

## Iyashikei 271

### Chapter 271:

“The pets inside the pet shop are all humans?” Taking in the large cages and the human spirits inside them, a surreal feeling overwhelmed Han Fei. Normally humans domesticated animals as pets, this was the first time he had seen domesticated humans as pets. Each of the cages came with a tag that recorded the spirit’s age, nature, personality, it was all very professional. Han Fei had Weep summon the vet out from the urn. When the vet in tattered robe appeared inside the shop, his face paled immediately.

“You guys really came here? We need to leave now! If it discovers us, we won’t have the chance to escape!” The vet gripped Han Fei and hissed desperately.

“Is there still hope for the souls inside these cages?” The caged spirits had human appearance but they saw themselves as pets. They seemed to have surrendered fully and accepted their pet role.

“No! They volunteered to be pets. Furthermore, they’ll be safer as pets here than wandering around outside.” The vet was being very realistic. Even though the caged spirits had lost their freedom and had regressed to animals, at least they gained the protection from the shop owner. They were safe. As long as they could survive, being a pet was not so bad.

“Open the cages, if they are willing then they can come with us. They should at least be given the freedom of choice.” Even in the dangerous cryptic world, Han Fei held onto his principle. He never actively hurt others, he only countered out of self defense.

“You’ll be the death of us all!” With no other option, the vet opened the cages. If not for Weep keeping an eye on him, he would have escaped already. When the cages were unlocked, the spirits inside showed no happiness or gratitude. They looked on numbly. Like trained pets, they didn’t dare to walk out from the cages. If anything, they cowered deeper into the cages as if knowing the cages were a safer place than the outside world.

Han Fei shrugged and walked past the two rows of cages and into the shop. Pushing open the reinforced door, Han Fei was instantly greeted by intense roars and sounds of steel chains clanking against each other. He turned to the sound and saw that the deepest door at the pet store was deep red in color. Thick carpet of animal fur and flesh covered the ground. Several large cages covered with black cloth lined the walls. A large metallic table stained with blood stood in the middle of the room.

“Normally I train and sew the wounds of the pets here. But now this place has been taken over by it.” The vet didn’t dare to enter the room, he was very afraid of this place. Having his neighbours be on their guard, Han Fei pulled off the black cloth from one of the cages.

As the cloth fell to the ground, a man covered in burn wounds, and had a butterfly tattoo on his chest appeared before them. He was about 2 metres tall and he kept ramming into his cage. The man was as powerful as a Medium Lingering Spirit. His eyes were red and his mouth drooling with saliva. A normal chain wouldn’t be able to apprehend him but the chains at the pet store appeared to be different from normal. They were sticky with pet fur and blood. Disfigured souls wound around them.

“The pet shop owner dares to imprison Butterfly’s people?” Han Fei pulled out Rest in Peace when he saw the familiar butterfly tattoo. “I’ll put this thing to rest and then take the chains and cage back home with me. They appear to be cursed objects too.” While Han Fei considered the logistics, crying came from the urn. The muscular man in the cage growled louder, all the chains around him pulled tight.

“It’s over now! It’s coming! We’ve been discovered!” The vet’s face was ashen. He fidgeted about, unable to find a place to hide. Putting on the Cattle Mask, Han Fei stared quietly at the door, preparing for battle. A bloody wind picked up inside the room. There were no footsteps but instead there was a speaking voice that came from outside. It was strange, like the speaker had just learned how to speak. “No matter the type of pet you keep, they have to be vaccinated to prevent the spread of disease.”

The curtains of the corridor were pulled back. A ‘human’ holding a syringe and covered in animal fur appeared in Han Fei’s sight. The monster had a feline face while its body was made into human shape from dead pets.

“This is a ‘pet’ I created out of accident, an undead presence...” The vet said with despair. The monster in the corridor repeated the statement. Its pronunciation was off like it had just learned how to use languages. It did not think much after seeing the open cages. Instead it reached into one of the cages, grabbed the spirit out and stuck the syringe into the spirit’s neck. The black liquid was injected into the spirit. After it collapsed on the ground, the spirit became even more like an animal. The last bit of humanity was vanquished. Pulling out the syringe, the monster turned to Han Fei. Its mouth split into a line, like it was grinning.

“Animals have the tendency to bond with their kin but be careful not to let your pet interact too deeply with wild animals to prevent spread of diseases.” While mumbling these strange axioms, the thing suddenly burst with speed!

Han Fei felt the draft blow at him and then his body was pushed away by an unknown force. When Han Fei came to, he noticed Weep was standing at the spot he occupied earlier. Weep's body protruded with despairing needles. The monster had materialized inside the room. Its arm was injured by Weep and lingering despair seeped through its wound.

'It can move that fast?' Han Fei's physique was not on the same level as the beast. Without his neighbour, he'd be dead already. No wonder Weep and Drake had him stay away from the pet shop back then. They were indeed not strong enough to take on such a threat. Turning its head to look at the spines in its arm, the cat face yawned its maw and its barbed tongue licked at the despair-filled needles. Then it sought out from its fur pocket a syringe filled with red liquid. "If you're accidentally scratched or bitten by your pets, you have to seek medical attention immediately and ask for vaccination." Then it plunged the syringe into its neck.

The black vessels pounded around its neck. The feline creature's body suddenly bloated. Its slightly cute face turned feral. This was its true nature. When the monster went berserk, Han Fei suddenly received a system notification.

"Notification for Player 0000! You've triggered Grade G Hidden Mission—Adopt a Pet.

"With a job comes the stress of the working life, adopting a pet can help provide you with spiritual support, adjust your emotions and relieve your stress.

"A good pet can turn into a good life partner, it is a great source for one to find happiness and bliss. Look at how obedient, and cute this little kitty is. Don't you feel your stress melting away just looking at it?"

Taking in the 3 metres tall 'little kitty' with Frankenstein-like suturing marks all over its body, a 'kitty' where its fangs were so long that they pierced through its jaw, Han Fei's eyes twitched involuntarily.

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'This thing is such a mixed species that one has to doubt if people can tell it's supposed to be a cat.' Han Fei accepted the mission but he couldn't tell who was supposed to be the pet here. The pet shop owner was strong enough to entrap a Medium Lingering Spirit so it had to be stronger than that. Weep wouldn't be able to handle it alone. To ensure that there was no accident, Han Fei summoned all of his

neighbours from inside the urn. If they couldn't win with strength, then they would win with numbers. If the neighbours were not enough, Han Fei still had other reinforcements.

The shrill cries engulfed the pet store. Lee Zai stretched to unleash his brother, Lee Huo. After their adventure at Cattle Alley, Han Fei's neighbours all experienced a categorical improvement. "Meat! I need more meat!" Glowing with red eyes, Lee Huo's skin was covered in blood. He was a literal manifestation of misfortune and tragedy. The fists that were bigger than an adult smashed heavily. He charged at the cat-faced monster like the Hulk. Lee Huo had no feeling of fear.

Before this, the tenants at Happiness Neighbourhood stayed in their own rooms and had no communication, but with Han Fei's help, the former strangers had started to accept each other, and knew how to work in a team. That was extremely rare in the cryptic world. Lee Huo was the tank, while Weep used his cries to interrupt the enemy to limit their movements. Drake guarded beside Han Fei. He gathered power in his hands. He looked for an opportunity to grapple the enemy so that Han Fei could deliver the final cut. The neighbours worked perfectly together but they had underestimated the terror of the monster.

Each of the creature's fur was bristling with curses. Its soul and heart were pieced together, in a way, it was similar to Xu Qin. The difference was Xu Qin was made from curses, while this monster was made from souls and flesh of humans and animals. Weep's despair mainly worked on spirits which this monster was not, instead it operated on an intense hatred targeted at humans. If this monster was allowed a free reign, it would eventually seek breakthrough to become a Pure Hatred.

The cat-faced monster and Lee Huo slammed into each other. The threads on the monster's body unraveled. Pieces of animal carcasses fell out, and the animals' souls were still crying inside the carcasses. Lee Huo didn't fare much better. The cat-faced monster had left a large gash that tore through his chest. Through the wound, one could even see Lee Zai who was slumbering inside Lee Huo. Both the monster and Lee Huo were injured but while Lee Huo's wounds worsened, the injury on the monster was rapidly recovering. In terms of self-healing, Lee Huo was slower than the creature.

This cat-faced monster was immune to emotional and psychological attack, its body was indestructible, its speed and strength overwhelmed everyone present and it could heal rapidly. Other than a lack of intelligence, this creature had no weakness. "Drake, go and help them!" Han Fei retreated once more, but he kept his eyes on the monster's heart. The wounds there did not heal, there were minor cuts. 'The monster is the owner of this place, it has the local advantage. We need to finish this battle as soon as possible.'

As the black anaconda crawled into the ghost tattoo, Han Fei's body temperature plummeted. Resisting the inhuman pain, Han Fei gained an increase in stamina and defense. Yin energy coated his body and Han Fei with masterful cold steel mastery gripped the hilt of the blade. He put down the urn and focused on the 3 neighbours who surrounded the cat-faced monster.

Slowing his breath, Han Fei adjusted his fingers that held the blade. As the monster was rammed into the wall by Lee Huo and lost its balance, Han Fei darted out. Han Fei's narrowed pupils targeted the creature's heart. Han Fei slipped through the three Lingering Spirits and delivered a deep cut!

"Rest in peace!" The blade materialized with a glow. Like a shooting star, it cut through the monster's chest. Blood splattered as the wound on the chest was torn open. The souls trapped inside its body immediately escaped.

'It's still alive?' This opportunity did not come easy to Han Fei, but probably because the monster rarely killed, so Rest in Peace was unable to deliver a fatal blow. Holding its open chest, the cat-faced monster slowed down. As the wounds increased on its body and Han Fei thought victory was theirs, the monster's lips suddenly broke into a humanlike smile. It took a glance at Han Fei. It was a strange feeling like you woke up to your pet tiger smiling at you in the middle of the night. The mouth covered in fur slowly opened to recite another strange direction. "If you have the habit of playing with pets, be cautious of hygiene. You have to bathe your pets often, and you yourself have to constantly wash your hands, take showers and change clothes!"

Then its hands grabbed at the wound around the chest and pulled with full might!

The horrid sound of skin tearing entered Han Fei's ears. After the cat-faced monster shed the wounded skin, there was another brand new body underneath. The redness on its fur was more brilliant, its fangs and claws sharper than before!

'The wounds have healed?' Han Fei couldn't believe his eyes. Other than the wounds left by Rest in Peace, the other wounds had all disappeared like the monster had been rebirthed. 'Each shedding of its skin will grant it new life?' Han Fei shot a glance at the vet. Clearly the man knew about this but he didn't tell Han Fei. "What kind of monster have you created here?" Currently the vet was cowering at the corner. It appeared like he had been scared witness. After tearing off the skin, the hatred inside the cat-faced monster intensified. The vet had everything to do with its current status. One couldn't help but wonder what kind of horrid torture and experimentations had been done on it to become a monster like this.

The reborn monster was so fast that Lee Huo and Drake couldn't catch up with it. Their bodies started to hurt and injure. Of the 3 neighbours, only Weep wasn't affected. The often-ignored boy was slowly narrowing down his despair and cries. While no one was paying him any attention, he was slowly creating a cage out of despair. Lee Huo and Drake were fighting as best as they could. Weep was at a critical point as well. None of the neighbours could afford to be distracted and it was this moment that the vet at the corner started to move. He silenced his presence and used the fragmented pig's mask to cover his face.

The vet had a wonderful plan. While everyone was caught in the battle, he would sneak away. To achieve that goal, he only gave partial info to Han Fei about the cat-faced monster. As he approached the door, malice crossed the vet's eyes. He stole a look back. He saw Han Fei clutch his fingers around the butcher's knife.

'Have fun with my creation. It won't die no matter how many times you kill it.' The vet cursed Han Fei. He saw Han Fei raise the butcher's knife that struck fear in his heart but instead of charging at the cat-faced monster, the man charged at him!

'What?' The vet's glee was severed along with his arm. When he felt the pain that gripped his soul, his face wrenched with disbelief. Even though the cat-faced monster was bearing down on him, Han Fei decided to go after the vet first.

"Have, have you lost your mind?!" Han Fei leaped to close the door. The weakened vet had to edge back to the room to avoid Han Fei. At that moment, Drake, who should be fighting the cat-faced monster, suddenly reached towards the vet's face. The already fragile mask shattered. The vet's presence exploded. He immediately sensed the hostility on him. Sensing his presence, the cat-faced monster stopped attacking the others. Its red eyes locked onto the vet. Before the vet could recover, both Drake and Han Fei joined to attack him again. They forced him to a corner and then quickly leaped back as the cat-faced monster charged at the vet.

The human and pet met again. Weep had successfully finished the last step of weaving the cage. The threads braided from despair trapped the vet and the cat-faced monster inside them. The vet wanted to use Han Fei to buy time for him to escape while Han Fei used the vet as bait to lead the monster into the cage of despair. "Do you think I've forgotten about what you did to Xu Qin at the House of the Butcher?" Han Fei told the vet who was trapped inside the cage with his creation. "I originally planned to give you a chance to redeem yourself, but you've shown that you do not deserve a second chance."

The cat-faced monster growled angrily. Han Fei opened Weep's urn again and many eyes blinked open inside the pet store. After getting Han Fei's present, Ying Yue agreed to his invitation this time and followed him out of Happiness Neighbourhood.

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Ying Yue was Han Fei's trump card. The little girl had never really unleashed her full power before Han Fei so no one really knew the true extent of her power. As the eyes opened inside the room, an indescribable pressure enveloped everyone present. The cat-faced monster inside the cage of despair felt it as well. It threw the dying vet to the ground and looked around with alert. Being the centre of all the scrutiny, Ying Yue walked out from absolute darkness, twisting the light as she went.

Her small body contained a power distinct from other Lingering Spirits. The two dark hollows stared transfixed at the cat-faced monster. Black blood leaked out from her skin. As Ying Yue lifted her hands towards the cage, all the eyes bled. A red world appeared hidden inside the endless darkness. As you met her gaze, you would be sucked into that darkness!

Ying Yue who lived forever in darkness and had never been touched by light had constructed a world from fear and torture in her mind. There was no light and love there, definitely no love and friends, there was only an endless sea of pain!

The cat-faced monster wailed as it used its sharp claws to puncture its brain. It could feel something trying to leave its brain but it was unable to stop it. Its desperation only caused more wounds to appear on its body. This was the first time Han Fei saw Ying Yue fight with her full force. Ying Yue's power was very unique, it was not a curse, or a psychological torment. It did not contain yin energy or negative emotions. She appeared to be able to pull her victims' consciousness into the world inside her eyes.

Both parties were equally powerful. Ying Yue's body trembled. Seeing that, Han Fei ordered the other neighbours to help her. Weep morphed the cage into chains, Lee Hou attacked from the front, while Han Fei used Rest in Peace to add more wounds on the cat-faced monster's body. 'The 5 of us should be able to defeat it now!'

As more wounds appeared on its body, the cat-faced monster pierced its claws under its skin and tore off another layer. Its presence became more foreboding but the wounds caused by Rest in Peace remained. With a loud growl, its eyes bled with blood. Ying Yue's body was reflected in its eyes like she was the only thing it could see now. The arteries under its skin pulsed. The monster rose to full height. Instead of attacking anymore, it slammed its fist into the floor!

The floor cracked. Horrible scent of blood and decomposition drifted out from the ground. 'The pet store has a basement?'

The revealed basement was frightening to say the least. A mass grave was hidden under the cute pet shop. It was stuffed with the carcasses of different animals. Most of them had been sewn together from the needlework visible on their bodies. To Han Fei's consternation, some of the 'failed products' inside the grave were still alive. Their souls lingered in the grave as they struggled painfully. The cat-faced monster dropped into the grave, causing a major splash. It picked up the dead carcasses and stuffed them into its wounds. The animal bodies melted into the wounds but they were unable to restore the wounds caused by Rest in Peace.

"It's growing stronger!" With Han Fei leading the way, all the neighbours charged forward. No one present would be able to take on the cat-faced monster alone. Its scary recovery ability could only be stopped by Rest in Peace but the blade's owner, Han Fei was too physically weak compared to the monster. If he had to face the monster alone, he wouldn't even have the chance to use the knife. Weep and Lee Huo created openings for Han Fei to attack with Rest in Peace. As Han Fei weakened the monster, it became more susceptible to Ying Yue's power. There was something core to the monster which was being sucked into Ying Yue's eyes.

"Keep on pushing!" The highly intense battle lasted for a whole 20 minutes before the cat-faced monster finally cracked. The threads around his heart and head burst open. A lingering spirit shaped like a black kitten was drawn into Ying Yue's eyes. The growling stopped immediately. The cat-faced monster's body froze and everyone turned to Ying Yue. In the world of her eyes, a wounded black kitten hissed angrily. Eventually Ying Yue closed her eyes. After a long time, Ying Yue's eyes started to bleed like the kitten had scratched behind her eyelids. She walked towards Han Fei and grabbed Han Fei's arm. She laid her hand on the ghost tattoo.

"This will be painful." After giving that warning, Ying Yue opened her eyes and stared at Han Fei's back. Han Fei had no idea what happened. As he turned around to look, it felt like someone had taken a brand to his back. The pain was so intense that he bit on his lips until they bled. Moments later, the pain disappeared. Ying Yue looked like she was about to faint as well.

"Ying Yue?" Turning around, Han Fei noticed that the ghost tattoo had a big change. The ghost face was now being bitten by a giant black feline.



“Fuelled by endless torment, the cat is impossible to kill, I had no choice but to trap it inside your tattoo. That should help you though.” Ying Yue sauntered back to Weep’s urn. “When you gain its trust, you can let it out.” After that, Ying Yue returned back to the urn. Touching the tattoo, Han Fei heard the system notification.

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve obtained a beginner level Grade F Ghost Tattoo— Nine Lives.

“Ghost Tattoo—Nine Lives: Gain 5 extra resistance to blood and flesh type curse. The tattoo can help you survive 9 fatal blows.

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve completed Grade G Hidden Mission, Adopt a Pet! Obtained 1 free skill point! Obtained a new pet—Nine Lives!

“Nine Lives (Flesh and Blood Type Pet): Straddles Grade G and F. Possess strong self-recovery and indestructible body!

“Loyalty: 0

“Hidden Talent: Unknown (Will be unlocked after loyalty is over 50)

“Since this is the player’s first pet, the player is awarded an additional skill—Grade G Active Skill, Pet Training.

“Pet Training (Grade G Upgradeable Skill): Only by mastering the basic science behind pet training and adopting the correct training method can you see the training effect double on your pets. It’ll make your training effort more effective.”

Han Fei was baffled. He finally got his first pet in his life. He hadn’t had one before. ‘So I’m a cat owner now?’

Han Fei tried to communicate with the kitten inside the tattoo. When he attempted to touch the kitten’s head, the kitten’s wounds tore open and it grew in size. It wanted to leap out from the tattoo to bite at Han Fei’s hand. ‘Such a cute kitty. It doesn’t aim for my neck but my hand. That shows a purity of heart.

Even though its loyalty is zero now, it's trainable.' It was not easy to find a pet in the cryptic world, so Han Fei did not ask for much.

'I need to do something to show that I mean it no harm. A good beginning is half the journey.' With that in mind, Han Fei turned to the vet. The vet involuntarily shivered. "Based on your wounds, you're not going to survive. Why not make your death more valuable?" Practicing a life of no waste, Han Fei used Soul-depth Touch to pick up the dying vet and placed him beside the ghost tattoo.

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"What are you doing?!" The vet was too weak to resist. The man before him was more cunning than any ghost, he wouldn't be surprised if the man threw him to the demons. "Please let me live. I'll stay to help you..."

"Do you know where these animal carcasses come from?"

"They are the monster's victims, I love animals too much to torture..."

"Do you think the monster is really capable of opening wounds and closing them using medical needles and threads? Would it have that kind of medical knowledge?" Han Fei's question stumped the vet. "I'm a very kind person, I would never harm an innocent person. Since this is between you and your creation, you'll resolve it among yourself." Han Fei dangled the vet before the ghost tattoo. After getting Nine Lives' attention, he started a simple training session with the kitten using the vet as leverage. The most basic training Han Fei needed to instill in the kitten was—As long as Nine Lives didn't harm Han Fei, Han Fei would help it seek revenge. The vet probably didn't expect he would end up as a cat toy. With the vet's 'help', Nine Lives finally learned how to obey simple order but its royalty remained a firm 0. Looking at the kitten who had gotten cuter in Han Fei's eyes, he picked up the vet's lingering soul and sighed, 'Is it why people choose to keep pets? It's quite stress-releasing.'

10 minutes passed, and the cat's royalty hadn't changed. In the end, Han Fei sent the vet into the ghost tattoo. After Nine Lives consumed the vet, its loyalty finally increased by 1. At the same time, another system notification came. "Notification for Player 0000! You've explored 10 buildings and successfully activated Yi Ming Street on the map. You've obtained a random exploratory chest, please open the map tab to accept it!" This was a mission Han Fei got before he went to Cattle Alley, he finished accomplishing it. 'I almost lost my life just from exploring this street.' In other games, normal players would have left the newbie village already but for Han Fei, he was still wandering about his first spawn point and his level was a pitiable 11. He had no idea whether he was progressing slow or fast.

Opening the map, a few weak lights were added to the endless darkness. If one didn't look closer, one would miss them. Only by amplifying the map to its maximum that Han Fei managed to find himself. All the buildings he had visited joined together to form a glowing line that was about a finger long. 'Just how big is the cryptic world? I don't think I'll finish exploring it in my life.'

The map of darkness was despairing to say the least. Han Fei sighed softly. He refocused and clicked on the exploratory chest.

"Drawing Random Rewards..."

"Congratulations to Player 0000 for obtaining Grade G Support Exploratory Skill—Collector of Specific Item!"

"Please select one specific item type, for example, food, gold, weapon or so on. After your selection is made, when you explore the map, when said item is near you, there is a chance for you to receive a notification about its location."

This was the first time Han Fei encountered a skill like this and it was immensely useful. 'Money is worthless here, food of unknown origin is no different from poison, weapons are not bad but I already have Rest in Peace. What I need now is cursed objects.' If Han Fei was not heading to the Ziggurat, he might consider picking spirits. However, since spirits would be teleported to random places when they entered Ziggurat, it was pointless as well. However, cursed objects were not placed under the same restriction. After giving it some thought, Han Fei selected cursed objects as his interested items of collection.

"You've obtained Grade G support Exploratory Skill—Cursed Objects Collector!"

"This is a passive skill. When there are cursed objects near you, there is a chance you'll be notified by the system!"

"Notification for Player 0000! There are undiscovered cursed objects at the pet store! Please claim them while you can!"

Han Fei had just activated this passive skill and it already paid off for Han Fei.

‘There are still hidden cursed objects here?’ Han Fei and his neighbours ransacked the place before their eyes turned to the caged Medium Lingering Spirit. The red chains that restricted the spirit appeared to be the cursed object they were looking for.

“Open the cage. The man doesn’t matter but be careful of harming the chains.” Han Fei’s neighbours immobilized the spirit for Han Fei to deliver the final blow. Rest in Peace easily cut through the man’s body. Due to his immense sin, the blade sliced through his chest like butter. The spirit groaned in pain. The wound on his body melted with the Butterfly tattoo. Black blood leaked out from the gaping wound and then a broken cocoon dropped to the ground.

“A human cocoon?” Han Fei hadn’t seen this in a long time already but he remembered that a lot of the outsiders controlled by the Butterfly had this cocoon inside them. The Butterfly used them to control the outsiders and made the outsiders a warm bed to nurture the cocoon. The broken cocoon was covered in sticky blood. The unknown worm inside wiggled weakly, it was about to die. Han Fei wasn’t paying it any attention until the lingering spirits at the pet store appeared to be attracted by this strange worm. They all wanted to crawl into the worm’s body like they could seek salvation that way. The worm that was cut open from its cocoon prematurely didn’t have the beautiful wings of a butterfly, it instead was covered in wounds. It couldn’t support the weight of so many animal spirits, it gyrated for several seconds before it went totally still.

‘The human cocoons are used by the Butterfly to control the spirits. The cocoons feed on flesh and humanity, the more complex their host, the prettier the Butterflies which would birth from it.’ Han Fei took out the human cocoon that he found earlier from his inventory. The small human cocoon had been properly fed. The skin was almost translucent, the thing inside was about to be born. ‘What will happen if I stop feeding it humanity but animality?’

Han Fei had no use for the human cocoon anyway. After a moment’s hesitation, he dug out a pool of blood in the mass grave under the pet shop and placed the mature cocoon inside it. Initially there was no change but slowly blood lines appeared on the cocoon surface as it sucked in the animal blood around it. Han Fei dropped the sewn together animal bodies into the blood pool. The spirits on the animal wailed and cried. As the cocoon took in the blood, the lingering spirits appeared to sense hope and they surged towards the cocoon!

The blood pool was soon filled with animal spirits. The spirits accumulated at the pet store gushed towards the human cocoon. ‘What is happening?’ The human cocoon should only feed on humanity but after it was stuffed with endless animal souls, the worm inside the cocoon started to mutate. The

human cocoon which was originally just a thumb wide grew. The blood layers washed away the beautiful pattern, only madness and gore remained. After sucking all the animal blood dry, the human cocoon started to crack.

Han Fei and his neighbours were on high alert as they stared deep into the hole. With a ting, the cocoon broke but it was not a butterfly that crawled out but a strange insect that had two horns on its head and was covered in spines. It looked ferocious. The neighbours looked at each other before they turned to Han Fei. Han Fei was confused too. Why would Butterfly's human cocoon give birth to something like this?

The system could only identify something if Han Fei touched it but seeing the spines on the insect, Han Fei didn't dare to wander too close.

"Boss, for the time I've worked at the convenience store, I've not seen anything like this." Drake tried to approach the insect but the moment he did, the insect made to attack Drake. It was incredibly aggressive. Everyone gave it a try and the insect was only slightly at ease around Han Fei. "Is it because I've fed the human cocoon with my own blood before?"

With courage, Han Fei approached the insect. Seeing a lack of resistance, he tried to touch the insect.

"Notification for Player 0000! You've found Grade G Curse Organism—Big Sin.

"Big Sin: An extremely rare insect that resides in the cryptic world. They are covered with spines that contain Soul Poison. They will only appear in years of big tragedies, they are portents of misfortune." Han Fei couldn't help but turn to look at his finger, "There is poison inside the spines?"

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To identify the insect, Han Fei reached out his hand to touch it. The stomach of his finger was now black and, in a few seconds, he had lost sensation of his entire hand. Black shadow trailed under his skin, as they corrupted Han Fei's flesh, they worked their way towards the man's heart. Han Fei honestly felt no pain at all. His pain receptors were nullified as if it was not his body which was poisoned but his soul. Han Fei's face paled as he took out Rest in Peace. Just as he considered chopping off his finger, the bug crawled over. It bit on Han Fei's finger again and the soul poison was instantly sucked away. The spreading darkness was unwillingly dragged back into Big Sin.

“That is such a powerful toxin.” Han Fei didn’t dare to get any closer to the insect. Just a brush with it and he almost lost his life! “Notification for Player 0000! You’ve survived Big Sin’s soul poison! Curse resistance to poison-type objects increases by 1!”

The insect flitted happily inside the mass grave. Han Fei didn’t want to bring this time bomb with him but he didn’t dare to leave it behind at the pet shop either. The thing that worried him the most was the insect might see his departure as a sign of abandonment and came to take revenge. “Am I... supposed to take it as a pet too?” Even though Nine Lives was scary looking, at least it looked like a cat. Han Fei could persuade himself that it was just a strange kitten unique to the world of the dead. However, Big Sin looked 0 percent like a normal pet. It was tragedy incarnate. Han Fei already had Huang Yin, the ultimate bad luck charm as his best friend as well as Lee Zai and Lee Huo as his neighbours. With how things were progressing, Han Fei had a feeling he would eventually accumulate all the tragedies within the world around him. After a lot of back and forth in his head, with all his neighbours watching, Han Fei reached out again towards Big Sin with an expression akin to resignation towards death. He touched the insect’s head which had the least number of spines and activated Pet Training.

“Training failed! You’ve been poisoned, please seek immediate treatment!”

“Training failed!”

“Training failed!”

...

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve successfully trained Grade G Cursed Organism—Big Sin.

“Big Sin (Grade G Cursed Organism): With your immense determination and contribution to its growth, you’ve gained Big Sin’s friendship!

“Loyalty: 50 (It trusts you slightly because you are the first person who is willing to come close to it)

“Hidden Talent 1: Soul Poison (The poison it carries can scorch one’s soul)

“Hidden Talent 2: Necrophagous (Blood and dead body can help it grow and heal at a faster rate)

“Hidden Talent 3: Natural Selection (Its favorite food is butterflies. All of its power will be doubled when used against butterfly-type curses or spirits.)

“Hidden Talent 4: Omen of Death (According to legend, it can see into one’s death, therefore it likes to stay with those who are about to die)”

Based on the introduction on Perfect Life’s official website, pets with hidden talents were incredibly rare. To have a pet with 1 hidden talent was already rare enough but Big Sin had 4 Hidden Talents at birth. Even though it was only a Grade G pet now, it had a higher starting point compared to the other pets. As Han Fei looked through the introduction, suddenly he didn’t find Big Sin that atrocious anymore, if anything, he saw some cuteness in the way it wiggled about. However, his expression froze again when he read Big Sin’s last talent. ‘It likes to stay with people who are going to die?’

Turning around to look at Big Sin who had stuck to his skin and remained as quiet as a stone, Han Fei’s feeling was complicated. Big Sin’s birth was purely accidental. The reason it liked Han Fei was probably because Han Fei was cursed by people from Ziggurat and his days were numbered. “Well, death is nothing scary. The appearance of this guy at least has provided me with an extra arsenal of weapons.” Han Fei was an optimistic person, if not, he wouldn’t have survived in the cryptic world. Just as Han Fei was contemplating how to bring Big Sin with him, the bug, who had its fill of fun and food, retracted all its spines and practically morphed into a black stone. Han Fei tried to pick it up and Big Sin felt cool to the touch. It would be perfect to use as a pillow in summer. After placing Big Sin inside the urn, Han Fei detached the pet store’s chains. He was not going to let anything go to waste.

“Player 0000, you’ve found Grade G Cursed Object—Red Pet Chain.

“Red Pet Chain: Most of the pets who once used this chain are dead. Their souls and fur are stuck on the chains and they whimper day and night.”

Perhaps because Nine Lives was now his pet, Han Fei didn’t feel any resistance when he picked up the chains and he very easily placed it inside his inventory. “Paper doll, pet chain, can of wishes... I have quite a bit of cursed objects but to survive at Ziggurat, these are not enough.” Grade G cursed items had limited uses. Han Fei wanted a Grade F Cursed item like the paper doll, even a broken Grade F Cursed item was stronger than a perfect Grade G Cursed item.

Using the map left behind by the previous manager, Han Fei started to strategize his plan. In his current area, the most dangerous building was the Ziggurat. If he had to delineate them by level, all the places he had visited were all Grade F and Ziggurat was Grade E. This didn't mean that all the ghosts at the Ziggurat would be dangerous but there had to be at least one extremely dangerous and powerful ghost there. The ghosts at the cryptic world could be delineated into Animated Regrets, Lingering Spirits and Pure Hatred. So far Han Fei had not encountered any Pure Hatred, he had a feeling he would meet one at Ziggurat. "Before I enter the Ziggurat, I should explore as many nearby buildings as I can. If I can draw the dangerous ghosts to the Ziggurat, it'll be best." Han Fei thought to himself, "Speaking of which, I haven't heard that song in a long time already. I wonder where is that Unmentionable now."

Walking out from the pet store with Weep's urn, Han Fei brought his neighbours to drop in on the other shops. After no mission could be triggered at Yi Ming Street, Han Fei returned to Yi Ming Convenience Store. Once he entered the store, Han Fei's heart was gripped by chill. He summoned Drake and Weep before he walked towards the counter. With blood polluting the air around her, the 2 metres tall bride stood behind one of the shelves. She almost gave Han Fei a heart attack.

"It hasn't reached our designated meeting time, has it?" Han Fei lifted his face to the woman and asked with confusion. Instead of answering, the bride dropped a set of clothes to the ground. Han Fei flipped through the clothes and realized it was a security guard outfit heavily stained with blood. The back of the shirt was sewn with the name of XX neighbourhood.

"One of the guards at Ziggurat has gone missing, you'll come replace it in a few days." The bride said chillingly.

"You wish for me to become the security guard at the Ziggurat?" Han Fei glanced at his business killer title and then nodded. "Okay, no problem."

Chapter 276:

Seeing Han Fei accept the guard uniform without any hesitation, the bride's expression changed. She initially thought she would have to coerce Han Fei to agree to this but Han Fei seemed surprisingly eager to accept like he couldn't wait to get to Ziggurat. The bloodshot eyes stared at Han Fei. Now she suspected Han Fei was planning to run and everything he was doing was to confuse her and to buy time.



Holding the guard uniform, Han Fei studied it when he suddenly noticed the bride was still staring at him. 'Why is she still staring at me? She wants me to try it on before her? To see whether it fits or not?' The blood on the uniform hadn't dried and it didn't feel that comfortable. However, to persuade the bride, Han Fei removed the jacket and put on the uniform. The moment he did, an accident happened. The sticky blood stain appeared to gain sentience. A wounded hand reached out from inside the uniform to grab at Han Fei.

"Notification for Player 0000! You've discovered Grade G Cursed Object—Guard 4's Uniform.

"Guard 4's Uniform: The previous owner of this uniform has died in such a horrible death that their body cannot be found. You have to think carefully before putting this on."

The resentment-filled arm reached for Han Fei but was stopped by Weep and Drake. The vicious hands struggled but eventually went limp. 'Even a normal guard uniform from the Ziggurat can be a Grade G Cursed Object, this place sure is dangerous.' Instead of removing the uniform, he made use of this opportunity to have Weep and Drake teach the hand a lesson. The bride watched silently as a human dominated a cursed object. It was not until the vicious hand was grounded down to a red claw that it became more honest. To ensure there wouldn't be more accidents, Han Fei placed the paper doll into the uniform pocket so that they could bond. Using about 10 minutes, the uniform could finally be placed into Han Fei's inventory. It had approved of Han Fei, it was very understanding. 'If I can sneak in as a guard, then I will have a greater chance of completing my plan. The bride has helped me tremendously.'

Han Fei wanted to slip into Ziggurat unnoticed and then give Butterfly a surprise. He was contemplating how to do that when the bride came to give him the perfect solution. With appreciation, Han Fei turned to the bride, "Don't worry, I will help you find the thing you need." If Han Fei's plan succeeded, the Bride could not only have the thing she wanted, she could take everything within rooms that had the number 4. Han Fei's purpose for heading to Ziggurat was singular, it was to kill Butterfly.

With increased interactions, the bride found herself understanding Han Fei less and less. Without saying anything else, she left Yi Ming Convenience Store.

'Happiness Neighbourhood is between Cattle Alley and Ziggurat. Now I'll have to explore my way to Ziggurat.' Based on his calculation, he should be able to get into Ziggurat before the week was up. After leaving a few messages with his neighbours, Han Fei logged off in the store warehouse. Blood descended and the world turned crimson...

Removing the helmet, Han Fei worked his leaden limbs. Thanks to his increased stamina, he managed to survive until now. 'Yet another eventful night over.' Looking at the sky outside the window and the moon hiding shyly behind the clouds, Han Fei thought, 'That's gorgeous.' Han Fei in the past wouldn't have noticed these details, he was too overwhelmed by the hubbub of life. However, thinking back, he couldn't really tell why he was so busy back then. He just felt tired, bordering on hopeless. Opening the window, Han Fei took in several breaths of fresh air and then pulled out his phone to check his unread messages. Most of the messages came from Director Zhang's assistant, everyone at the crew was worried about Han Fei.

After replying to some of them, Han Fei's eyes suddenly brightened. He checked the numbers in his account repeatedly, counting the number of zeros on it. 'The salary for the movie is here!' Perhaps due to his accident at the set, the salary for Thriller Novelist arrived earlier than Twin Flower. 'This is wonderful, if my math is right, after purchasing the multi-purpose gaming hub, I would still have some money left.'

Nowadays, actors' salaries were open and translucent, even the biggest actor wouldn't be paid that much. Therefore most actors opened their own company and then participated in the production themselves, for box office dividends. This had its pros and cons. The pros were if the movie was a success, they would get a big share; but if the movie failed, then they would lose money alongside it.

Han Fei finally could get the gaming hub he wanted, his mood lifted. 'Nothing has changed inside the game, I still need to face life-threatening danger but I'm still so happy to be able to afford the gaming hub, perhaps that is the simple joy in life.' With a new gaming hub, he could play longer, even for 24 hours. Just as Han Fei considered when to make the purchase, Director Zhang who got his reply came in with a video call. Han Fei hesitated before answering it. "Director Zhang? Why are you still up so late at night?"

"I can ask you the same thing. You're still in your outerwear, did you just come back from the police station?" Director Zhang was concerned about Han Fei.

"No, the police have finished their questioning in the afternoon already."

"Good, I just want to personally check up on you. Also, I don't think you should come to the set for the next 2 days." Director Zhang looked very tired with his two dark circles. "There's a murder at the set, even though it was the killer who died but there would be reporters. You better keep a low profile in the meantime."

“Okay.”

“I’ve already urged them to send you the salary. You should try to relax, after all, chasing after the killer, I mean, being chased by the killer should be quite taxing on you.” Director Zhang hadn’t slept since yesterday, he was in a bad state.

“You should rest too. Health first.”

After hanging up, Han Fei opened the internet browser and his name appeared on the hot searches again.

“A murderer infiltrated into a movie set but he ended up dying in an accident!”

“It’s him! That man has struck again! A different crew, the same fate!”

“The polling for the new generation of Death Reaper has begun! This is the first time a non-animated character has entered the polling—Han Fei!”

“Han Fei: I bloom from murders! Like a flower in the dawn!”

Celebrities got on hot searches with different reasons but Han Fei’s reason had always been the same. Closing the phone, Han Fei also closed his eyes to these fluff pieces. ‘They can say anything they want. Well, this is perfect. I’ll have time to go purchase the gaming hub tomorrow.’

After who knew how long, Han Fei finally could have a good night’s sleep. But as he tossed and turned in bed, he found it difficult to sleep because once he closed his eyes he would be reminded of things from the cryptic world. ‘I’ve not experienced this before.’ He opened his eyes and realized he could see the butterfly pattern everywhere. This illusion was new. ‘Was this something Spider experienced? Butterfly did first appear in Spider’s dream. Is this a sign that it is approaching me?’ Han Fei questioned but he did not panic.

After checking all the corners of his room, he crawled into bed and forced himself not to think about Butterfly but his brain kept feeding him images of Butterfly. Avoidance wouldn’t solve the problem.

Instead Han Fei actively tried to think of the scariest, most powerful ghost he knew and had her tear off the Butterflies again and again. Reciting her name, thinking about her every detail, Han Fei slowly fell asleep. "Xu Qin, Xu Qin..."

#### Chapter 277:

Due to his interactions with Spider, Han Fei knew that once Butterfly targeted a person, it would go after their psychological weakness first. Butterfly was a master at manipulating one's mind and dreams. Han Fei had no idea if there were ghosts in the real world or not but he knew Butterfly had been doing its best to convince him that there were and he should fear them. The meat packing factory living compound where Spider once stayed was filled with altars. The older generation who still lived there had deep beliefs in talks of the supernatural, that was probably Butterfly's doing. To deal with Spider, Butterfly had infected the whole building. In Butterfly's eyes, everyone was a usable pawn. Humans were nothing but toys. When Han Fei left the game and thought subconsciously of Butterfly, it could only mean that Butterfly had targeted him. Based on what happened to Spider, Butterfly would next enter Han Fei's dream and become an inescapable nightmare.

Theoretically speaking, that should happen but when Han Fei woke up in the late morning, he realized he hadn't dreamed of Butterfly at all. 'Butterfly didn't appear in my dream but Xu Qin did. Could it be that the black box can prevent Butterfly from infiltrating my mind?' But then no one could really alter another person's dream. Han Fei was confused. He decided to pay attention when he slept again that night.

'When Butterfly fought with Spider, Spider sank into the abyss with it. In the end, Spider used his 9 personas to trap Butterfly in his mental world. My situation appears to be the complete opposite of Spider, it looks like the Butterfly cannot enter my dream.' Han Fei and Spider each had their own ways to deal with Butterfly so the easiest target for Butterfly would be Huang Yin. 'Butterfly might manipulate Brother Huang to his side. Brother Huang is mentally weak and has a cowardly heart. He needs further training.' Han Fei believed he was being too gentle around Huang Yin. He was hindering the man's maximum growth. 'Being trained by me is still better than losing his life to Butterfly.'

Since Han Fei planned to go purchase the gaming hub that day, he would drop by to visit Huang Yin. After a quick shower, Han Fei reported his schedule to the police and then departed for Xin Lu's intelligent city. It was only a few days until Perfect Life's OB, their advertisements could be seen everywhere. They were everywhere you looked. Hearing the excited discussions of the people around him, Han Fei was frankly quite envious. Perfect Like was a perfect social game, it was designed for plays between friends and families. For most players, Perfect Life would be their sanctuary.

Everyone looked at the heaven-like trailers with anticipation, only Han Fei felt slightly offended by the company's PR. If there was heaven, there had to be hell. But most people only were given glimpses of heaven. In hell, the Butterfly was flapping its wings and a storm which could take down the whole city was brewing.

Taking the high-speed train, Han Fei arrived at the intelligent city in about 10 minutes. As he took in the buildings along the way, he was overwhelmed by a sense of surrealism. There was a great technological gap between the old city and the intelligent city but that didn't seem visible to most of the citizens. Most people just had good hope regarding the continuously forward push of technology. After he exited the station and took in skyscrapers and virtual screens, Han Fei who had visited the city before was still impressed. Based on the intelligence GPS, Han Fei easily found the concrete shop for Perfect Life. The shop was situated inside a gigantic mall. There were so many types of technological products that they blurred his eyes. Personal butler who knew more than 77 languages, robot partner that you could be legally married to, a virtual garden, a medic bot and so on. There were things Han Fei had not heard of, much less seen of. This was not Han Fei's fault, after all, if one had the ability, who wouldn't want to enjoy the best of the best?

With Han Fei's meagre income, he had to skimp for years before he could afford the latest gaming hub. And that was when he was still single, he didn't need to support a family. Technological advancement needed money and the companies were not doing charity. People like Han Fei who lived at the bottom layer of the society would only enjoy the eliminated or obsolete products.

"Hello, I wish to purchase a multi-function gaming hub." Han Fei searched for a long time before he found a salesperson.

"Sir, all your needs can be completed online. We will install the gaming hub within 24 hours."

"It's like this, I need a gaming hub that can be connected to a gaming helmet."

"What version of a gaming helmet is it?"

"Erm..." Han Fei's gaming helmet was rather unique. It had injected something into his brain so it was probably altered. Just as Han Fei considered how to answer the salesperson, an imposing middle-aged man walked out from the elevator. He was dressed in a three-piece suit. When the sales people saw him, they all stood up straighter and smiled brighter.

“Is there a problem?” The middle-aged man saw Han Fei and the salesperson. Normally speaking, all the shopping could be done online now. The intelligent shopping companion could handle everything so rarely would a person require the aid of an actual human salesperson.

“Our customer wishes to purchase a gaming hub that can connect to an external gaming helmet, but he cannot remember the model.” The salesperson said with the perfect smile.

“Then give him one that can be adjustable to all external modules.” The middle-aged man helped Han Fei personally. After everything was done, the man dragged the salesperson to the side and they whispered among themselves. Han Fei was not purposely eavesdropping, his hearing was just better than most. When the middle-aged man stepped out from the elevator, Han Fei already recognized him. The man’s name was Kong Tiancheng, Han Fei had met him at Perfect Life’s release press conference. This man was giving a speech on stage when Meng Changan was arrested.

“All the information about Prototype Zero has been sealed, the company will view your contribution seriously. Are you sure you won’t consider my previous offer?”

“CEO Kong, this is not the issue of money. The risk of neurological operation is too high, I still have a family, I don’t dare to risk it.” The salesperson smiled politely but the smile was straining under pressure.

“It’s just a small surgery. There are no side effects, we’ll just inject...”

“Sir, please find someone else. There are a few other workers who were on the job with the crazed employee. Right, there’s someone called Feng Ziyu who is good friends with that employee, you can go find him.” The salesperson gently rejected Kong Tiancheng. After the salesperson left, two more people walked out from the elevator to join Kong Tiancheng, “Brother Kong, still no one agrees to it? Why don’t we just let it be?”

“Never! Our former employee butchered a whole neighbourhood in the game and that will forever be a thorn in my heart. As long as I don’t get to the bottom of this, I will not sleep well!”

“But haven’t we already handed in a reasonable investigation report? The fault was with the employee and he is already dead.”

“So the truth shall die with his death?” Kong Tiancheng glared at the man.

“The problem never returned in our recent testing and that proved that the incident had nothing to do with our game. It was the employee who had the mental issue.” The man grumbled.

“Don’t ever let your guard down, we mustn’t allow there to be any mistake. Remember that, no mistake!” Kong Tiancheng ordered. “Go and revisit that slaughtered neighbourhood, do not leave any data behind, we have to find that demon who caused our employee to go insane!”

“Brother Kong, you said it yourself, the employee was insane. Was there really a demon? Or was it just an illusion of a crazy person’s mind?” The man sighed, “We understand you will need to conduct the 7th CB but we don’t have any more time. Everyone has waited too long for the game release.”

“Illusion? Then answer me this, how did that employee’s illusion match so perfectly with the message inside Immortal Pharma’s director’s unrevealed will?” Kong Tiancheng demanded, “Jia Cheng, your dad sent you here to learn, so that you can one day contribute to the company. Don’t ever think that this is a holiday.”

“I understand. But we’ve spent too much time on the deleted map, Ziggurat. We still have too many things to do.” The man wasn’t a slacker. In contrast, he was very capable. He just had his own way of doing things.

“Ziggurat takes precedence over everything else.”

“Brother Kong, that undisclosed will might not even be trustworthy. The director was already incoherent by then, how could he possibly remember the face of the demon?” The man still didn’t believe that. “A mask-wearer wielding a bladeless blade, gathering the world’s misfortune and despair around him. That’s too general, they don’t mean anything.”

“You underestimate Immortal Pharma’s former director. He was the man closest to god before the technological explosion. It behooves us to carefully analyse his every word.” Kong Tiancheng’s eyes filled with admiration.

“No matter what, he’s no longer with us and we need to deal with the current director. We can’t waste company resource on meaningless things.”

“I can’t change the director’s mind but he will not change mine either. This might be an isolated incident for you but think about this, what if that employee wasn’t crazy, what if everything he said is real?” Kong Tianzheng shook his head. “The demon is real and I worry that Perfect Life is its Pandora’s Box and we’re going to open it.”

“Brother Kong, you’re overthinking this. Perfect Life is just a game.” The man couldn’t understand Kong Tiancheng’s worry, he couldn’t see the point.

“It is indeed just a game but it is a game that has no precedence. You do not understand its true meaning and power.” Kong Tiancheng didn’t explain. He turned and left. Han Fei’s eyes followed the man. He saw the warning sign the man passed. “Do not presume to be God, humans should keep their research target to themselves.”

Han Fei stared at Kong Tiancheng silently, he remembered everything the man said. He didn’t expect people from Deep Space Tech to be also investigating Ziggurat, the supposedly deleted map. ‘Could they have discovered something wrong about Ziggurat? Or is this another one of Butterfly’s doing?’

“Sir, are you satisfied with the product?” The salesperson returned to Han Fei’s side.

“Yes, please do deduct the payment from my account. I’m free today so can your people come over to my place to install it later?” Han Fei couldn’t wait to experience the new gaming hub.

“Okay, we will arrive at your place at 5 pm sharp.” The salesperson’s attitude was much better when he saw Han Fei bought the most expensive multi-function gaming hub without even a blink. When he scanned Han Fei’s citizenry info earlier, he was worried that Han Fei couldn’t afford the purchase. After filling in his address, Han Fei left the shop. He called Huang Yin and they promised to meet at Corner Coffee. He came to the 2nd floor and saw Huang Yin with heavy dark circles.

“I don’t get it, you game every night and have to make movies in the day, how did you find time to do all those things the newspaper said you did? Won’t you ever get tired?” Huang Yin was envious of Han Fei’s physical constitution.



“I’m just good at managing time.” Han Fei stared at Huang Yin for a long time before asking, “Did you dream of Butterfly yesterday night?”

Huang Yin was startled before he shook his head. “No, but I did have a very strange dream.”

“What dream?”

“I dreamed that I was a child again. I was playing by the lake with my mother, I accidentally fell into the cool lake. I struggled and cried for help but this time, my mother didn’t jump in to save me. Instead she stood quietly at the shore, watching me slowly sink and drown.” The despair was thick in Huang Yin’s voice. “But I suppose it’s not that bad. At least I’m the one who died and not her. It’s not really a nightmare if you think about it.”

“Brother Huang, you need to snap out of it. Your mother will not do something like that. She loves you the most, you have to believe that no matter what.” Han Fei sensed that Butterfly had already gotten to Huang Yin by going after Huang Yin’s most precious memory.

Chapter 278:

Butterfly couldn’t find a flaw on Han Fei’s defence so it shifted its attention to Huang Yin. If something happened to Huang Yin, then Butterfly could get to Han Fei through Huang Yin. But if Huang Yin managed to resist Butterfly’s influence, it might even help Han Fei at the Ziggurat. In conclusion, this was a very crucial moment. Han Fei wanted to enter the Ziggurat and kill the Butterfly; Butterfly though came after Huang Yin in real life, making him a target. Huang Yin and Han Fei had to deal with Butterfly in both real life and in game, losing for either one would cause irreparable results. But at the same time, it meant that Butterfly had to deal with 2 enemies at the same time and it had to split its focus into two.

Han Fei was hard to deal with for Butterfly, he was as annoying as Spider but Butterfly was afraid of Huang Yin even more. Any human who could enter the cryptic world wouldn’t be normal, that was Butterfly’s preconception. Huang Yin not only had arrived at the cryptic world, he always appeared at the most important time and location! His timing was so flawless that Butterfly had no choice but to believe that the man was toying with it!

At Yi Ming Private Academy, Butterfly controlled Ma Manjiang so well that Han Fei was cornered into a dead end. Han Fei was stuck in a situation where there was no escape, even Butterfly itself couldn’t find

the solution but Huang Yin's appearance had ruined everything. The man had waited a long time in the shadows, watching for the perfect moment to destroy Butterfly's plans!

Since it was just a subconsciousness of Butterfly controlling Ma Manjiang, it had no idea how Huang Yin managed to do this. It only saw the result—it was defeated by Huang Yin. Therefore, how could it possibly be a normal human who had managed to defeat it? With that in mind, Butterfly approached Huang Yin carefully. It didn't even dare to appear in its real form but instead tackled Huang Yin's deep-buried memory. After the simple interaction, Butterfly discovered something incredible. Huang Yin's mental constitution was so common that it was almost banal. He was far less impressive than any of the murderers it had controlled in the past. Butterfly would never admit that it was defeated by someone as common as this! There had to be a different explanation behind this!

A real commoner wouldn't be able to sense the cryptic world, much less appear in it. Therefore, Butterfly confirmed that Huang Yin's memory and consciousness had to be faked, and the disguise was so perfect that it couldn't find any flaw. Compared to Han Fei which it couldn't infiltrate deeply into, Huang Yin was clearly more dangerous. Huang Yin allowed the enemy to enter his mind easily, a bit too easily that Butterfly had to believe that it was a trap. What kind of conspiracy was this man planning?

Butterfly trembled just thinking about it. It saw Huang Yin as its most dangerous opponent, a man who was far more dangerous than Spider and Han Fei combined. Han Fei could guess Butterfly's train of thought. He knew that Butterfly was only probing Huang Yin's mind for now but as the probing went on, it was only a matter of time until the truth was exposed. It could take days, weeks, or hours.

The police's action had placed a great pressure on Butterfly that it had started to act a bit recklessly but Han Fei knew he shouldn't let his guard down. Always preparing for the worst was how Han Fei managed to survive in the cryptic world.

'Looks like I'll have to speed up my plan.' Originally Han Fei planned to only challenge the Ziggurat when the curse was activated but from the looks of it, the Butterfly couldn't wait until then anymore. Therefore, Han Fei had to take the initiative and ambush Ziggurat. Since he was going to face death eventually, why not have the prerogative when he was at it? With the decision made, Han Fei pulled Huang Yin to the side and told him everything that had happened to Spider. Han Fei did not ameliorate any details, he had to make sure Huang Yin understood how dangerous Butterfly was.

"Brother Huang, when facing Butterfly, the more afraid you are, the faster you'll die. You'll have to have unshakeable conviction." Han Fei taught Huang Yin some tricks, hoping that they could help Huang Yin. "Okay, I understand."

“It’s not enough that you understand, I will need to conduct some basic training on you so that you’ll get more used to fear.” Once Han Fei said that, Huang Yin’s face turned green.

“Is that really necessary? Now whenever I think about you, Butterfly becomes not that serious of a threat anymore. I might even deliver a few punches at it.”

“Really?” Han Fei’s eyes brightened.

“Of course!”

“Then it means that my training is effective, so we’ll have to kick it up a notch!” Han Fei patted Huang Yin on his shoulders. After deciding on a time for their training, Han Fei left. “Brother Huang is a good teammate, he has immense potential.” Han Fei took the train to head back to the old city. Before the people from Deep Space Tech arrived, Han Fei called Li Xue. He hoped that the police would send some people over to inspect his new gaming hub. When the sun almost set, the people from Deep Space Tech finally arrived. When they saw where Han Fei lived, they were quite shocked. A person who ordered a gaming hub worth several ten thousands RMB was staying at a dilapidated place like this? Just how passionate must their customer be about gaming that they had to have spent all their savings on the gaming hub?

The police didn’t quite get it either but they still followed Han Fei’s request and inspected the machines several times before they allowed it to be installed. Han Fei was still testing out the gaming hub when the paparazzi got the news. When the gaming hub was fully installed at 7 pm, some ‘dirt’ on Han Fei already appeared online. They claimed that Han Fei was taking illegal bribes, committing tax evasions, and that his salary was not transparent and so on. He would rather spend so much money on entertainment than to donate to charity. Han Fei didn’t care about these things but some people purposely came to his own social account to mock him about it. Based on Han Fei’s supposed salary for Thriller Novelist, he shouldn’t be able to afford such an expensive gaming hub so he must have gotten the money elsewhere. It was this elsewhere that these naysayers had issues with. Seeing these comments, Han Fei could only laugh.

He copied and pasted his own purchasing history and the source of his income on his social media. Most of the money he used to purchase the gaming hub came from his bounty money he got from helping the police. Then Han Fei attached a link to Xin Lu Law Enforcement’s official website and their fugitive lists. “This is how I got my money. The lowest reward for capturing one of these fugitives is 30000 RMB.” Han

Fei was helping the police promote their website and he was doing his part for the protection of public safety.

Han Fei chuckled as he looked through the comments. He noticed that ever since he started Perfect Life, he cared far less about these criticisms. He wouldn't get mad facing these mockery and sarcasm. However, due to his impressive memory, he would memorize these people's ID. Who knows, one day they might meet Han Fei in the cryptic world.

After the people from Deep Space Tech and the police left, Han Fei walked circles around the gaming hub. The gaming hub dominated the already small living room. If he wanted to practice martial arts in the future, he would need to find another place.

"It makes the place look so much smaller than it is." Shaking his head, Han Fei hugged the gaming helmet and crawled into the hub. "Human desire is endless. Now that I have the gaming hub, I want to move to a bigger house. Humans will never be satisfied. This is why humans are sometimes the closest organism to a greedy demon." After connecting all the wires, Han Fei successfully activated the game. He was first greeted by an advertisement from Deep Space Tech, Han Fei finally got the chance to experience the game from the perspective of a normal gamer. However, when the game's virtual guide appeared, an intense pain gripped Han Fei's mind. When he recovered, the virtual persona of the 7th generation photon computer, the persona, who was modelled after numerous beautiful women throughout human history, was covered in blood. Her body and face were deeply scarred and she looked at Han Fei with cruelty and condescension. Then she was dismembered right before Han Fei and melted into a pool of blood. His mind detached and blood covered everything.

"Welcome to Perfect Life where you are free to choose your own perfect life!" The robotic voice said. Han Fei was still reeling from the shock. The guide's venomous gaze stuck in his mind, like it was his fault that such fate befell her.

'The black box in my brain appears to have very high operative rights when it comes to technology, nothing can change it but everything will be changed by it.'

Chapter 279:

Opening his eyes, paper dolls were scattered everywhere. The warehouse of Yi Ming Convenience Store was ransacked, the stock littered everywhere like a storm had blown through this place. Feeling the chill from the landlord's ring, Han Fei slowly pulled out Rest in Peace. He lowered his body like a panther and

slowly moved to hide behind the rack. Moving towards the direction where the chill came from, Han Fei navigated around the toppled shelves and found a dusty white candle at the bottom of the trash pile.

“You’re still alive?!” When his fingers touched the thing, the system identified it for Han Fei. This white candle featured heavily in Han Fei’s life. Seeing Han Fei, a sad face appeared on the candle, “Boss, you’re finally here!”

“Why? Why are you waiting for me?” Han Fei took out the lighter and interrogated the candle, “What happened here? And where is everyone else?”

“The Song returned to the street. It glanced into the shop.” When the candle thought about it, its face shook with fear.

“Just a glance caused such destruction?” Han Fei was incredulous, “Or did you attract it here?”

“How powerful do you think I am?” The white candle smiled sadly, “You’re still prejudiced against me.”

“If you didn’t do it, why are you the only one alive? Where’s the rest?”

“When Drake heard the song, he immediately gathered all the other employees, the most important items and ran.” The white candle grumbled, “I was abandoned.” Staring at the white candle, Han Fei’s interest piqued, “I’m curious, how did you manage to survive then?”

“Perhaps because I am too weak to appear on the Singer’s radar.” Compared to the Singer, the white candle was more afraid of Han Fei.

“I hope you’re not lying to me.” Han Fei still had his doubts about the white candle. He placed it inside his pocket and left Yi Ming Convenience Store. Han Fei crossed the room and noticed something had changed to the altar next to the neighbourhood gate. The thick black cloth was peeled off and something inside the altar was bleeding. When Han Fei got close to investigate, the black cloth moved on its own to cover the altar back up. ‘Is there really a guard spirit living inside the altar?’ Since the thing was not yet ready to meet Han Fei, Han Fei was not going to force it.

Worried about the safety of his neighbours, Han Fei turned and rushed into the neighbourhood. The ground was scattered with bloody soils and dirty laundry. Rusty gym equipment was twisted together. The vine that crawled on the walls had all wilted and the bodies which nourished them before had all been turned into skeletons.

‘The Singer has entered the Happiness Neighbourhood again?’ Han Fei’s heart jumped to his throat. Calling his neighbour’s name, Han Fei rushed through Building 1. Then he knocked heavily on the door of Room 1044. Several minutes later, the anti-theft door was open. Wei Youfu who had zero fighting capability and could be blown away by a wind appeared at the door, “Don’t worry, everyone is safe.” Wei Youfu already knew what Han Fei was going to ask, “Other than myself, everyone has gone hiding at the primary school across the street. Thankfully you’ve mentioned us to the spirits at the school before. They recognized Weep and Lee Zai or else we really didn’t know where to hide this time.”

Han Fei sighed in relief hearing that news. “The Singer hasn’t shown itself for a long time already, so why did it suddenly return? And it feels like it has gone through a more thorough search than last time.”

“The Singer’s goal should be Little Eight. The previous manager said that Little Eight is a key, a normal spirit would have no use for that but Unmentionables are different. Little Eight is highly valuable to them.” Wei Youfu explained.

“But Little Eight has been staying here for a long time already so why now? Is it because... I’ve separated the 8 of you?”

“Most likely not, I believe it has to do with the previous manager. To prevent Little Eight from being discovered, he had set up a lot of things around the neighborhood like the plants on the building walls and the altar at the gate. But after his disappearance, the things slowly lost their powers.” Wei Youfu sighed. “Little Eight’s presence will be harder to hide, Happiness Neighbourhood is no longer safe.”

“It’s okay, we can hide somewhere else. There’s always a way.” Han Fei felt the pressure as well. The victims of the human jigsaw case were Han Fei’s family in the cryptic world. When Han Fei was incredibly weak, they didn’t torment Han Fei but chose to accept him. Room 1044, which was haunted and should be avoided at all costs by others, was home for Han Fei. He had never experienced those feelings before. Memories of home, things that were commonplace for others, were incredibly precious to Han Fei. Because of that he empathized deeply with the victims of the case.

“The Singer will definitely return, we need to be as prepared as we can.” Han Fei told Wei Youfu about Cattle Alley and then told him about his plan to infiltrate Ziggurat. If Cattle Alley couldn’t stop the Singer,

then they would lure it to the Ziggurat. The Singer was an Unmentionable. Han Fei was already planning how to weaken the thing and then find a chance to kill it once and for all.

“Huang Yin needs to deal with Butterfly in real life and the Singer is still searching for Little Eight, I don’t have much time to train my level.” Han Fei thought of going to Ziggurat when he was level 15 but now he had to change his plan. Starting from that day, he would start his exploration towards Ziggurat. Since there was no way back, he would have to proceed. He would do that while training his level.

“Rest here, I’ll go take a look at Yi Ming Private Academy.” Han Fei hurried to Yi Ming Private Academy. Once he entered the school gate, he saw Zhang Guanxing who was hiding at the gate. “Sir!” The young man ran towards Han Fei and he looked happy. Han Fei treated Zhang Guanxing as his own student and Zhang Guanxing found a lost fatherly love from Han Fei.

“Where’s the people from the Happiness Neighbourhood?”

“Everyone is safe. When the Song appeared, Jin Sheng had woken up. It eclipsed the whole school from detection.” Zhang Guanxing told Han Fei. Normally ghosts from Happiness Neighbourhood and Yi Ming Private Academy wouldn’t have any interaction but the appearance of the Singer made them understand something. Before Unmentionables, they were all on the same boat, going after each other was pointless before a bigger threat.

“Where’s Jin Sheng’s now?” Han Fei wanted to meet Jin Sheng. The boy who was covered in ghost stories was a unique existence. After the previous manager’s ‘treatment’, Jin Sheng was more like a cursed object than a ghost. If Han Fei could persuade Jin Sheng to join him at Ziggurat, then his survival chance would highly increase. After all, Jin Sheng was the manager of a hidden map, he had a manager talent.

“He’s still at the infirmary but Jin Sheng is in a curious state. You better be prepared before you go meet him.” Zhang Guanxing had fear and caution in his eyes.

Chapter 280:

“I am a staff member approved by Jin Sheng. As long as he still has a bit of rationality, he wouldn’t harm me.” Han Fei didn’t feel as confident as he claimed but before his student, he mustn’t show weakness. Following Zhang Guanxing, Han Fei came to the infirmary. This was not the first time he visited this place

but whenever he intended to push the door, he'd get nervous. Zhang Guanxing astutely retreated to the side, he was worried about being a burden for Han Fei. Holding the infirmary door, Han Fei felt like he was holding a piece of ice. When he looked closer, he could see small words written on the door handle. He slowly eased the door open and an indescribable chill gushed out from inside the room as if it was trying to freeze the whole school. Han Fei's Life Point dropped immediately. The ghost tattoo was activated and howls of beast could be heard from it. Forcing his eyes open, the scene inside the infirmary shocked Han Fei.

The ceiling, floor, walls, every inch of the room was filled with black and red letters. The words were imbued with curses like living worms. Standing in the middle of the words, at the spot where the curse was strongest, was a young man. His body was frail and his skin pale. His skin was stuffed with cursed words, his body was practically made from curses.

"Jin Sheng?" The young man before him didn't look like Jin Sheng in Han Fei's mind. Jin Sheng before was as thin as thick, he was small even among his peers. But now Jin Sheng had reconstructed his body from curses. Every inch of his flesh was a mixture of blood and curse. Jin Sheng was now a living ghost story, a ghost story which was a culmination of all the ghost stories the boy had told. The chains that shackled his body clanged as Jin Sheng turned around. His character-filled eyes turned on Han Fei. Han Fei froze, feeling Jin Sheng's eyes on him. If Jin Sheng was in the past an overly-sensitive kid, now he was something else completely.

The previous manager tried to use his way to cure Jin Sheng but Jin Sheng was still trapped in his own world. He didn't move one step away from it because he was sunk too deep into it. The dark memories were already a part of him, he couldn't forget or leave them behind. However, Han Fei's method was completely different from the previous manager. He was forced into Jin Sheng's nightmare. In the same situation, Han Fei led Jin Sheng's blood covered head out of the school. The cage of despair that Jin Sheng thought he could never escape was broken just like that. Han Fei's appearance had given Jin Sheng some hope. There was no need to remove the past because they were all part of him. After realizing he got nothing from forcing himself to forget about his past, Jin Sheng now chose to voluntarily accept them. He allowed the ghost stories that he told to enter his body. If no one in this world would believe me, then I would become my own world. Jin Sheng had been showing himself in the image of a young boy before so that his body could hide inside the cupboard. But now he reappeared in the image of a young man. His body stood straighter and his eyes carried a miniscule trace of humanity.

"Have the thing that entrapped you been shattered after killing Ma Manjiang?" Han Fei was truly happy for Jin Sheng. Jin Sheng's presence was so strong that perhaps only when the 8 victims of the human jigsaw case joined together that they could rival him. Jin Sheng didn't answer Han Fei. His lips just opened when heavily cursed words tumbled out. Each of his words carried impossibly scary energy. Han Fei suspected that every ghost story Jin Sheng told now would come true. His manager talent probably was to turn all the fake ghost stories true. Jin Sheng stared at Han Fei quietly because he literally



couldn't communicate. His expression didn't change either. It was hard to tell whether the young man had lost his mind or he was trying to control the madness within him.

If someone encountered Jin Sheng in this state, they would run immediately but not Han Fei. Han Fei's life was limited anyway so he was not afraid of anything. "Ma Manjiang is dead but he was only a shell, the real thing that turned you into this is the Butterfly and it is still very much alive." The best method of persuasion was through telling the truth. Han Fei and Jin Sheng had the same goal. "I'm planning to head towards Ziggurat because Butterfly is there. Would you help me?"

Jin Sheng stared at Han Fei for a long time before his lips curled. As he tightened his fists, an intense chill gathered inside the room. The letters inside the room turned into the same statement—The Butterfly will die, die, die, die!

The proclamation came with an intense curse. Jin Sheng had used action to answer Han Fei. The statements were bleeding. Even through the distance, Han Fei could feel the hatred in them.

"Butterfly will notice me the moment I go near Ziggurat but I can use my own way to help you." A row of blood messages appeared before Han Fei, they were strung together with thread. "Butterfly have many enemies, more than just you and me. There are more than 1 person watching you from the dark. When the Butterfly's wings cracked, a bloody night would descend at Ziggurat."

Jin Sheng's words carried a unique presence with them. Even just reading them, one could feel the emotions within. "There are others out to destroy Butterfly?" Han Fei's eyes narrowed, this was very good news. "I'll start my journey tonight and start to move towards Ziggurat. I should be able to enter the locale in the next 6 days." After knowing Han Fei would start his attempt tonight, Jin Sheng's mouth opened again. Seeing the blood red guard uniform Han Fei wore, he said the following slowly. "Before you go, I need to tell you a real story." As Jin Sheng spoke, the cursed words inside the room started to bounce and bleed. "No one knows the reason but one day, a guard at Ziggurat went missing. No one knew the name of the new guard who replaced the old guard, no one had seen him before. The new guard was good to everyone, he mixed well with the tenants and everything soon returned to normal. However strange things started to happen at the building, many tenants were not seen after they entered their room at midnight. Fear spread like vines, everyone placed their hope on the new security guard. However, the investigation came up with nothing. Less and less tenants remained. The surviving tenants wished to escape the neighbourhood with the new guard.

"That was a scary night. The responsible guard was the first to disappear, then the adults, finally the children. When the last tenant reached the exit, suddenly he encountered the missing guard. The responsible guard smiled like usual and slowly approached with the bladeless blade. When the blade

pierced through the Butterfly pattern, the tenant saw the spirits hiding behind the guard. He was a well-hidden demon, he was an unmitigated madman, he massacred the whole neighbourhood.” The stories Jin Sheng told would slowly come through. Han Fei still had no idea how it would affect his imminent adventure. After Jin Sheng finished the store, all the letters that featured in the story crawled inside Han Fei’s body. The ghost story hid inside Han Fei’s body, it was both a curse and a blessing.

After telling the story, Jin Sheng edged towards madness again. The words inside the infirmary started to go out of control. Chill froze the room and Han Fei was pushed out from the infirmary by Jin Sheng.