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Chapter 251:

The sharp table knives pierced through the skin and the stick figure's clothes were dyed red. Staring at the drawing waving in the Dreamer's hand, Han Fei's face darkened. Han Fei grabbed the boy by his shoulders and lifted him up to eye level. He looked into the boy's young face. "It was you who called Xu Qin away so why is it that you've returned alone?" The most dangerous demon often decorated themselves as angels. In the cryptic world, do not give away your trust easily, not even to a child who looked perfectly harmless.

"Draw, draw..." Dreamer waved the paper repeatedly. The more frightened he was, the more he stammered. He was unable to complete a full sentence.

"Why would Xu Qin plunge her knives into herself? Where is she now?" Han Fei knew it was hard to communicate with the Dreamer. He put him down, reached into the boy's pocket and placed the paper and pen before him. "Draw out what you want to say." As if knowing that time was running out, the Dreamer started to make broad strokes on the paper.

Two stick figures with masks sat beside the dining table. The chopping block at the middle of the table was covered with chopped up human flesh. The two stick figures gestured at the chopped-up person and laughed. There were other stick figures in the background. One of them was a long-haired woman with a chef's hat. It was a quick color pencil drawing but there was something immensely horrifying about it. Han Fei glanced at Dreamer and thought to himself, 'What exactly has this boy seen?'

Lee Zai bent his body to almost 90 degrees to see the drawing. His head was almost pressing on Han Fei's shoulder. "Looks like someone inside the building has been killed? There are 9 chairs around the table but even including the chef, there are only 8 people inside the painting. The missing individual should be the one being served on the chopping block. Has anyone gone missing recently?"

"Missing? There's only the writer! The missing writer has been eaten?" Holding the drawing, Han Fei turned to the Dreamer, "But what does this have to do with Xu Qin?" The Dreamer used the red pen to circle the chef. Then he added an arrow that began from the chef and ended at the dining table.

"They plan to eat Xu Qin next?" Xu Qin was a Curse Amalgamation, her greatest power came from her set of table knives. She could stab herself with all her knives to achieve her strongest state. All of the tenants must have ganged up on her for her to do something as drastic as this. Taking out Rest in Peace,

Han Fei squatted beside the Dreamer, “Are you one of the two stick figures sitting around the dining table?”

The dreamer shook his head vehemently. He pointed at his face and stammered, “I, I have no mask. Mine got stolen.” Perhaps to convince Han Fei further, the Dreamer picked up the pencil and added a doctor’s coat around one of the stick figures at the table. He pointed at the figure cautiously as he repeated the term, doctor.

‘One of the writer’s killers is the Doctor? That is different from the story in real life. Have there been changes in the cryptic world?’ Han Fei signalled for Dreamer to lead them to Xu Qin. Han Fei hadn’t fully trusted the Dreamer but he didn’t have much choice now. The sub personas of Spider appeared to have some kind of special ability, no matter how the space changed, they could easily find the right path, it was like they were one part with the building. There was so much less blood compared to yesterday, it felt like someone had given the place a good cleaning. Han Fei noticed this place was slowly matching with Fu Gui Factory Living Compound in real life. Dream was edging towards reality and the tragedy from the past would repeat itself.

Passing the many rooms and doors, the Dreamer finally led Han Fei to the 4th floor of this interconnecting cluster of buildings. They stopped before a normal-looking door. “Xu Qin is inside?” Han Fei had the Dreamer open the door. When he did, a mist of disinfectant rolled out from inside the room. Looking in, there were medicine bottles everywhere but more importantly, this place looked just like Spider’s room in real life!

“What is this place?” Han Fei turned to the boy. The boy coughed several times before answering, “Doc, doctor’s place. The chef, chef was here.”

“The Doctor’s place?!” Han Fei’s eyes widened. That could only explain one thing, during the last moment of his life, it was the Doctor’s persona who took over Spider’s main persona! That would explain why the Doctor’s place in the cryptic world mirrored the Spider’s place in real life. ‘The Doctor is the persona controlled by the butterfly? If that’s the case, he almost succeeded!’

Walking into the room, Han Fei had the uncanny feeling that he was back in real life. The medicine bottles and medical reports were very real. ‘The doctor’s responsibility is to heal all the other subpersonas, in other words, Spider was trying to cure himself. He was a patient. Indeed, if Butterfly corrupted the healer, the mental health of Spider would collapse.’ The décor inside the room was similar to the one in real life, everything was where Han Fei memorized them to be. After checking the living room, kitchen, Han Fei entered the bedroom. He turned to the bookshelf and finally noticed something different from real life.

The places where the two books, Cattle Alley and House of the Butcher should be were instead two thick medical reports. Han Fei picked up a random one and started to read. The content and pictures instantly grabbed his attention.

“Recently there are more patients inside the alley. They show the same symptoms, coughing, fever, rashes on the skin and inexplicable itchiness. Based on observation, all the patients had bought packaged meat from Fu Gui Meat Packaging Plant on the night of the 4th.

“This is more than a case of food poisoning. Patients would show heavier symptoms one week after the surfacing of the illness. They would complain of increased itchiness and they would escalate to self-mutilation to stop the itchiness.

“In the 2nd week, most patients would show symptoms of hallucination and acousma. They claimed that something had entered their bodies and begged for surgeries to remove them. The patients’ weight showed no difference but they all lost plenty of muscle mass like something was eating them from inside.

“In the 3rd week, part of the patients’ skin started to crack and scars started to appear. A small number of patients showed skin ablation.

“In the 4th week, most of the patients have died. Their actual diagnosis is as follows.”

Seeing the reports, Han Fei’s heart squeezed, these were all lives. Closing the first report, Han Fei turned to the second one. The second one was as detailed as the first one and it recorded the changes to the doctor’s own body.

“February 4th, no visible change to the body...

“February 5th, itchiness on the skin.

“February 7th, first instance of acousma.

“February 15th, a drastic thinning of the body. The skin started to crack. Pain coexisted with the itchiness. The yearning to tear open the body increased.

“February 21st, gained a clear feeling of something inside the stomach trying to crawl out. Skin started to dissolve, I can see into my own internal organs.

“February 25th, none of the medicine works. The illusions and acousma have dominated my mind. Surgery cannot stop the mutation to the body. I shouldn't have eaten the writer, I wonder in what form he would return next time.”

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The Doctor's 2 medical reports read like normal reports and were done professionally until Han Fei saw the entry on the 25th. 'I shouldn't have eaten the writer?' With the connection to Dreamer's drawing, Han Fei believed the Doctor was one of the two who killed Spider. 'In real life, Spider had murdered all of his subpersonas, why is it the opposite in the cryptic world? Furthermore, based on what I'm reading the subpersonas have murdered Spider more than once and the murders were brutal and macabre.'

He continued to read the report to get to know the Doctor better.

“February 26th, intense pain came from the stomach. There's only a layer of skin left on my stomach. My body is like a balloon blown to the max, ready to burst at any moment.

“February 27th, most of the patients have died, no one can live more than a month. After I inspected their bodies, I realized all of the victims' stomachs had split open, it was as if something had crawled out from them. Strangely enough, all the victims were heading towards this apartment building before they died, they collapsed on the journey here and died. Based on this information, I can be certain that he is back. I find it hard to believe that he is so hard to kill.

“February 28th, the plant was destroyed, the people who lost their jobs scattered in the alley. The rumours about the dirty meat had spread like wildfire. To stop this chaos, to return everything to normal, I have to figure out a way to kill him again.” The Doctor wrote down many things in this second medical journal. It was clear that he was not in a good condition. The last few pages were stained with blood, it appeared like he coughed on them when he was writing them.

'The doctor's aim is the writer so why the sudden change of target to Xu Qin? Furthermore, this Doctor's mind is a bit insane, the factory was manufacturing human meat and all the workers are pig-faced monsters but the Doctor appeared to be unable to see that. He instead saw the monsters as fellow kin.' The boundary between human and animal was blurred at Cattle Alley, Han Fei couldn't help but wonder if the doctor had become a pig-faced monster himself. When the beast won over humanity, he would think everything that happened inside Cattle Alley was perfectly normal because he too had become an animal with a mask.

Han Fei was still considering the connection when a loud boom came from downstairs and the whole building shook. The layout of the rooms at the House of the Butcher was crooked and senseless. Beyond the window of the Doctor's room was another room. Trapped in this maze, Han Fei had no idea what happened outside the building. Han Fei hurriedly turned back to the Dreamer, "After Xu Qin came to this place, where did she go next?" Before the Dreamer could speak, the building was rammed into again. It felt like the building could collapse at any moment.

Hugging his head, the Dreamer curled up at the corner. He was like a child abandoned by the world. This subpersona represented the loneliness and sense of abandonment in Spider. He also represented the remaining childlike innocence in the man.

"Only by finding Xu Qin that we can live, we'll all die if we can't find her." Han Fei squatted down beside the Dreamer. The boy knew many things but he had not told Han Fei everything. Han Fei chose to believe the kid because Xu Qin believed in him. Furthermore, the boy did not exhibit the symptoms described by the Doctor so he probably didn't participate in their crazy rituals.

"You're not purposely trying to buy time, are you?" Han Fei placed Rest in Peace on the boy's shoulder and he demanded in a chilling tone, "Honestly, I'm not interested at all in the tenants here, I don't wish to kill any of you. I don't care whether you're good or not. The main reason I came here is to bring her back. I don't care what the plan is, if you intend to stop me, then I'll have to kill you." The pairs of pale arms materialized. A special pressure came from Han Fei's knife, it could expose any kind of sin.

After reading the Doctor's medical reports, Han Fei knew that there was not one sane person at this building, he needed to find Xu Qin as soon as possible. With the knife placed on his neck, the Dreamer's hands shook. He was terrified. Taking out the pen and paper, the Dreamer drew several quick paintings. The general idea was, after Xu Qin saw the doctor's medical reports, the curse and mask of the chef started to go out of control. When she exited the room, the people waiting for her outside the room ambushed her to try to grab her mask. Eventually they all disappeared down the corridor.

Studying the simple paintings, Han Fei had no idea whether he could trust the Dreamer or not. He had the boy lead the way and stealthily took out the red paper doll from his inventory. At the House of the Butcher, there was some kind of inhibition that dampened the connection between the doll and Xu Qin. They had to be extremely close before the doll would react. After leaving the Doctor's place, the Dreamer headed down the direction Xu Qin took while Han Fei followed behind him with the knife.

Even though he had his neighbours with him, Han Fei didn't have much confidence because he was going up against a whole building of butchers. The ramming against the building continued. The interior of the building was slowly morphing into the living compound in real life. Spider had personally walked through these corridors and steps before. As they passed the rooms, Han Fei started to see blood. But the strange thing was, about 10 seconds after the blood stained the wall, they would disappear as if consumed by the building itself.

'No wonder I haven't seen any blood on the way.' He reached out to touch the wall and he was surprised to feel a human warmth. In fact he could even feel the heartbeat underneath. 'The building has come alive?'

The building was cleaning up the bodies and blood but even so, the blood started to pool around Han Fei. He was heading down a path towards death. They came to the first floor where the blood was so thick that the building couldn't operate fast enough to clean them. The paper doll in his pocket finally reacted and showed a beautiful smile. The Dreamer stopped moving. Han Fei passed through another room carefully and turned to look at the door at the end of the corridor.

Blood leaked out from the edges of the old door. Before the blood could hit the ground, the building had already sucked it dry. 'Xu Qin is behind this door.' Han Fei pushed the door open. The disappearing red appeared to have gathered inside this room. 3 monsters in pig masks were staring at the centre of the room.

At the place where the blood was thickest stood a woman. Her body was pierced through by 12 table knives. Blood formed red vines and weaved into a shield around her. Her pale skin was slashed open and her face was a mix of madness and illness. At that moment, she held her last knife above her heart. As the knife neared the heart, an endless curse surfaced from her skin. With this last knife, all the curse would be released from her body!

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The 12 table knives were all plunged into the vitals, fresh blood poured out to form a flowing dress.

“Xu Qin!” After she heard Han Fei’s voice, Xu Qin’s eyes trembled slightly. Her crimson lips parted as if saying something but Han Fei was too far away to hear her. Then without any hesitation, she plunged the last knife into her heart!

Blood bloomed like flowers and Xu Qin’s last rationality was shredded. The slender arms swung weakly beside her and the curse weaved intricately on her pale skin. Different souls emerged from the curse, they were like flowers opening in the sea of blood or monsters lurking in the depths of the red sea. The 13 table knives were the key to unlock the truth within Xu Qin. There were sweet whisperings, graceful seductions, shrill crying, and painful wailing but in the end, all the emotions were overwhelmed by Xu Qin’s hoarse cackling. “Who would tear me open with their hands, who would embrace me in their hugs. Kill the crazy lady or be killed by the crazy lady.”

Blood and curse mixed together, the shadow under her feet spread. The table knives were keys to unleash the gore and the gore was necessary to unlock the heart dominated by gluttony. The most vicious curse in the world poured out from her wounds. Standing in the deepest darkness, the curse consumed the area around her. It was like she was floating about an abyss. “I’ve been searching for the prettiest skin to make the prettiest dress; and the prettiest face to piece together yours. How could I keep such a selfish love to myself?”

The slender arms reached forward and the darkest curse curled around it. Mesmerizing faces appeared on Xu Qin’s body. Xu Qin stared at the monsters with pig masks and charged at them dragging her cursed body. The building kept trying to clean away the blood but its speed was much slower than the speed the blood spread. Xu Qin was already fully out of control. There was no trace of sanity left in her eyes. The curses inside her body were unleashed all at once, no one would have dared to get close to her!

Han Fei now knew the real meaning of the word, Curse Amalgamation. Every inch of her flesh and every drop of her blood was thick with despair. Other spirits were compelled by despair but she was made by despair.

Bloody shadows flew at the masked monsters, the endless pool of blood morphed into man-eating vines. There was no escape from them once you were caught. The monsters at the House of the Butcher probably did not expect the woman would turn out to be so scary as well. They had cornered her multiple times but none of those times she had done something as crazy as this. These monsters had no idea that Han Fei had returned to Xu Qin the missing knife from her set. They probably didn’t expect that when they planned to go for the kill, it would happen to be when Xu Qin was at her strongest. Do

not push anyone too far unless you are confident you are able to take them down, that was the first rule in the cryptic world.

The three masked monsters knew that retreat was not an option, they shared a look and then charged at Xu Qin at the same time. The eyes under the mask glowed with malice and hatred. Their physical bodies were changing at observable speed. The two monsters leading the charge were the pig-faced monster Han Fei had seen in the factory but these two had totem-like blood painting on their bodies and they were more human-like compared to the other pig-faced monsters. Pulling out their butcher's cleavers, they growled as they whacked their sharp cleavers on the blood red vines. Blood rained. The two pig-faced monsters blocked the advance of the blood vines. The last monster in a black-robed took a quick glance at Han Fei before he carried out a small puppy whose body had been sewn together from inside his clothes.

The puppy whined weakly. The dog's back was lined with a nasty gash. The man chopped off his finger and fed it to the puppy. After the puppy swallowed its master's flesh, the eyes suddenly rejuvenated with life. Yin energy pooled in it. It suddenly grew in size and the wound on its back tore open. The jaws about the size of one's thumb glinted dangerously. The puppy's exposed flesh was carved with names, these names belonged to its former owners, humans who had once abandoned it. All the cute-sounding names carried with them heavy despair. They looked like they were carved into the puppy's flesh. Perhaps the owners had already forgotten about it but the puppy definitely hadn't forgotten about them. It remembered each of its owner's smell and taste. The giant dog tore open the blood vines and pounced at Xu Qin.

As the giant beast lunged towards her neck, Xu Qin opened her arms as if to welcome it with a hug. However, her action actually mobilized the endless curse inside the room!

Around more than 100 curses embraced the giant puppy. They overwhelmed it with the deepest resentment and despair. No one could take Xu Qin's cursed embrace. The hug was like two giant waves closing over its victim. The pale arms slowly closed. The giant dog's body was embraced by the wings of death. The arms swung upwards and smashed the dog's head through the roof. When the dog was pulled back down by gravity, the head and body were already separated.

A blood red rug covered the floor. Xu Qin slowly made her journey forward. With each of her steps, the range of the redness would increase in size. As the battle continued, more humanoid curses crawled out from the sea of redness. The woman was like a walking tragedy.

After seeing the giant puppy being decapitated in one move, the 3 masked monsters were stunned but they did not retreat. The blood totems gathered to form a beast-like face. The two large pig-faced

monsters used their blood to feed their cleavers. When their cleavers were fully dyed red, they advanced on Xu Qin on both sides. The man who stood at the back tore off his black robe and hood to reveal an animal head. Under his black robe was a tattered doctor's coat. A veterinarian work license hung around his neck. The man emitted strange noises from his lips, it sounded like he had forgotten the human language.

Dying, sick and sewn together pets crawled out from his white coat and black robe. The veterinarian sliced at his veins to feed these pets his blood. Han Fei saw everything from outside the door. The veterinarian wasn't a tenant at the House of the Butcher and he wasn't one of the Spider's subpersonas but he was wearing the tenant's masks. The Doctor appeared to have given him the mask to get him to his side.

"The Dreamer wasn't lying, his mask has indeed been snatched away from him." The veterinarian needed time to mobilize all the pets, while he was preparing, Han Fei already sneaked in with his knife. The room that they were in was connected on 4 sides to different rooms. This was the biggest room inside the building but due to the abyss that Xu Qin created, the amount of safe space was miniscule. The veterinarian did not sense any threat from Han Fei until the crying started. Before he could react, Lee Zai already switched his body with his younger brother, Lee Huo. The burly Lee Huo instantly rammed into the veterinarian. The mutated fists slammed against the floor. This was not the first time Han Fei had worked together with his neighbours. He moved with ease behind his neighbours. His eyes carried no emotions as he focused on the veterinarian's neck. "If not for you people, Xu Qin wouldn't have lost control. You'll have to pay double for the pain she had to suffer from the 13 knives!"

The veterinarian had placed his full attention on Weep and Lee Huo. He had no idea the human who posed zero threat would even be involved in the battle. When he realized the problem, Han Fei was already close to him. With his fingers around the hilt, Han Fei aimed at the vet's neck and chopped. The veterinarian was startled when he saw Han Fei take out the knife but he had no idea how great the danger the seemingly harmless man would pose.

The veterinarian did manage to evade at the last moment. The cut meant to kill instead slashed through a big gash on his stomach. The veterinarian tried to step back but fell right into Lee Huo's grasp. The danger to the veterinarian was not yet over.

The two pig-faced monsters were already covered by the blood vines. The humanoid curses came to bite at their bodies. While the pig-faced monsters were still struggling, Xu Qin turned her gaze upon the veterinarian and Lee Huo. She was no longer who she was. Being controlled fully by curse, she couldn't tell what was before her anymore. All she could tell was consumption and murder. The body stuck with table knives was like a door that opened to another world, no one knew how many resentments were hidden inside that deep darkness.

“Leave me be! If you don’t run now, you’ll be killed as well!” No one cared about the veterinarian’s last word even though he did have a point. Weep dragged the dying veterinarian into the urn and then retreated with Lee Huo. Even among the redness, Xu Qin’s laughter was still as alluring, captivating and maddening as ever.

“Run, run!” Holding Han Fei, the Dreamer’s words came easier than normal. The blood vines expanded. Xu Qin was close on their heels and she attacked everything indiscriminately.

“Where is the Doctor? Bring us to the Doctor now!” Han Fei ran very fast. One wrong step and he’d be killed by the blood vines.

“The, they plan, to, to kill the writer...” Han Fei picked up the boy and they ran up the stairs. The passage inside the House of the Butcher was still changing. As it absorbed more blood, the building became more alive. Now everyone could hear the beating heart.

“Run towards the spot where the heartbeat is the strongest!” Han Fei still hadn’t found the other half of the heart which represented kindness. The sinful half was inside the blood pool at the factory so the kind half should be at the House of the Butcher. The ramming from outside continued. The building shook even more. When Han Fei’s group came to the second floor, the passages started to collapse. The person who stole the manager’s power was desperate. They aimed to accomplish their goal even if it would destroy this building.

Blood covered the world. Tragedies were everywhere at this most populated building at Cattle Alley. As the walls fell away, the heartbeats as well as the ramming from outside became more pronounced. When the wall beside Han Fei crumbled, he finally saw the world outside through the gap.

Many pig-faced monsters had gathered outside the House of the Butcher. Their pig masks were all cracked and so was their skin. Things crawled out from their bellies. The unknown fleshy substance joined together to form the shape of a human. When Han Fei saw the humanoid creature’s face, his eyes twitched. He was not expecting to see Spider in the cryptic world in such a manner!

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Han Fei was very familiar with Spider's face, his bedside table was decorated with Spider's writings. As someone playing the Spider, he would spend his free time trying to understand the man. Han Fei was one of the living people who knew Spider the best. In his impression, Spider should be intelligent, melancholic, introverted but the Spider he saw now was a monster formed from flesh and blood. His body wasn't even pieced together yet. 'Spider should be the manager of Cattle Alley, how did a manager end up like this? What has the Doctor done to him?'

The House of the Butcher shook and the blood from the factory streamed towards the house like they were being guided by some kind of force. The Spider built from flesh rammed madly against the front door. More flesh gathered around him and the presence he emitted was stronger than a normal Lingering Spirit. The situation inside the house wasn't any better. Xu Qin made every moving object her target and spread her curse everywhere.

Black and red were corrupting the building. The speed by which the house absorbed the blood slowed down but the heartbeat that came from the centre of the house became more pronounced. The corridors cracked and the walls crumbled. With another powerful shove, the entire 2nd and 3rd floor of the house sank!

A large hole appeared in the middle of the house. Echoes of cries reverberated everywhere. Before the tragedy, Han Fei had no idea so many people lived here. Without the ceiling and floor, the sound of the heartbeat echoed even louder. All the survivors turned to the site of the collapse. The floor of the House of the Butcher sank into the ground. The complicated underground maze was revealed. The rooms underground were like individual torture chambers, each of them was filled with various torture and murder instruments.

On the surface, the House of the Butcher was the sanctuary for the survivors at Cattle Alley but in reality, it was the gathering spot for all the best butchers. The ugly truth stunned everyone but that was not the scariest. In the middle of the underground maze was a hollowed out surgical room with a black roof. The room was rather spacious and it had many medical supplies. It looked like a place of recovery and healing but of the entire building, that place emitted the strongest stench. A thick blood vessel that extended out from the surgical room split into smaller vessels and they connected to the whole building. Normally these vessels were hidden inside the walls. Seeing this, Han Fei was reminded of the meat packaging plant. The pig-faced manager used these blood vessels to control the entire factory. In other words, the owner of this surgical room could do the same thing here as well. In fact, perhaps it was the surgical room owner who taught the manager how to control the blood vessels at the factory. 'No wonder this place is called House of the Butcher.'

Underneath the normal, welcoming facade hid a secret bloodier and gorier than the meat packaging plant. The pig-faced monsters were compelled by gluttony, once the prey fell into their arms, they

would perish either inside the monsters' stomach or the blood pool at the factory. However, the situation at the House of the Butcher was different. The people here treated you with kindness, you'd never realize you were the prey until it was already too late.

Bang! The stairs shook again. The building was not supposed to be so fragile. The blood vessel from the surgical room hadn't got the chance to fully control the whole building structure. Bricks fell here and there. Xu Qin who was chasing after Han Fei stopped. The blood underneath her feet started to pour underground as if attracted by more delicious food which was hidden there!

As Xu Qin headed towards the centre of the House of the Butcher, people with masks emerged from the ground. They were not Spider's subpersonas but people who accidentally found their way into Cattle Alley. They were accosted by one of Spider's subpersonas and then they stayed. Their mask was specially made. The masks were cracked and it was clear that the masks were pieced together from different masks. 'The actual subpersonas' masks have been shattered and then mixed with other masks to make these outsiders' masks.'

Han Fei was contemplating why someone would do this when the answer revealed itself to him. The blood vessels that originated from the surgical room started to gush with blood. A dark and smelly blood started to surge upwards into the building!

Each of the bricks at House of the Butcher had a blood vessel inside them. They were used to transport a special kind of decomposing smell that collected at the surgical room. Exposure to this unique smell would cause one to go insane. Human nature and animal nature fought over control of the physical body. The hunger pangs increased in intensity. Even though the stench was atrocious, it would cause the victims to growl with hunger.

The unique curse at Cattle Alley was triggered through this method. Lee Huo next to Han Fei lost control immediately and swung his fist at Drake. Drake's single eye glowed with bloodlust. Only Weep who had taken a soak in the blood pool could resist the curse. Han Fei was not doing so well himself. But whenever his glutinous desire grew, the hilt of Rest in Peace would chill, stopping him from straying into madness.

At the centre, the outsiders with the masks were in the same state as Weep. They could retain their rationality to a certain degree.

'The subpersonas' masks can help resist the curse.' Han Fei placed number 6's mask on Drake's face. The moment it was put on, Drake calmed down immediately. He shivered because there was a moment

when he thought about eating his own flesh because he was so hungry. Han Fei only had one mask and he couldn't get close to Lee Huo to help him anyway. All he could do was to grab The Dreamer and stay away. 'Without the mask, the curse will also be triggered once you leave Cattle Alley. If you do not eat meat, you'll turn into this mindless monster controlled by hunger.' Han Fei finally understood the true horror of the curse at Cattle Alley and the pain Xu Qin was constantly under. 'There are hundreds of curses on her. If there's a chance, I should help her undo them one by one.'

His eyes turned to the centre of the building. After the curse at Cattle Alley was triggered, Xu Qin who lost her mask became even crazier. She bit on her arms and sucked on her blood. Her maddened face colored with satisfaction. "So sweet..." The arresting beauty opened her arms and plunged towards the surgical room. The female faces that surfaced on her skin followed beside her, the humanoid curses supported her fall. There was more than one curse which was invoked through Xu Qin's body. She was used to this impossible pain. To deal with despair, she turned to deeper despair; to deal with curse, she unleashed a stronger curse.

Something was clearly not right with Xu Qin's state. More curses appeared around her, they almost submerged her but even so, more curses still poured out from the 13 table knives. The slender arm yanked off the surgical room's roof and exposed this hell for everyone to see.

In the middle of the surgical room was a doctor in white coat lying on a white bed. His chest was sliced open and a half heart was beating inside the chest!

Endless black vessels glued themselves to the half heart. The Doctor attempted to transplant the heart into his body but no matter what, his body refused to accept the half heart.

Since he forced the transplant regardless, it caused the whole House of the Butcher to crumble. The unbearable pain caused the Doctor to grimace. The mask on his face was thus tilted to the side and his true face was revealed. Half of his face was fair and mature but the other half was that of an ugly, disgusting monster.

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'The other half of the Spider's heart is inside the Doctor's chest?' Han Fei already predicted that the other half of the heart would be inside the House of the Butcher. What he did not expect was for the Doctor to get it earlier than he did and even managed to steal part of the manager's power. 'The Spider sliced away the rotten half of his heart and left Kindness for himself but something must have happened during that process.'

The original House of the Butcher was one of the few normal-looking buildings at Cattle Alley. But now the House of the Butcher was like the punctured heart inside the Doctor's chest, the walls crumbled and the floors sank. A stink lingered in the air. The colors of black and red corrupted the building from both sides. They gathered to form a storm cloud of despair over everyone inside the building. The Doctor lying inside the surgical room held his palm over his chest while his other hand gripped a surgical knife. "Why? I am you and I am better than you so why can't I take your heart?" The Doctor's expression was ghastly, he was running out of time.

The Spider who was remade from flesh and blood was crashing into the front door while inside the building, Xu Qin had made him her new target. Being targeted by 2 malignant forces, the pressure on the Doctor was huge. He had been preparing a long time for this day. He used the sin from the entire Cattle Alley to nurture the rotten half of the heart and stole the other half away from the writer just so he could control the entire Cattle Alley. The plan was good but it fell apart at the most crucial moment.

First, the murdered writer had returned in another form and the most surprising thing was the meat packing plant got destroyed. Someone managed to swim to the bottom of the blood pool to decimate the half heart there. The various accidents compelled the Doctor to push his plan forward. And now he also had to deal with an out-of-control Xu Qin. The curse at Cattle Alley was fatal for normal ghosts but for Xu Qin, it only made her stronger and more excited. The preparation that the Doctor had done was all pointless. The pig-faced monsters could only stop Xu Qin, they couldn't kill her. They were after all creatures of curse themselves. The outsiders he bought to his side were even less reliable, some of them were already preparing to leave. Staying inside the building would definitely lead to death but escaping from it might contain a chance at survival, the choice was quite clear.

"Doctor? What should we do now? Didn't you say you can cure everyone this way? You'll make us all better?" There was another woman inside the surgical room. She looked normal but had a welcoming presence about her. Her words had that comforting quality to it.

"Who said I can definitely cure all of you? Then who is going to cure me?" The Doctor's bestial face twisted. The strange pattern surfaced among the ugly face. It looked like the half wing of a butterfly. "Greed is the original sin. I can't let go of it now, especially since I have had a taste of it." The Doctor aimed his scalpel right at the half heart! Spider's blood splashed onto the Doctor's chest and then they swiftly turned black. "Since I can't possess the whole you, then I will personally destroy you and sew your body onto my heart!" The ghastlier the Doctor's expression, the clearer the butterfly pattern.

The heart beating inside the chest was stabbed multiple times. The entire building shook as if in pain as well. The monsters outside the building went into a berserk, the walls collapsed. The woman inside the

surgical room wanted to stop the Doctor but when she saw the Doctor's struggling face, she chose to stand by his side silently. The half heart that represented Kindness gradually slowed down. At that moment, endless black blood veins erupted from the Doctor's body and forced their way into Spider's heart.

Hidden among the numerous black threads were other substances. Of everyone present, only Han Fei managed to pick up on them. The pattern on the Doctor's face was fading, the strange pattern was flowing towards Spider's half heart through the blood veins. With the cover from the black blood veins, the pattern silently migrated onto the Spider's half heart.

'The Butterfly has made its move? The persona bought over by the Butterfly was the Doctor? But why is there only half a butterfly wing on his face? Is there another persona who was seduced?' Han Fei subconsciously let the Dreamer down. If the Dreamer was the other persona, then Han Fei would be finding death hugging him. To be honest, Han Fei was not in a good state either. The curse at Cattle Alley had started to work on him. Hunger tied around his brain like invisible wires. The hunger pain made it difficult for him to think and maintain his rationality. He had no idea how long he could keep on like this. He needed to either kill the Doctor or escape from this building before he was consumed by the curse.

The monsters gathered around the Doctor pounced at Xu Qin. The place was turning into a red hell. The pig-faced monsters were chewed up by curses, and they used their lives to slow Xu Qin's advances. On the other hand, the outsiders who sided with the Doctor ran out from the House of the Butcher and got into a fight with the Spider. They didn't really wish to help the Doctor, they were merely trying to find an opportunity to escape. The biggest massacre was happening at the House of the Butcher. All the butchers were also preys, deaths happened every second.

Han Fei watched everything from the sideline. Cattle Alley was not on the same level as the Ziggurat where the Butterfly resided, but even so, the amount of monsters and spirits at Cattle Alley was already at an astronomical number. Han Fei could not imagine how scary things would be at Ziggurat. On top of that, there was a crucial point. All the buildings he had visited so far, none of the managers were hostile against him, be it the previous building manager, Jin Sheng or Spider, they never targeted Han Fei on purpose. But if Han Fei entered the Ziggurat, then Butterfly would do everything within their power to kill Han Fei.

'I'm already cursed by someone at Ziggurat, I'll have to go there eventually.' His fingers tightened around Rest in Peace. Han Fei's eyes glowed with greater determination. He bit on the tip of his tongue and used the pain to jolt himself awake. Cattle Alley was just a stepping stone to the Ziggurat, his journey mustn't end here. 'The Doctor is currently hindered by 2 other forces, this is the perfect opportunity for me to strike.' Gauging the distance between himself and the surgical room, Han Fei took out Cattle Mask from his inventory. This face featured a strange bestial face, it looked normal but it

was made from the skin of an unknown creature. After Han Fei put it on, his presence was eclipsed and the curse of Cattle Alley on him weakened. He did not feel the intense hunger anymore, instead it was replaced by an animalistic urge. To tear, to grind, to feast, the desire in his heart and his stamina grew.

Han Fei summoned Weep and Drake, the 3 of them approached the surgical room from 3 sides. Weep without the mask approached from the most direct route, his piercing cries echoed everywhere. The moment Weep showed himself, the Teacher beside the Doctor turned to the boy in alarm. Her kind face started to change. As Weep approached, her skin cracked to expose the interlining black scars underneath. For some, they hid their scars well. The scars went deep but they weren't visible from the surface. The Teacher's body started to distort. Her mutation was like her distorted love for the Doctor. She respected the Doctor, trusted the Doctor. She believed the Doctor was the only normal personas among them and salvation was only possible by following the Doctor. To ensure that Weep did not disturb the Doctor, the Teacher led Weep away. Now the Doctor was the only one left inside the surgical room.

While the Doctor was busy plunging the scalpel into the Doctor's heart to weaken it, Drake who wore the number 6 mask appeared without warning. Without any hesitation, Drake tried to reach for the Doctor's chest. He followed Han Fei's order to the tee. "Since you're wearing the mask, why are you stopping me? Only I can save you, you bunch of worms who have been tricked by him!"

The Doctor was still lying in bed. As Drake approached, the bed collapsed around him as 8 appendages reached out from his back. Each appendage was bounded together by flesh and blood. The Doctor would never be the main persona, so he tried to become as close to the Spider as possible through other methods. The 8 spider legs covered in human faces stabbed at Drake. The Doctor's horrible cackle echoed inside the surgical room. He had pulled back his false mask to reveal his true self.

The Doctor's responsibility wasn't to cure anyone, his presence was merely there to tell all the subpersonas that you were all patients, you were all abnormal. Only when everyone was sick that there was meaning to the Doctor's existence. Therefore, when the main persona started to change due to his adoption of the child, the Doctor was the first to reject it. The shelves in the surgical room were swept away by the spider legs, things littered everywhere. Drake tried his best to stay alive. His wounds were still recovering and he was too weak compared to the Doctor. The Doctor should be a large Lingering Spirit. If the Doctor hadn't needed to distract him to ruin Spider's heart, Drake wouldn't have a chance at survival.

"Why run? Why stop me? Don't you want to feel normal again?" With each of his claims, black blood leaked out from the Doctor's body. The blood weaved out a black net inside the surgical room. His voice could affect people's mind and the invisible voice was like a net entrapping his prey. "You no longer need to be a sub existence to anyone anymore, we too can live like him. Is that too much to ask?!"

The 8 spider legs stabbed rapidly at Drake, the spider net weaved from the black blood limited Drake's moment. He was like a poor bug, he tried his best to struggle but his predator only found that laughable. Blood leaked out from the Doctor's body, his skin was breaking inch by inch. The symptoms recorded on his medical report appeared. The Doctor himself had consumed those unique 'meat' but he had managed to suppress the negative influence. However, now that he needed to fight with his full might, the symptoms that he had been suppressing started to surface. The skin of his limbs cracked like bad quality china, his belly expanded. His stomach skin was almost transparent and Han Fei could look clearly into it.

The 8 legs waved madly. The Doctor was looking like an actual humanoid spider, he had become the thing he wanted to be but he didn't get the happiness he hoped for. The Doctor had to assimilate the Spider's heart, to control the spread of disease and to force back Drake. This was why he did not notice the approach of another character inside the surgical room. Han Fei walked out from the Doctor's blind spot. He held the bladeless blade. When the Doctor spotted him, Han Fei shot out like an arrow!

A normal person, holding a bladeless knife charged at a demon.

Several arms gripped the hilt, the thin blade materialized like a falling star. It cut through the Doctor's chest!

The enlarged stomach was sliced open easily. The Doctor didn't expect someone to get so close to him, much less that person having such a sharp butcher's knife. Han Fei planned to decapitate the Doctor but he saw the red blood threads around the Doctor. He wouldn't have the chance to get too close, the enlarged stomach was the only opening he saw. The blade cut through the Doctor's chest. After delivering the attack, Han Fei did not hesitate, he grabbed Drake and pulled him towards the door.

Rest in Peace was a Grade F Butcher's Knife. The blade would leave behind wounds that were hard to heal. Because no matter how strong the hatred, they couldn't shake the brilliance of humanity. His stomach and chest were split open and the wound refused to close, however this was not the worst for the Doctor. One of the meat pieces that crawled out from his stomach suddenly gripped at the half heart inside the Doctor's chest!

The web of black blood was torn apart. The blood and flesh curled around Spider's half heart to form a shield. Like a living creature, it rolled towards the real Spider. The few sentient tenants inside the House of the Butcher all had their eyes locked on that piece of moving meat and then they all jumped at it!

Chapter 256:

“My heart!” The 8 spider legs stomped frantically inside the surgical room. The Doctor’s chest and stomach were sliced open and no matter how many black threads that collected towards them, the wound refused to heal. Clutching his empty chest, his face distorted with anger. The things in the room tipped over as the Doctor climbed up from bed and moved towards the heart. Now, he was the closest to the heart.

‘I have to stop him.’ Han Fei saw the heart rolling on the ground as well. However, he was too weak to stand up to a Lingering Spirit. If the Doctor even touched him, he would be in mortal danger. The only thing Han Fei could do in this situation was to try to harass and stop the Doctor, to weaken him. With the Cattle Mask, Han Fei followed behind the Doctor like a silent ghost. Han Fei would help the pig-faced monsters which were knocked apart by the Doctor by giving them a final release with Rest in Peace.

The heart had attracted the attention of not only the Doctor and Han Fei but also the many outsiders. They noticed that as long as they were close to the heart, the curse of the Cattle Alley would weaken. Furthermore, since the Doctor valued it so much, it had to be very important. The Doctor killed anyone who dared to steal from him but even so he couldn’t stop everyone. Every monster at the House of the Butcher had lost its mind. There was Spider’s real self outside the building, and Xu Qin inside the building, previously, their best option was try to escape Cattle Alley and suffer with its curse but now a better option had presented itself.

The human heart was easily swayed. The moment the cure for the curse appeared, the Doctor’s fragile alliance collapsed immediately. Without the outsiders stopping him, Spider’s fleshy body finally entered the building. The bloody writer stared at the heart that fell from the Doctor’s chest and his body mobilized again. Blood and flesh flowed like a river heading towards the centre.

“You’re so persistent! Why can’t you just stay dead?!” The Doctor was incensed. While he was distracted by the Spider, Han Fei took this opportunity to cut off one of the Doctor’s legs. Blood spurted. When the leg dropped to the ground, the lingering spirits on the unravelling flesh laughed happily, they finally found release. He was only distracted for a second and one of his legs was chopped off. The Doctor raged, he had never encountered such a cunning enemy before. He had half a mind to tear Han Fei apart but he didn’t have the time. If he hesitated, the Spider would grab his heart back.

Resisting the pain, the Doctor charged towards the heart wrapped in flesh. Seeing the Doctor ignore him, Han Fei became more brazen. But just as he chased after the Doctor and planned to go for the second leg, the landlord’s ring chilled. Han Fei stopped and his body shivered. Han Fei looked towards a

direction and his pupils narrowed. At a corner of the ruin stood a pale-faced woman. She reminded Han Fei of the ever approaching ghost in real life!

'Butterfly?' Even though this was just a guess, Han Fei already had a hard time calming down. He held the hilt and stared down at the woman. Despite the chaos at the House of the Butcher, the woman kept her eyes on Han Fei. She had no expression and held a book whose cover had been torn away. Two figures collapsed behind her. One of them was extremely muscular. His mask was shattered and his face crushed like he was bulldozed. The other should be a student. He wore a pair of headphones. There was a strangulation mark around his neck. His eyes were popping out and his chest sunk. 'That's the Spider's 2nd persona, the ruffian and the Student which represented the Spider's yearning for the future and outer world!'

With Han Fei watching her, the expressionless woman took out a mask and placed it on her face. She did not even attempt to hide the number behind the mask. When the mask joined with her face, Han Fei could see the pattern of the other half of the butterfly wing.

'Number 9? The Reader?' Among all the subpersonas, the Reader was the most unique. Even Spider's psychologist couldn't tell whether she was the first or last to appear. She had always been by Spider's side, from his birth to his death but her presence was very weak. She was like an outsider and was forgotten by everyone. In the movie, there were little scenes involving the Reader and most of them were correspondence with the writer. 'Spider is a writer and used his life to complete 2 books; the Butterfly is the Reader, they are the only people who have read those books.' Spider and Butterfly were mortal enemies but the writer and the reader were soul partners. Because they understood each other so well, they knew they had to kill the other.

When the 9th persona appeared, it felt like Han Fei had returned to real life. The approaching ghost brought with it inexplicable pressure and horror. The Spider's 9th persona should be the closest to the Butterfly. While the Doctor did everything on the surface, the Reader was watching from the dark. Perhaps the Doctor didn't even know the other half of the Butterfly was the Reader. When the accidents kept happening, the 9th persona finally decided to show herself.

Guarding himself with Rest in Peace, Han Fei had never been so focused. He still couldn't quit the game, if he fell into the Reader's hands, he might be trapped forever. The Reader's gaze wandered between Han Fei and the heart. Finally she made a decision. She tore out a paper from the coverless book. With bloodied fingers, she sketched out Han Fei's face on the strange book. When the painting was done, small wounds appeared on Han Fei's body. They continued to widen like they were tearing Han Fei apart from inside.

'A curse?' Before Han Fei could react to the curse, the landlord's ring chilled further. He lifted his head and saw that the Reader had abandoned the Spider's heart and was coming after him!

'The Butterfly has chosen me between me and the Spider?!' He couldn't understand why the Reader would abandon Spider's heart and choose to kill him instead. 'For the Butterfly, I pose a bigger threat than the Spider?!'

Han Fei was already feeling unwell when he was placed under the curse. His speed and strength couldn't rival the Reader, it would be easy for her to kill him.

"Drake!" Han Fei retreated. He knew Drake wouldn't hold her off for long so he made preparation for the worst. While the curse had not taken its full shape, he ran towards Xu Qin. If he had to die, Han Fei would rather die in Xu Qin's arms. At least he would be absorbed into her curse and wouldn't be a wandering soul. He ran at his highest speed but even so, he didn't forget to take account of the situation inside the House of the Butcher. The Doctor and the outsiders fought for the heart but the heart appeared to have eyes of its own. It was surprisingly agile for just a heart. It weaved through the attacks and made its way to the Spider. At that moment, Xu Qin who had butchered all the pig-faced monsters appeared to block the heart's way. Curse and blood crested a wave. The heart immediately changed its direction.

However, as it turned around, it careened right into Han Fei who was running this way and they bumped into each other!

Feeling a weight on his chest, Han Fei didn't expect the heart would run right into him. After the quick shock, Han Fei was covered in cold sweat. The landlord's ring emitted such chill that the ring almost shattered. Hugging the heart, he looked around. Every monster inside the House of Butcher was staring at him.

Chapter 257:

The spotlight that he was owed in real life now shone brightly on him in the cryptic world. Han Fei's throat quivered as he took in the many gazes that aimed to tear him apart. He was having trouble accepting this level of popularity. Hugging the half heart that represented Kindness, the heart did not harm Han Fei, if anything, it appeared to have calmed down in Han Fei's grasp.

“Off you go!” Without any hesitation, Han Fei tossed the heart towards the location where the fleshy Spider was. That was all he could do to bring them closer. Han Fei’s idea was noble but what happened next stunned him. The heart wrapped in flesh appeared to be glued to his palm and refused to let go!

Compared to the disgusting and malicious nature of the monsters inside the building, Han Fei’s human warmth, and kindness was like a shining beacon. Spider’s heart appeared to believe that it was safest to stay with Han Fei. Han Fei’s back was drenched with cold sweat. He was in too much trouble himself for others to turn to him for help. He was already at his limit, dealing with the Reader. He wasn’t able to take on the whole building of monsters. He tried to swing the heart off but the thing remained stubbornly stuck. Even the way Xu Qin looked at him was changing. She licked her lips as if wanting to trap him inside the pool of curses.

The Doctor who was not far away was enraged even further. The enmity between them had reached a whole new level.

Spider’s half heart refused to leave. Han Fei also noticed that the heart was covered in scars and wounds, it probably couldn’t move anymore. Now Han Fei only had 2 choices, either he chopped off his own hand or he returned the heart back to the Spider as fast as he could. He gritted his teeth, hugged the heart and changed his trajectory. He raced towards where the fleshy Spider was!

When he made that decision, the system announced in his mind. “Notification for Player 0000! You’ve triggered Grade F Hidden Mission—Spider’s Fate!

“Spider’s Fate: Return the heart of the manager at Cattle Alley to the Spider and help him regain control of Cattle Alley; or consume the heart of kindness and gain control of Cattle Alley for yourself! The choice will decide your own as well as his fate!” Han Fei wasn’t paying attention to what the system was saying at all. He had entered the zone. Similar to athletes at the last stretch of the race, he tuned out the surrounding noises. Furthermore, from what Han Fei knew of the system, it would have nothing helpful to say anyway. Han Fei’s understanding of the system was that it was cold, inhuman and most of the time, a useless observer.

Moving through the obstacle course which was the wreckage of the House of Butcher, Han Fei was as agile as a professional parkour athlete. He didn’t dare to make even the smallest mistake because if he tripped here, he might not have the chance to stand up again. A living human whipping through ghosts and spirits, Han Fei was challenging his limit every single day.

The Reader, Doctor and Xu Qin, these three immeasurably terrifying presences chased after him. However to Han Fei's surprise, just as the Reader was about to catch up to him, Xu Qin mobilized her curse to tangle over the Reader. Even though the woman had lost her mind, she refused to let anyone else harm Han Fei. It was like she had decided only she could kill Han Fei. The fight between the 3 forces gave Han Fei a chance at survival. He had never run as hard as he did at that moment.

In just a few seconds, Han Fei already had to face death several times. If not for his strong mental constitution, he would be frightened to death already. Han Fei's goal was to reach the Spider. The 3 scary presences behind him read his mind clearly and they refused to give him the chance to get close to his goal.

He was unable to transport the heart to Spider and the curse on Han Fei was getting harder to bear. The Reader kept drawing Han Fei's body part on that cursed book. It felt like bugs were biting through his limbs and joints. Han Fei saw with his own eyes how his flesh was slowly being torn apart. The blood capillaries under his skin appeared to work against his own body. Thanks to the buff from Midnight Butcher, he gained resistance against flesh and blood-type curse or else he'd be dead by now.

'What to do?' Things could not have been worse. Han Fei tried to get close to the Spider but there was a gulf between them. 'I need to escape from the House of the Butcher!'

Every decision that he made then could be his last. 1 second of hesitation would mean death. Han Fei's brain spun rapidly. While he raced through the crumbling ruin, he already made up his next step of plan. Using the holes on the wall as footholds, Han Fei climbed up to the 2nd floor. He shimmied to avoid the stabs from the Doctor's spidery legs. He dragged his body upwards while keeping his eyes on the Spider. Since he was surrounded on all sides, the only way Han Fei could go was up.

By climbing up the wall, it looked like Han Fei had given up the idea of returning the heart to the Spider. He was more focused on his own survival. The House of Butcher was dissembling. Han Fei finally reached the 3rd floor but he was now even further from the Spider. His body slowed due to the curse. The Doctor and the Reader surrounded him from both sides. When the giant appendages plunged at Han Fei's head, the man did something no one expected. Tensing all the muscles in his body, he sprinted towards the hole in the middle of the house!

Just like how Spider once fell from the 4th floor, from reality into his inner world, Han Fei jumped down from the hole on the 3rd floor into the torrents of blood and flesh underneath!

Since Spider entered the House of the Butcher, he had formed a raging pool of flesh and blood on the first floor. Any unfortunate soul to have fallen into it would be mulched to feed into the ghastly pool.

Han Fei and the Spider were different individuals but shared surprisingly similar experiences. Han Fei had once stood inside the writer's room and empathized with the determination and sadness he felt before he made that leap. The current Han Fei was the past Spider. Holding the half heart, Han Fei leaped towards the Spider without any hesitation. He had no idea whether it was despair or hope awaiting him, he could only do the thing that he believed was correct.

The wind howled into his ears as he fell. The wounds on Han Fei's body tore open and they left scarlet trails through the air. He forced his eyes to open and his pupils reflected the image of the Spider made from flesh and blood.

'I was the one who destroyed half of your heart so I shall be the one to deliver to you your other half. I've helped you cut away the pain and malice, and deliver for you the kindness and hope.' Han Fei's body sunk into the pool of blood and flesh. The half heart in his hand was immediately engulfed by the blood and washed towards the Spider who was in the middle of the pool. When the half heart was encased into Spider's chest, the whole House of the Butcher collapsed. Spider who had only been operating on basic instinct opened his eyes. His murky eyes looked at the devastation around him before they landed right on Han Fei.

Chapter 258:

Of all the individuals Han Fei had encountered, Spider was undeniably the most complicated one. He had 9 different personas, sometimes even he couldn't recognize himself. Consumed by the bloody torrents, the curse on Han Fei was suppressed and his wounds healed. Strength returned to him but the pain didn't alleviate, if anything, the pain had gotten more intense. Han Fei inspected his wounds and realized that each wound possessed 2 kinds of curse. The Spider did not know how to remove Butterfly's curse, so the only thing he could do was to apply a deeper curse on Han Fei, to use poison to fight poison. Spider bore the sin and murder accumulated at Cattle Alley alone, now he was applying a small part of it on Han Fei's wounds.

The pain caused Han Fei to roll amidst the blood water. Seeing how energetic Han Fei was, Spider left him be and turned his attention instead to the Doctor and the Reader. The black blood threads around his heart disappeared but the strange butterfly pattern had imprinted itself on the heart. It had become a part of the heart of Kindness. The heart was now inside Spider but Spider didn't dare to use the power of the heart lest the pattern of the Butterfly continued to spread. The wound on his chest closed and Spider rebirthed through the flesh from endless pig-faced monsters. His body was slowly returning to

normal, his every movement influencing this dirty world. His face became more defined. Spider stood on the ruins of the House of the Butcher and found himself surrounded by 3 scary figures.

As the manager, he was the most powerful threat at Cattle Alley, even in his current state, no one would win him in an individual fight. However, if the 3 figures worked together to attack Spider, then the situation would be different. Therefore, the result of the fight depended not on Spider but on the out of control Xu Qin. If Xu Qin decided to work together with the Reader and the Doctor to become the next manager at Cattle Alley, then things would be very dangerous for Spider. However, if Xu Qin went after either the Reader or the Doctor, then the situation would be heavily weighted against the two subpersonas.

The Reader and the Doctor understood that. When the Reader turned to glance at Xu Qin, the woman who originated from curses was already charging at her. There was no reason, and no explanation, the Reader couldn't understand why Xu Qin would come after her. She did notice that Xu Qin was staring at the book she was holding, examining the broken Han Fei in her paintings.

While Xu Qin and the Reader were caught in a fight, the Spider made his move towards the Doctor. All the hidden blood vessels inside the ruin, the blood and carcasses on the ground were all under the Spider's control. The Doctor merely changed his physical appearance to look like the Spider and used the black blood threads to simulate the Spider's ability but the Spider was above these tactics, after all, his spider web was this whole world. Once one was inside the Cattle Alley, one wouldn't be able to escape, not even the Butterfly. The blood and flesh moved, everything within sight mobilized to stop the Doctor. Before the Spider even got near, there were already plenty of wounds on the Doctor's body.

To assimilate the Spider's heart, the Doctor was already wounded. His chest was sliced open by Rest in Peace and one of his legs was cut off during the chaos. Facing the Spider alone, the chance of the Doctor winning was zero.

The Doctor turned to the Reader but she was not in a good state as well. Xu Qin was like a mobile gate of curses, the 13 table knives opened an unimaginably horrifying door. The two frontlines were crushed. The outsiders bought by the Doctor knew things were not looking well, and they hurried to escape from the House of the Butcher. More blood and flesh gathered around Spider. A large and thick blood vessel connected Spider with the ruin underneath him. Blood submerged Cattle Alley and the Doctor's last hope. The Doctor's sharp appendages were grabbed by hands that materialized from the blood. The large body felt like it was sinking into quicksand, the more he struggled, the quicker he sank.

The Doctor was a rare Large Lingering Spirit but he was no match for the Spider at Cattle Alley. Everything around him was made into a big net to entrap him. Han Fei finally witnessed the true terror

of the manager. Each manager had their own unique talent. The Spider's talent was webbing, he could turn everything within his sight and possession into an invisible web. He had complete control over Cattle Alley because everything in this place had fed on his blood and flesh before. There was no screaming or hysterics, the way Spider killed was uniquely serene and gentle.

"No wonder the people from Ziggurat didn't dare to come here before Spider's consciousness shattered. The moment they step into this place, they'd die." Han Fei was envious of the Spider's ability, compared to his ability of summoning Huang Yin, it was far more useful. The appendages that grew out from the Doctor's back were yanked off one by one. He splashed in the blood water. Spider looked at the man silently, there was no pity, no joy, not even excitement in his eyes. It was like he had already foreseen this ending many times.

The Doctor cursed and growled as his body was slowly pulled underwater. Eventually only a numbered mask remained of the Doctor. Then, the blood water floated into the Reader's room and digested the Ruffian and the Student. Spider's eyes scanned the different masks before turning to the Reader who was still fighting Xu Qin. His expression finally changed. It was colored by loneliness and confusion. In Spider's world, the Reader was his own friend, the only persona who could understand him and listen to him. But from some moment onwards, the Reader started to change.

Spider then realized the Reader was not a friend but a disease. He started to take medicine and undergo psychiatric interventions and counseling. He was finding a time to greet everyone farewell and achieve final rest. However, Butterfly's intervention ruined everything. Even though Spider had not killed anyone in real life, and had not violated any law, he knew that his hands were bloody because he had to kill 8 different versions of himself. Other people would never understand Spider, even the most professional psychologist couldn't really walk into his heart. Spider had always been lonely.

After the Reader saw the disappearance of the Doctor, she knew everything was over. Struggle would be a waste of time. "Spider, you are always so lucky, but do you really plan to spend the rest of your life forever inside Cattle Alley?"

After evading Xu Qin's curse, the Reader grabbed at the book and then she tore them into bits and threw them into the air. The first few pages were about Han Fei but every page after that was pictures of Spider painted in different horrifying deaths. Each of the paintings contained an immense curse!

"You have a pair of eyes that can see the truth, and that is why I wish to bring you to witness the world with me. We could have been partners but you resisted me from real life to the mental world. You resisted me just to protect that little bit of humanity?! Why?" The curse on the book was triggered all at once. The pattern on the Reader's face started to spread.

The Spider's reconstructed face sighed deeply. He looked at the Reader for a long time before he asked the question which had been buried deeply inside his heart. "When you first appeared inside my mind, were you the Reader or the Butterfly?"

The Reader answered with an explosion of her soul. As her body blasted everywhere, the half wing of a blue butterfly flew at Spider's heart at amazing speed! The Reader's last attack was to send the other half of the Butterfly pattern into Spider's heart!

"No matter, I already have an answer." Spider had regained his sentience but looking at the flying butterfly, he did something inexplicable. He tore open his healed chest and dug out the half heart with Kindness. He studied the pattern on the heart like he was admiring the prettiest gem in the world. "There was never the Reader to begin with, we are all just mad and delusional." He mumbled to himself. Spider only lifted his head when the half butterfly came incredibly close to him. His hands that held the heart suddenly tightened. Before the butterfly could touch it, Spider personally crushed his heart!

The butterfly pattern lingered on the broken flesh. The kindness and humanity inside the heart were transported by the Spider into Xu Qin. The layer of curse was peeled back. When Xu Qin was enveloped by Kindness, her expression turned difficult and pained. Her eyes gave a glimpse of the immense battle happening inside her heart. After giving the Kindness as a gift to Xu Qin, Spider used the last of his energy to raise a large wave from the blood pool and slam it against the ruin of the House of the Butcher.

Blood rained from the sky. The butterfly wings were crushed and the wave also washed away most of the curse around Xu Qin. Spider stood at the space where the House of the Butcher once stood. "I've been constantly searching and thinking and I ended up trapped inside the world that I built, bound by the web I weaved. Thank you for cutting open a gap for me to escape." Spider picked Han Fei out from the pool. He could see the humanity shining within Han Fei and Spider's eyes colored with unbridled envy. "With regards to how to survive in despair, you've given me a new answer." After dropping Han Fei beside Xu Qin, Spider's body weakened and thinned. He reached his hands into the pool of blood and soon straightened up with broken pieces of heart in his palms.

The heart pieces in his left palm were rotten and ugly, while the pieces in the right palm were bleeding with fresh blood.

Chapter 259:

At this moment, Spider looked more like a common person, there was nothing too special about him. The hearts representing Sin and Kindness had both been destroyed, his connection to Cattle Alley was slowly being weakened. The dirty, ugly world was returning back to normal. The blood washed away everything, and the waves pushed Han Fei back to Xu Qin's side. When he opened his eyes, he saw Xu Qin who was struggling in pain.

Spider's heart of sin supported the sinful production at Cattle Alley, his heart of kindness had special power as well. By destroying his heart of kindness, Spider tried to pull Xu Qin out from the cursed abyss. He did that not only to help Han Fei and Xu Qin, he was also doing this for himself too. If he didn't help Xu Qin regain control, he would end up in a battle that had no winner. The blood waves washed away the curse that surrounded Xu Qin. The Kindness awakened the voice of logic within Xu Qin. As the manager, Spider did everything he could to create a chance for Han Fei.

Han Fei naturally understood how rare this chance was. When he opened his eyes, he already moved his body. He stood up and ran towards Xu Qin before the curse had the chance to regather. The 13 table knives pierced into her body and his heart. Xu Qin was like a nailed bloody angel. Her consciousness was barely there anymore. As an actor with masterful acting skill, Han Fei could invoke any expression he wanted and come up with the best lines on the spot but at that moment, he didn't say anything. The only thought in his mind then was to help Xu Qin return to normal.

Noticing the approaching Han Fei, Xu Qin gnashed her teeth, as if to scare Han Fei away. The curses were regrouping. When all the curses gelled back together, Xu Qin would lose control again and Han Fei would be dragged down by the endless curses and die a horrible death. Pain flashed across the crimson eyes. Xu Qin was losing control of her body again. As Han Fei continued to approach, she shouted shrilly, almost tearing her beautiful lips open!

Anyone who saw Xu Qin then would think she was a monster. She was trying her best to show her danger and terror but that did nothing to stop Han Fei. Han Fei powered on with will and determination. Han Fei stopped before Xu Qin, he planned to use his own hands to pull out the 13 knives. The 13 knives were the key to unlock the door of curses. Han Fei knew that to get back the normal Xu Qin, he had to remove all the table knives. As Midnight Butcher, Han Fei had curse resistance against blood and cold steel but even so, when his fingers touched the table knife, the curse swam down his arm instantly. His skin split open and the warm blood splashed on Xu Qin's dress. If he couldn't even touch them, how was he supposed to pull those knives out?

Xu Qin shrieked again. Malice and melancholy erupted from her body. She raised her arm to mobilize the remaining curse. They morphed into vines and whipped Han Fei to the ground. Han Fei bit his teeth against the pain but he did not give up. He barrelled on. With an indescribable emotion in his eyes, Han Fei reached his hands towards the table knife stuck in Xu Qin's heart. The knife was very short and it had

a human skin cover around the hilt. Han Fei closed his hands around the hilt and his palms tore open immediately. However, perhaps the human skin cover contained some kind of meaning to Xu Qin, even though she was no longer in control, the curse did not phase through the cover.

“To protect me from being burned by curses, you’ve made me this human skin cover. Do you think I will let go now because of some physical wound?” The pain from his palms reached his arms but Han Fei smiled brightly. His body shook tremendously from pain but he still tried his best to pull the table knife out. The blood red blade slowly edged out from the body. Hundreds of curses caged Han Fei but he didn’t seem to notice them. “You probably never thought this table knife would bind us together, right?” Warm blood slithered down his arms. Just as the curses were about to reunite around Xu Qin, Han Fei managed to yank the table knife out!

The human skin cover was soaked in blood. The curse around Xu Qin dissipated and some rationality returned to her eyes. Her eyes widened and she saw as Han Fei lifted his wounded arms to reach for another knife on her body. Despite the pain and curse, Han Fei was smiling. His smile was awkward, but everyone could feel his joy. Xu Qin had stopped attacking, she just stood there, observing the man before her. As the knives got removed one after another, her memory and consciousness slowly returned.

When the door of curses opened, these 13 table knives created the biggest distance in the world. Xu Qin had never imagined someone could close that distance and look so happy while doing it. All 13 knives were pulled out and Xu Qin regained her lost rationality. The two heavily wounded individuals looked at each other and it was Han Fei who spoke first. “Shall we go home now?”

Xu Qin didn’t say anything, she merely nodded. At the same time, the robotic voice announced, “Notification for Player 0000! Friendliness level with Xu Qin has reached the maximum! Triggered the preliminary missions for the hidden profession, Lapidarist!

“Lapidarist: Your affinity with this profession increases further! This is a very unique profession, it is extremely rare. After obtaining this profession, you’ll have more chances to procure help from the spirits. With increasing charm, you’ll find it easier to increase friendliness level with spirits. However, if you do not use your influence wisely, you might end up dead, for the spirits would kill you so that you’d be with them forever.

“Preliminary Mission for Lapidarist: Try to shape the friendliness level of 3 Lingered Spirits. After lowering their friendliness level, double them.”

After scanning the details, Han Fei chose to ignore it, he was not one to manipulate other people's feelings. Perhaps this had to do with his background. He could empathize with the despair of these spirits and it was why he was sincere in helping them find hope. Perhaps because of this outlook, his neighbours, colleagues, and students were willing to stay beside him.

'Compared to a Lapidarist, Midnight Butcher is more suitable for me.' Now that the House of the Butcher had collapsed, Han Fei was probably the last and only Midnight Butcher in the cryptic world.

Chapter 260:

Han Fei took the first steps, but he realized Xu Qin did not follow. When he turned back to look, he saw Xu Qin tip to the side. Xu Qin was in an extremely weak state. She couldn't even move, that was the aftereffect after unlocking the gate within herself. He reached out to hold Xu Qin. To Han Fei's surprise, even without using Soul-depth Touch, he was able to come into contact with Xu Qin. It appeared like Xu Qin had fully trusted him. "Let me carry you."

The completely defenceless Xu Qin had something charming about her. Han Fei carried her and allowed her cold arms to wrap around his shoulders. Despite her appearance, Xu Qin was very light, the only weight appeared to have come from her clothes. Han Fei couldn't help but admire the hands that crossed before his chest. They were fair and flawless. Seeing Xu Qin this weak felt incredibly surreal. Out of the intention to know Xu Qin better, Han Fei used Soul-depth Touch. But the moment the ability was activated, an unimaginable pressure came from behind him!

His knees buckled. If not for the blood water, his kneecaps would have been crushed. His back bent and his bones felt like they were about to break. It felt like he was not carrying a person but a sea made from curses!

After deactivating Soul-depth Touch, the pale-faced Han Fei tried to stand up from the ground.

"Do you need help..." Weep toddled over but before he could get any closer, the boy was dragged away by Drake. Taking in his neighbours who watched from afar with interest, Han Fei shook his head and righted Xu Qin on his back. After knowing Xu Qin's innermost secret, and felt personally the weight she was literally bearing, Han Fei had a deeper understanding of his sisterly neighbour. Wading through the blood, Han Fei stopped before Spider, "Thank you for saving her."

Spider slowly turned around to face Han Fei. He looked much older. "I haven't heard that in a long time already. But I should be the one thanking you, if not for you and your friends, I would be brought under Butterfly's control already."

"Please don't say that, I have a feeling you could have saved yourself through other methods, you merely didn't have the chance to use them." Han Fei took in the two broken hearts in Spider's hands and he was quite embarrassed. "How are you going to control Cattle Alley without the hearts? How about you come with me?"

Spider gave Han Fei a once-over. His tired face brightened with a smile. "Did you recruit them using this method as well?" Han Fei was about to explain when a large wound appeared on Spider's chest and the man grimaced in pain.

"Are you alright? Is there anything I can help with?"

"I'm fine."

"But your chest is literally breaking open..."

"I'm fine." Spider mixed the pieces of the two hearts together and mashed them into his chest. "Sin and Kindness are interconnected, there shouldn't be such a clear delineation. I was being too extreme in the past." Spider walked over the ruin of the House of the Butcher. Even though he literally had 8 other selves, Han Fei realized Spider was probably the loneliest person in the world. "Found it." Spider unearthed something that looked like a pocket talisman from the ruin. Han Fei saw that in the writer's room before, it was hanging beside the hidden compartment, "This thing has been protecting me for a long time. As a token of appreciation, I shall give it to you. Remember, only open it when you are in absolute danger and there is no other choice."

Seeing how serious the Spider was, Han Fei did not reject it. When he touched the talisman, the robotic voice said, "Notification for Player 0000! You've discovered Grade F consumable—Spider's Talisman. What is inside this talisman? Open it to find out." This was the second Grade F object Han Fei obtained, so it was very precious.

"I can't leave Cattle Alley for the foreseeable future. The Butterfly will come for you so you need to be very careful." Spider reminded Han Fei. The smile never left his face, this was not the Spider Han Fei had imagined.

"Actually I've already been cursed by the Ziggurat, the curse will trigger within 7 days to 1 month. So even if they don't come to me, I'll have to go to them." Han Fei and Butterfly, only one could survive.

"With your current ability, I'm afraid you won't be able to defeat it." Spider said sadly.

"Can you tell me what exactly is the Butterfly? I've encountered it several times already but until now, I still have no idea what it is. Is it a ghost? A person?" Han Fei asked the question which had been bothering him.

"Butterfly is a consciousness that can travel freely between dream and reality but one thing's for sure, the Butterfly started as a person! It would possess different people to conduct its plan, but at the same time, it would leave behind its traces on these people." Spider scanned the broken world and explained, "Darkness, hatred, arrogance, madness, the thing is driven by the simple desire to destroy but it expounds the spirit of salvation. It has no friends but it has many disciples who worship it. All those disciples have its brand on them, some of them are quite dangerous."

"Then do you know what Butterfly's weakness is?"

"Butterfly will do everything within its power to create something for you to believe, once you buy into its story, it'll be over for you. So when dealing with the Butterfly, you must be rational at all times. Do not be tricked by it, not even once." Spider was silent for a long time before adding, "The Butterfly has no weakness but I know a way that can temporarily trap it."

"Trap it?"

"When the Butterfly's main consciousness occupies someone's mind, its subconsciousness would stop working. The disciples charmed by it would gain a temporary clarity. That is the result I concluded from experimentations on my different personas." Spider shook his head. "But the Butterfly is too cunning to let its weakness be exposed. You might not even meet its main consciousness before you die in a freak accident." Han Fei tried his best to digest the info given to him by Spider. Of Butterfly's nemesis, only Han Fei and Huang Yin remained. "If you intend to go after the Butterfly, I can give you another clue."

Spider called over the Dreamer. He borrowed the boy's pen and paper to draw out a metrosexual-looking man. "When the Reader first appeared to me, it looked like this. So there is a high chance this is the Butterfly."

Han Fei imprinted the man's image in his mind. He planned to share this info with the police the moment he logged out. Compared to the cryptic world, Han Fei was more confident he could take down the Butterfly in real life. The two chatted like long lost friends until the blood water receded and Cattle Alley returned to normal.

"Notification for Player 0000! You've completed Grade F Hidden Mission—Fate of the Spider! At the crossroad of destiny, you've chosen to help Spider to regain the control of Cattle Alley! Friendliness level with Spider increases by 20! Obtained 2 free skill points!

"Completion rate over 90 percent, congratulations for obtaining Grade F unique title—The last Midnight Butcher.

"The Last Midnight Butcher: You are the last Midnight Butcher to exit the House of the Butcher. This title allows you to enter and leave Cattle Alley freely and grants you part ownership of the meat packing factory. Gain additional 5 percent curse resistance to blood and cold steel type objects.

"Notification for Player 0000! Your personal resume has been updated! On your first day of work, you collapsed the entire industry, turning your profession into a unique title!

"Warning! With the murder of each butcher in the future, the business killer title will gain part of the EXP! When the title levels up, you'll unlock new abilities!

"Having a perfect profession is an important step to possess a perfect life, clearly you are on the right track."