requirements? How much is it worth?”

The shopkeeper reached out a hand, bringing the painting in front of her, and after looking at it for a few seconds, said, “Thirty thousand.”

How much? Jenna instinctively doubted her ears.

It wasn't that she thought this bizarre oil painting had no mystical value or wasn't worth thirty thousand dollars, but rather that for her and Franca, this painting was a burden, a danger, something they would pay to get rid of.

If the shopkeeper had said she would take the painting for thirty thousand, Jenna thought that after discussing with Franca, they would grit their teeth and pay.

As thoughts raced through her mind, Jenna considered a possibility.

The shopkeeper of the Star Dream Provisions Store was clearly an ally, and her current behavior was to provide more funds for their team!

And money had a very important symbolic meaning in the dream city.

Not giving it directly, but using this opportunity of buying mystical items as the method... Is this because certain rules of the dream city have to be satisfied, rules that even gods can't violate? Equivalent exchange? If that's the case, it must have been quite difficult for the Major Arcana card holders to provide two thousand in startup funds for each person... As Jenna pondered this, she subconsciously thought about whether she should haggle and try to raise the price a bit.

Since they were allies, they should be happy to see such behavior, as it meant they could provide more help.

After brief consideration, Jenna abandoned this idea.

The person across from her was the manifestation or projection of a true god. The price She quoted must have been carefully considered to be the most suitable, appropriate, and least likely to cause anomalies.

In terms of dream consciousness, every item has an estimated price. If the transaction price is too high, it would be considered problematic and might involve illegal activities, inevitably leading to reactive changes later? Thinking of this, Jenna responded to the shopkeeper, “Alright.”

When the shopkeeper actually transferred thirty thousand yuan to her, she suddenly regretted letting Ludwig eat all the other paintings.

Those might have been worth some money too!

However, those were just painted by Luo Shan, probably not worth much, maybe just equivalent to Ludwig's late-night snack fee...

“Thank you,” Jenna thanked the shopkeeper again and turned to walk out of the Star Dream Provisions Store.

The bright and brilliant sunlight from high above fell on her, finally giving her the feeling that the danger had completely passed.

Only then did she begin to feel fear in hindsight.

She still had many things she wanted to do, and several people she couldn't bear to part with.

At the entrance of the Tech Building.

Franca, wearing low-heeled shoes, carefully ascended the steps.

Her current attire was something she had never worn before, instinctively giving her a sense of insecurity and embarrassment.

This also made her more sensitive to the gazes and appraisals around her. She felt that the admiring ones were still acceptable, but those she previously considered impolite and a bit disgusting seemed to have increased, or perhaps she just noticed them more. Some people hurried past her, then turned back to look after taking a few steps, thinking they were being discreet, revealing slightly disappointed expressions.

This seemed to be because her makeup, attire, and appearance didn't quite match what they had imagined after seeing her figure and clothes.

Why are you being disappointed, asshole!? Franca secretly gave the middle finger and cursed under her breath.

She finished climbing the stairs and looked towards the security guard at the entrance, but didn't see Lumian.

I thought we could communicate with eye contact at the entrance, pretending not to know each other on the surface, just like in some spy dramas... Franca muttered silently, entering the lobby and walking towards the elevator area.

Inside the surveillance room.

Lumian sat in front of several large screens divided into multiple scenes, carefully scrutinizing each image from a not-so-short distance—yesterday's minor incident had given the security director Grimm an excuse to arrange for him to watch the surveillance cameras and patrol floors on rotation, no longer needing him to guard the main entrance.

Lumian quickly noticed Franca in the elevator area.

Although she had deliberately made herself less attractive, wearing old-fashioned black-framed glasses and clothes she had never worn before, he still recognized her.

It's a pity that Lie now only equates to top-level makeup skills and can't adjust height and figure to a certain extent, otherwise the disguise effect would be better. As it is now, it's still too eye-catching... Lumian commented inwardly.

Seeing him watching so intently, the security guard sitting next to him rolled his eyes and said, clutching his stomach, "Li, my stomach hurts. I'm going to take a dump. Keep an eye on things yourself."

Is this what they call getting paid to poop online? Lumian chuckled inwardly and said, "Okay."

This couldn't be better, maybe there's even a chance to check yesterday's surveillance footage and see how Zhou Mingrui reacted to my employment in private, what he did!

After his colleague had really gone to the bathroom outside the surveillance room, Lumian saw that Franca had finally managed to squeeze into an elevator after two failed attempts.

Suddenly, on the big screen, several images showing the situation inside the surveillance room went black.

Wh— Lumian didn't move.

Just two or three seconds later, there was an additional person beside him.

It was security director Grimm, wearing a thin blue suit.

Grimm, looking at the big screen, said in an seemingly casual manner, “Be careful of Huang Tao.”

Be careful of Huang Tao? What relationship could Mr. Huang have with me, a male security guard? Lumian was puzzled and asked calmly, “Why?”

Maintaining his posture of watching the surveillance footage, Grimm explained briefly, “He has betrayed Mother and is no longer Mother's child.”

No longer... He was before, but not now? Madam Magician mentioned that in the Vortex event, although Emperor Roselle perished, he also severely injured the strongest Broker, breaking free from the corruption of the Great Mother and retaining hope for resurrection... This and Amon obtaining Mr. Fool's consent to reborrow power from His past self are different components of the same event... So, Mr. Fool learned about Emperor Roselle's status, his subconscious cognition changed accordingly, causing Huang Tao in the dream city to no longer secretly harbor the corruption of the Great Mother? Lumian preliminarily sorted out the logic.

This also made him realize a problem.

Previously, he only knew that accidents and encounters in the dream might reflect in reality, bringing about real death or problematic advancements, but at this moment, he believed that changes in reality could also affect the dream, provided that Mr. Fool truly perceived it.

The dream and reality are not one-way, they can interact... Lumian remembered this discovery, then turned to smile at Grimm.

“Don't you find it strange that as a Child of God, I'm not female?”

Grimm showed a confused expression.

“Mother's children can be of any gender, or even genderless, or multiple genders.

“These are not important. What's important is the ability to procreate and bring new life.

“Child of God, why do you ask such a question?”

Grimm's brow furrowed slightly.

Of course, it's to test you! Lumian laughed inwardly in response.



He was testing whether Grimm only sensed that he was a Child of God, or if he knew more specifically that the current Child of God was Omebella, like Hand Bro.

If Grimm knew that he “was” Omebella, he would be confused about the gender discrepancy. Otherwise, it would indicate that he indeed lacked the necessary wisdom and was more like an NPC as Franca had said, but influenced by the Great Mother.

This also proved from another angle that there was a big problem with Hand Bro being able to call out the name Omebella.

Lumian smiled and said to Grimm, “I thought Mother had already let you know my true identity.” As he spoke, his hair gradually lengthened, and the lines of his face quickly softened.

## Chapter 948 New Employee Orientation

Grimm's eyes suddenly reflected an indescribably beautiful face, but it vanished in an instant, like an intoxicating yet elusive dream.

Lumian had already transformed back into his male state, his gaze returning to the surveillance screens.

After a few seconds, Grimm remarked with some emotion, “When I was looking at the files transferred from HR, I was thinking that a 22-year-old with a 7-year-old son would be very suitable to be Mother's child, and could definitely be developed. I didn't expect... hehe, truly worthy of being a Child of God.”

I didn't alter my background information and it still had this benefit... Who could have imagined this before... Lumian had to admit that some things were beyond even the Conspirer's expectations.

Suddenly, Grimm stood up and left the surveillance room.

In just a few seconds, the cameras inside the surveillance room resumed their normal operation.

Not long after, the security guard who had gone to defecate came back swaying and sat down next to Lumian.

He asked in a low voice, “The team lead didn't come, did he?”

This referred to Xu Xinyang, the team lead of Security Team 2.

“No,” Lumian answered honestly.

Simultaneously, he silently added, The team leader indeed didn't come, but the director did.

Just then, Lumian's phone vibrated.

He turned his body, facing away from his colleague, discreetly took out his phone, unlocked the screen, and looked.

The vibration was caused by a WeChat friend request, the applicant was “Intis Group Grimm”.

After Lumian accepted, he took the opportunity to look at Grimm's Moments.

The most recent post from this Intis Group security director was: “Children are more important than money, offspring are more important than work.”

This was accompanied by nine photos, each with a different child.

Lumian quickly scrolled down and found that Grimm's Moments had only one theme, which was sharing about his children.

As expected of Mother's chosen... Mr. Fool's subconscious cognition is still too conservative, only giving Grimm nine children. Well, it also has to conform to the daily situations of the dream city... Lumian locked the screen, put the phone back in his pants pocket, and thought about how to use Grimm's connection in the future.

He planned to inquire about what Grimm had been doing recently and how well he had been doing it, under the pretext of a superior's assessment next time.

Tenth floor, Intis Group Administrative Department, in a separate small office.

Franca, led by an HR employee, met Zhang Qing, the deputy director of the Administrative Department.

He was also one of the interviewers at the time.

Zhang Qing looked Franca over a few times, and actually felt somewhat amazed, of course, this was based on her state during the interview as a reference.

He could only say that her figure was indeed very good and suited this outfit well.

While feeling slightly amazed, Zhang Qing also started to feel a headache coming on.

He worried that this new employee, Luo Fu, might be blindly arrogant and set her sights on Mr. Huang. He hoped she would honestly and diligently do her job and share the work between himself and the others.

Thinking of this, Zhang Qing couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

This was his daily state—facing beautiful women of various styles every day. As a man, it was inevitable to have some emotional and desire fluctuations, but thinking that any of these beauties might become Mr. Huang's mistress at any time, he had to restrain himself and not show any abnormality. Moreover, these beauties would occasionally quarrel and fight, coming to his office crying to complain, requiring him to spend a lot of energy mediating.

This made him physically and mentally exhausted every day, feeling a sense of spiritual impotence.

Namo Amitabha... After Zhang Qing muttered to himself, he began to explain the daily work and precautions of the office to Franca according to the procedure. Finally, he said,

“I'll find an experienced employee to guide you. Your position will be arranged near that experienced employee.”

Franca took the initiative to say, “Can you ask Luo Shan to guide me? I live very close to her, we knew each other before, and it was she who made me full of longing for the company.”

Before officially starting work, Franca had already thought about what image she wanted to establish in the Intis Group—a newcomer without much scheming, rather frank and cheerful, sometimes speaking without thinking.

She felt that as long as she didn't deliberately think about problems, following her daily life state, she could play this role well.

Zhang Qing nodded slightly, his expression relaxing considerably.

“Alright.”

He stood up, led Franca out of the small office, and introduced her to other employees in the Administrative Department.

Franca saw a series of beautiful women, all striving to highlight their own characteristics. There were innocent ones, glamorous ones, and those going for the pure and sexy look, giving a feeling of a hundred flowers blooming.

These women were all alert at first glance of Franca, but after their gaze fell on her face and scrutinized for a few seconds, they relaxed.

Some of them perfunctorily greeted her, then picked up their makeup mirrors to touch up their makeup, while others enthusiastically chatted with Franca, thinking about dumping some of their work on this newcomer later.

Franca, having managed a large number of dancers before, was not at all unfamiliar with such occasions and naturally and appropriately followed Zhang Qing around the Administrative Department.

Seeing this, Zhang Qing imperceptibly nodded.

Indeed, she has three years of work experience, and the evaluation from her previous job is also very good...

Well, after seeing so many star-like beauties, she shouldn't have any unrealistic thoughts, right?

Franca noticed that about half of the employees in the Administrative Department were working seriously, and among them were also many good-looking women. Some of them were purely attracted by the high salaries of the Intis Group, not very interested in Mr. Huang, and had no hope for possible favor. Rather than becoming Mr. Huang's mistress, they wanted to develop in their careers and prove themselves. Others planned to establish the image of a capable woman, thinking that maybe Mr. Huang liked this type recently?

After introducing Franca to the employees of the Administrative Department, Zhang Qing stopped near Luo Shan's position and nodded slightly.

“Luo Shan has gone to the foreign trade department and will be back later. Since you already know each other, I don't need to introduce you.

“Well, Mr. Ed is currently entertaining distinguished guests and is not in the company. I'll take you to meet him later.”

Mr. Ed referred to Edward, the vice president of the Intis Group, in charge of administration and business.

Entertaining distinguished guests? Zaratulstra mentioned in the information from the Major Arcana card holders? This person is most likely a subordinate of the Celestial Worthy, suspected to be a Seer pathway Angel who is currently possessing Loki... Franca pondered as she replied to Zhang Qing.

She then sat down at the desk not far from Luo Shan's position, hiding her legs under the table.

This gave her back a sense of security, and the faint shame subsided.

After Zhang Qing left, Franca sat in her position, looked around the bright and clean Administrative Department, and silently exclaimed, So this is what working is like?

During the time after her transmigration when she lived on the original body's savings, she naturally thought about not eating away at his savings. But she didn't understand the skills the original body knew, and the original body had no education, so she could only find jobs like waitressing and kitchen helper. Then, because she couldn't stand the conscience of those merchants and was unwilling to make counterfeit goods or help deceive innocent people, she couldn't last more than a few days before being fired either voluntarily or involuntarily. Almost no job lasted a full month, and there were a few times when she was almost beaten up.

In her view, this was no different from doing internships or summer jobs during college, and now was her first real job, especially in a dream city very similar to the world she transmigrated from.

While observing naturally, Franca saw those paintings on Luo Shan's desk.

Her heart suddenly skipped a beat.

Luo Shan's paintings at home have been cleaned up, but there are still some here...

After some consideration, Franca stood up, walked to Luo Shan's seat, tore down all the paintings that could be torn down, and threw the ones that couldn't be torn down into the trash can along with the items.

Just as she finished doing this, she felt someone watching her. She quickly turned around and saw a young man standing in the aisle near Luo Shan's position.

The man wore plain glasses and a plaid shirt interwoven with three colors. His appearance was slightly handsome with a very clear chin. It was Zhou Mingrui.

Damn... I've directly encountered Mr. Fool's dream image... Seeing Zhou Mingrui's confused expression, Franca quickly explained, "Luo Shan asked me to help deal with it."

Zhou Mingrui looked at the paintings and items in the trash can and said as if talking to himself, "Luo Shan asked to throw them away?"

He then glanced at Franca's heel height and muttered in his heart,

With such low heels, she's still a bit taller than me...

Franca nodded repeatedly. "Yes."

Zhou Mingrui withdrew his gaze and smiled politely.

"Where did Luo Shan go? I have something to discuss with her."

“She went to the foreign trade department to coordinate something,” Franca repeated Zhang Qing's words.

“I see...” Zhou Mingrui then asked, “Are you transferred from another department to the Administrative Department? I don't think I've seen you before.”

“I just joined,” Franca answered honestly.

Seeing Zhou Mingrui's gaze unconsciously move towards Luo Shan's seat, Franca controlled her inner nervousness and smiled naturally. “Luo Shan and I are neighbors, we knew each other before. Before she went to handle something, she asked me to help her throw away all these paintings. She doesn't want them anymore.”

“Doesn't want them anymore...” Zhou Mingrui repeated this sentence softly, then asked Franca with a colleague's attitude, “Did Luo Shan give you an internal recommendation?”

“No,” Franca said with a slight pride. “I relied on my own abilities.”

Then, she said in a teasing tone, “Maybe the Administrative Department has been busier recently and needs more people who can really get things done.”

She didn't want Mr. Fool's dream image to think she was a gold digger.

Zhou Mingrui exchanged a few more pleasantries, left the Administrative Department, and returned to the opposite side.

Franca sat back in her position and quietly let out a sigh of relief.

Fortunately, I've been well-trained in front of the Demoness of Black. Mr. Fool, uh, Zhou Mingrui shouldn't have noticed that I was a bit nervous just now, right?

It's normal to be nervous; after all, being caught throwing away a colleague's belongings behind their back...

In the Security Department.

Lumian took the opportunity of going to the bathroom to take out his phone and clicked on the dialog box with Anderson Hood.

The chat interface was still on the initial greeting message.

Chapter 949 Action Outline

Lumian waited until the Dream Tutoring Classes opened before sending a WeChat voice message to Anderson Hood: “Mr. Anderson, does your tutoring school have painting classes? A friend of mine wants to know.”

Late last night, after receiving Jenna's message, Lumian had been thinking about how to probe Anderson Hood. Based on the premise that Luo Shan had been controlled and her personality alteration had been initially resolved, he felt this matter was not urgent. There was no need to screenshot the legal representative and shareholder information of “Colorful Hostel” and send it

directly to Anderson, “teasing” him about having other businesses on the side, then observe the subsequent reactions and wait for any unexpected developments that might result.

He planned to start with the painting issue, making initial probes, preferably without alerting Anderson.

Anderson didn't immediately reply to Lumian, and Lumian didn't linger in the bathroom. After putting his phone in his pants pocket, he walked back to the surveillance room.

Looking at the large screens in front, his mind flashed through some “experiments” he had done and needed to do:

1. Observe Mr. Fool's dream manifestation Zhou Mingrui and the people around him;
2. First contact with Zhou Mingrui during the day, leaving a certain impression;
3. Contact people close to Zhou Mingrui, divided into multiple stages, eliminating the suspicion of one target before contacting the second, and so on;
4. Contact Zhou Mingrui again during the day, leaving a deeper impression;
5. Establish a relationship with Zhou Mingrui during the day where they can chat, hinting at the existence of Beyonder powers and his goodwill;
6. First contact with Zhou Mingrui at night;
7. Hint at the existence of Beyonder powers and his goodwill to Zhou Mingrui at night;
8. Based on the results of previous experiments and information gathered, formulate an official awakening plan.

This was the action outline for Lumian's team. Currently, the first four parts had been completed, without any members being kicked out of the dream or restricted—the third part was spread throughout all subsequent steps, and team members responsible for contact had to self-isolate for a day and night before continuing to advance.

The danger gradually increased in the later parts. Lumian didn't think about avoiding it, because determining the degree and source of danger was one of the purposes of the experiment.

Only by knowing what could be done, what couldn't be done, what would lead to immediate expulsion, and what would take time to explode, could their team officially enter the eighth part of the action outline and formulate a targeted awakening plan.

At this stage, Lumian wasn't worried or afraid of failure; he was worried and afraid of not being able to find the reasons for failure.

With this mindset, he approached many things with a “testing” attitude, including whether the Information Shredder worked, whether Stiano was trustworthy, what relationship Anderson Hood had with the Painter pathway, whether Grimm had become one of the Great Mother's tools to influence the dream, and so on.

After obtaining the “test” results, they would contact the Major Arcana card holders to compare accounts, which might reveal some interesting and useful details.

If they had consulted the Major Arcana card holders from the beginning, forming preconceived notions and fixed thinking patterns, they might not have “tested” some things, and thus wouldn't

have obtained their own results. Their minds would only have the conclusions given by the Major Arcana card holders, which might cause them to miss key information.

As Lumian was pondering what to do next, he noticed an extra person in one of the surveillance footage on the tenth floor.

The camera was aimed at the entrance of Aurora Company, and a person wearing a black robe with a wide, deep hood, completely out of place among the nearby white-collar workers, walked out.

Suddenly, a bunch of things fell out from inside the person's robe, landing on the floor.

The person quickly crouched down, the hem of the robe covering the fallen objects.

When he stood up, the ground was clean again, without any items.

After watching this person walk out of the surveillance frame and seeing him enter the elevator through the elevator surveillance, Lumian silently said to himself, The corresponding image of a certain Aurora Order mister in the dream city?

The security guard sitting next to him followed his gaze and laughed. "It's fine; those clowns from Aurora Company are like that, it's nothing, it's nothing."

"I thought it was some kind of performance art," Lumian said as he saw Luo Shan walk out of the elevator and enter Intis Group.

In the Administrative Department, large office.

Luo Shan stood confused next to her position, seeing her desk with fewer items.

"I helped you throw away all those paintings," Franca walked up to Luo Shan and explained with a smile.

Luo Shan suddenly realized. "I had forgotten about that, I'll draw some new ones later..."

She paused, looked around, and asked in a lowered voice, "Can I, can I still paint later?"

"Yes, it doesn't affect your ability to use your power," Franca comforted her quietly, then raised her volume, "Director Zhang asked you to familiarize me with the work process."

Zhang Qing's full title was Deputy Director of the Administrative Department of Intis Group.

"Alright," Luo Shan pulled Franca over and openly chatted about various rumors within the company.

Finally, Luo Shan said, "I forgot to tell you last night, there's a very fierce young security guard recently, he even dares to confront those MCN company people. He's really handsome, but don't tell anyone, he already has a 7-year-old son, and he's only 22!"

Theoretically speaking, I am the child's mother, one of them... Franca's mouth twitched slightly as she echoed with emotion, "Doesn't that mean he had a child in middle school?"

After chatting about this for a while, Franca returned to her seat and entered work mode according to Luo Shan's guidance.

After familiarizing herself with the office system, she rotated her chair and stood up, wanting to help Luo Shan share some work.

She saw Luo Shan holding a pencil, focused on drawing on a white paper.

What is she drawing? Franca softened her steps and silently walked to Luo Shan's side.

She found that Luo Shan was sketching her own portrait, with the Luo Shan in the drawing having hollow eyes, a cold expression, and a curled mouth.

Wh— Franca's eyes focused, and she immediately reached out her right hand and patted Luo Shan's shoulder. “What are you drawing?”

Luo Shan was startled and quickly stopped drawing.

She turned her body, and seeing it was Franca, she visibly relaxed and pressed her chest saying, “You scared me! I thought Old Zhang had caught me slacking off.”

As she spoke, Luo Shan glanced at the sketch on the table, and her expression quickly became terrified. “W-why would I draw this?”

Franca pondered for two seconds and showed a smile that made Luo Shan extremely reassured. “Don't worry, you can finish the last few strokes, I'll handle it.”

Luo Shan, uncertain and frightened, leaned forward again and added the last few strokes, making the portrait more lifelike.

As soon as she finished drawing, the Luo Shan in the sketch presented a state as if about to come alive.

Franca grabbed the drawing, and black flames burned discreetly in her palm.

The expression of Luo Shan in the drawing immediately became painful, full of resentment and hatred, as if she was being burned by flames.

In the blink of an eye, the drawing curled up, showed signs of spontaneous combustion, quickly turned to ashes, and fell into the trash can.

While completing this, Franca used the Mirror Maze through the transparent screen on the side of the desk, Luo Shan's phone screen, and the mirror being used by a nearby colleague for makeup touch-ups, to deal with the camera surveillance, not leaving traces of Beyond powers in the corresponding footage.

Luo Shan stared blankly as Franca dealt with the portrait, and after a few seconds said, “I feel like my whole being is much lighter again; my mood is better...”

Franca nodded and said, “You can treat it as another release of negative emotions and desires.”

She considered for two seconds and added, “Currently, we can only treat your symptoms, not solve the root cause of the problem. Simply put, we can only treat the symptoms, not cure the disease.

“So, you need to be vigilant about your own state, do self-examination from time to time, and if you find something wrong, immediately come to us for a new round of treatment. Don't delay, otherwise, behavior like just now will happen again, and the consequences are unpredictable.



“Power is a double-edged sword, it can harm others and also harm oneself, this will accompany us for life.”

Luo Shan listened quietly, remained silent for a moment, then lowered her head and smiled. “I understand what you mean. I hope, hope I can hold on for a few more years, preferably until I retire, no, let me enjoy life for five more years after retirement.”

Seeing Luo Shan's smile, Franca suddenly felt it was a bit dazzling, making her eyes ache.

She comforted in a gentle voice, “If you can hold on, you must hold on. It's like some diseases that were terminal in earlier years, but if you actively cooperate with treatment and try to prolong life as much as possible, with the development of technology, they can now be cured or better controlled.

“In the future, we might become stronger, or we might meet stronger people who have ways to solve the problem of power corruption.”

Luo Shan nodded slowly and smiled at Franca. “I'll try hard, and you should work hard too, let's all work hard!”

Franca remained silent for a moment, deactivated the Mirror Maze, and returned to her own seat.

She picked up her phone and found that Jenna, with the nickname “Nana and Lily”, had sent her a message describing the dangers encountered on the way to deliver the painting to Star Dream Provisions Store, the help received, and the final result.

Franca felt a wave of fear reading it, quite regretful that she hadn't accompanied Jenna.

She had anticipated great danger but thought that Jenna, who could actively exit the dream, would at most waste one opportunity. She didn't expect that the power representing the Fantasy Association's evil god could prevent them from returning to reality.

Jenna had almost really died.

Fortunately, Amon and His father are on our side... Jenna's experience also provided us with important intelligence. In the future, when encountering people and objects of the Painter pathway, we need to be careful about not being able to exit the dream... Franca, thinking of Lumian about to or already probing Anderson Hood, quickly forwarded Jenna's message to him and reminded him to remember to delete it using the Information Shredder.

After confirming that Lumian was currently fine and had received the warning, Franca glanced sideways at Luo Shan, roughly understanding why her condition had suddenly relapsed earlier.

It coincided with the time when that painting appeared abnormal and Jenna nearly died.

Inside the surveillance room.

After deleting the messages from Franca and Jenna using the Information Shredder, Lumian pinged Anthony.

He continued to watch the surveillance, looking for potentially abnormal people and events.

At this time, Xu Xinyang, the leader of Security Team 2, entered the surveillance room and patted the shoulders of his two subordinates. “After work this afternoon, let's go visit Old Wang and Old Ding together, they're out of danger now.”

“After visiting the hospital, let's gather with all the folks who aren't on shifts. It's also to welcome Little Li to our team.”

“Old Wang and Old Ding?” Lumian could guess who the team leader was talking about, but still had to put on a confused expression.

Xu Xinyang, with his burly build, square face, and very tanned skin, said with both amusement and helplessness, “Didn't you see the news? Several of our folks were struck by lightning. Fortunately, it wasn't people from our Team 2 who died. Damn, how did they get struck by lightning?”

“Oh, I remember now,” Lumian then asked, “Which hospital are Old Wang and Old Ding in?”

Xu Xinyang answered simply, “Mushu Hospital.”

## Chapter 950 Dinner Invitation

It's really Mushu Hospital... Lumian wasn't surprised at all by Xu Xinyang's answer.

He grunted in acknowledgment. “Alright, Team Lead.”

He had thought about it. As an important base for evil gods to influence the dream city, and with some degree of cooperation with the Celestial Worthy, Mushu Hospital might be unavoidable for many things to come. It wasn't a matter of cautiously avoiding it or not entering, pretending it didn't exist.

So, rather than that, why not take advantage of the daytime, while their actions hadn't yet reached a critical stage, while he still had another chance to enter, and while he had a reasonable and legitimate excuse, to go take a look and investigate in person. Of course, the underground floors that likely represented the Abyss and Mr. Fool's psychological dark side still couldn't be recklessly entered.

After seeing off Xu Xinyang, Lumian stayed in the surveillance room until almost noon. He and his shift partner Old Xia waited for their colleagues to relieve them, then went downstairs together to the Intis Group staff cafeteria located in the annex building of the Tech Building for lunch.

They didn't get meal allowances, and the cafeteria wasn't free, but it had a wide variety of dishes, and the prices were kept quite cheap through company subsidies. So, whether from headquarters or branch offices, employees in this building all liked eating in the cafeteria. Even Mr. Huang himself would come eat there occasionally to check the quality of the food.

The only problem was that during the lunch rush, the cafeteria was packed. Higher-income employees preferred to order takeout or dine at nearby malls.

As security guards, when they could go to the cafeteria depended on when their colleagues came to relieve them. Everyone tacitly agreed to come a bit earlier to avoid the peak hours.

Lumian got steamed eggs with minced meat, stir-fried yellow chives and meat with pickled peppers, fried chicken leg, cucumber and pork soup, and a big bowl of rice. He found a corner spot with Old Xia and listened to him chat about the antics of the Aurora Company folks while eating.

Old Xia clicked his tongue and said, “Their boss is an exhibitionist, or the M in S&M, often with whip marks on his body...”

Say more, slander some more, I love hearing it... Lumian nodded along while inwardly muttering.

Suddenly, his phone vibrated twice.

He picked it up and saw a message from “A name that leaves a deep impression on you”, which was Anderson Hood: “Is that friend you mentioned actually yourself?”

Lumian smiled and replied using voice input: “You could interpret it that way.”

He felt that in conversations between Hunters, whoever got anxious first, whoever got angry first, whoever felt guilty first, would lose.

Only by adjusting oneself to a state where nothing mattered could one stand undefeated.

After about 20-30 seconds, Anderson replied: “Painting requires talent, I hope you have it.

“Our tutoring school doesn't have painting classes, but I know a decent studio, that's where I learned. If you're interested, tomorrow night at 7, meet me at the entrance of Jinxiu Dongfang Community on Sifang Street, and I'll take you for a tour.”

At night? Lumian pondered for a moment before replying: “Alright, thank you.”

He remembered that Colorful Hostel was on Sifang Street, but the interior renovation and decoration hadn't been completed yet.

In the Administrative Department, large office.

Luo Shan stretched lazily, walked over to Franca's desk, and asked with a smile, “What are you eating for lunch? I don't want to join the crowd at the cafeteria.”

Without waiting for Franca to respond, she lowered her voice and said, “Other departments all find time to have team dinners to welcome new employees, only our Administrative Department doesn't.

“Mainly because those ladies don't want to or think little of us, which is fine, but the worry is that they'll insist on going, wanting to find some free helpers. Tsk, can you imagine how that would develop? Sarcasm and veiled barbs are the norm, with people crying, arguing, or even wanting to get physical not being uncommon. It left a bunch of trouble to deal with afterward, so Old Zhang simply stopped organizing departmental dinners. Those who get along well just gather privately, however they want.”

Franca listened with relish and said expectantly, “I wonder when Mr. Huang will next come to the Administrative Department.”

The scene then would surely be spectacular; she wanted to witness it.

Demonesses inevitably tended to have a bit of a chaos-loving inclination, which was very justifiable when it came to watching drama.

“Mr. Huang probably won't come in the next few days. He has VIPs to entertain, and even if he comes to the company, he'll go to the 16th floor,” Luo Shan disclosed Mr. Huang's whereabouts.

Zaratulstra? Franca was very attentive and serious about this matter.

Besides the items listed in the action outline, they also had to guard against the Celestial Worthy and evil gods doing bad things to Zhou Mingrui in the dream city. They needed to discover and prevent it early.

Moreover, this could also accumulate inspiration to help them formulate an awakening plan—how the Celestial Worthy's subordinates did it, and they could try to do the opposite.

“What a pity,” Franca said with a look of regret.

She then asked curiously, “Won't Mr. Huang bring the VIP to tour the company?”

“He has before,” Luo Shan suddenly paused, her voice becoming even lower, “That day Zhou Mingrui happened to be on sick leave. Franca, could that long-named VIP be the destroyer you mentioned, sent from the future to the present by evil forces? Was Zhou Mingrui's sick leave arranged by your people?”

A Painter's spiritual intuition is quite strong... Franca smiled and said, “Is that VIP called Zaratulstra?”

Luo Shan nodded solemnly.

“Then it is,” Franca confirmed her earlier guess.

Luo Shan was silent for a few seconds, then her eyes lit up and she said,

“Why don't I ask Zhou Mingrui to have dinner with us? That way you'll have a chance to meet and chat with him.”

Holy crap... So fast? So direct? Franca felt a bit shocked.

She had thought it would take her and Lumian a week or two to naturally contact Zhou Mingrui through work matters before reaching a point where they could add each other on WeChat or have casual chats.

Who knew that on her first day of work, Luo Shan would invite Zhou Mingrui to have dinner together!

It's too, too fast...

This progress is too advanced; I'm not ready yet...

Seeing that Franca hadn't answered, Luo Shan smiled and said, “Zhou Mingrui owes me several meals. Every time he asks me for information, he says he'll treat me to a meal next time, but so far he's only done it once.

“Hmm, welcoming my bestie to the company is a good reason.”

As she spoke, she picked up her phone and started tapping out a message to Zhou Mingrui.

After a while, Luo Shan waved her phone and said, “He agreed, but said it would be dinner tomorrow, because he has to work overtime tonight, and tech people have too little lunch break time to go eat something nice.”

He agreed just like that... No stress reaction, no excuses? Franca suddenly recalled an old saying: The best way to get close to someone is to know the people around them.

Helping Luo Shan was indeed the right choice... This is karma rewarding kindness! Franca pondered for a moment, then said to Luo Shan, “Zhou Mingrui seemed a bit concerned about those paintings you had on your desk before. He didn't refuse your invitation, but agreed to it. Maybe he also wants to confirm or probe something...”

Without waiting for Luo Shan to respond, Franca added, “If that's really the case, it's a good thing.”

The only question is, does dinner count as nighttime?

This goes against the plan in the action outline, and could lead to confusion and ambiguity in the experimental results...

It shouldn't count if it's not completely dark, right?

At 4:30 in the afternoon, after another round of patrolling the floors, Lumian and Old Xia came to the underground parking lot of the Tech Building. They saw Team Lead Xu Xinyang sitting in a dark gray SUV, reaching out from the passenger seat and waving at them.

“Over here.”

Lumian and Old Xia walked over and sat in the spacious back seat.

“Just us few?” Old Xia looked out the window.

Xu Xinyang laughed.

“Who goes to visit patients at a hospital in a big group? The nurses wouldn't let us in!

“Just the four of us, Zhao is driving, the others will wait directly at the dinner place.”

Zhao was the young man sitting in the driver's seat, looking a bit chubby from the side.

At this time, the roads were still fairly clear. Before 5 o'clock, Lumian and the others had arrived outside Mushu Hospital.

Two young men each carrying a box of fruit and a bag of nutritional supplements followed behind Xu Xinyang and Old Xia as they walked in.

The lobby of Mushu Hospital was no different from when Lumian last came, ordinary, with people coming and going. Only occasionally could one notice certain orderlies with indifferent gazes and slightly mechanical movements.

Lumian withdrew his gaze, confirming that his spirituality gave no warning and there were no abnormalities around, then entered the elevator going up and arrived on the 12th floor.

Exiting the elevator area and turning into the ward, after pushing open the door, what met his eyes was a quiet nurses' station and a corridor extending into darkness.

The light at the end of the corridor seemed to be broken, not yet repaired.

Led by a nurse who looked very normal, they entered a double patient room where Old Wang and Old Ding were.

Before Lumian, Zhao, and Old Xia could get a clear look at the patients' condition, two bedside family members rushed in front of Xu Xinyang, speaking one after another:

“Team Lead Xu, this is definitely a work-related injury for our Old Wang!”

“Boohoo, Team Lead Xu, our Old Ding almost died, look at him, look at him, who knows how long it will take to recover.”

“...”

Xu Xinyang finally found an opportunity and pressed his right hand down.

“Ladies, this will definitely count as a work injury. Mr. Huang said that not only will there be compensation according to national standards, but the company will also give an additional sum, as well as cover all medical expenses beyond insurance, and continue to pay normal wages until Old Wang and Old Ding fully recover and can return to work. We won't let one of us bleed, sweat, and cry!”

While Xu Xinyang was comforting the family members, Lumian and the others turned their gaze to the hospital beds, seeing the two patients wrapped from head to toe in white bandages, with only their eyes, noses, and mouths exposed.

Old Xia couldn't help but lean close to Lumian and say in a low voice, “I don't mean to be unkind, but they really look funny like this. I thought only TV shows wrapped people up like this. Didn't expect to see it in real life too.”

Lumian didn't respond to Old Xia, because he thought of mummies.

Mummies that were said to have close connections with the Wraith pathway controlled by the Mother Tree of Desire.

And this was Mushu Hospital.