

Iyashikei 421

Chapter 421 Perfect Personality

'The plastic surgery hospital can provide various perfect personalities to the children, and now I encounter this playroom which mimics Happiness Orphanage. Does that mean the personality implant technology has to do with the Happiness Orphanage?' Most of the memories Han Fei had of the Happiness Orphanage were positive, even though the place was simple and old, it was his childhood.

When he was young and innocent, it was the worker and volunteer there who told him about the world and the greatness of humanity. After he grew older, the first thing he remembered about the place was the positive memories. For a long time, he believed that was all to his childhood until he lost his souls.

Without his childhood memory, kindness and sin, the blood red orphanage deep inside his mind exposed itself. At that moment, Han Fei noticed everything in his mind was dyed red, every act of goodness was bloody. As the fragmented memories clicked together, he slowly saw the truth.

'The laughter is alone inside the blood red orphanage, as alone as I am standing here looking at the painted windows. I see how beautiful the world outside the windows is but I can't ever leave because the windows are all just painted. There was no tragedy in my childhood. My friends, volunteers, teachers, have given me a positive childhood, but when I try to think about them, I can't remember any of their faces. Were they real? Do they really exist? Can a healing personality heal all the wounds? If yes, how?'

Han Fei closed his eyes. Pain was like a needle that pierced deep into his brain, allowing him to see the laughter deep inside his mind. It was a madman who laughed like no tomorrow. Everything in his eyes was dyed red, his world was red. Han Fei had no idea if his healing personality was a perfect personality or not but he was sure the laughter must have the world's most imperfect personality.

"Han Fei?" Bai Xian froze at the door. He studied Han Fei inside the playroom. Other than fear, he felt worried for him. Han Fei stood before a painted window motionless like he was trapped inside a nightmare. Rousing his courage, Bai Xian slowly nudged into the room. "Han Fei!" He darted to Han Fei's side and grabbed the man's arm. "We can't stay here any longer!"

Bai Xian's voice made Han Fei lift his head. The back of his head still pained but at least now he could tell where the pain came from. As long as he didn't try to remember his childhood, he'd be fine.

“Why did you come in here?” Han Fei instantly looked to the door, he was afraid that the guard might escape with his brother. Clearly Han Fei was overthinking this. The guard was shivering, he didn’t dare to stay in the corridor alone. When Bai Xian ran into the playroom, he dragged his brother into the room too.

‘The brother’s phone is filled with videos of children being tortured. If the white shoe is a child, then he must have been tortured, it’s normal then for him to possess resentment, but for the resentment to gather until he became a Pure Hatred? Something else must have happened.’ Han Fei had no idea if there was a connection between the white shoes and the hospital in the cryptic world but based on his experience of dealing with Butterfly, he knew that only Pure Hatred could move from the cryptic world to the real world via some kind of unique method.

‘The white shoes, the painter, and the monster who is influencing Ah Cheng’s boss, there are at least 3 Pure Hatreds at this hospital.’ Han Fei now focused on the hospital because this place appeared to be related to him. Han Fei looked around to search for info directly related to Happiness Orphanage but all the files had been wiped. If Han Fei wasn’t a resident of Happiness Orphanage, he wouldn’t have recognized the children’s playroom. This hospital hid itself well. Even the employees here wouldn’t know its secret, much less the outsiders.

‘When Immortal Pharma’s CEO was still alive, he often visited this hospital. This hospital is related to the Happiness Orphanage. His big brother gave me the black box in my mind. What are they planning?’ 10 years had passed, the CEO died and his brother was beaten until only his memory fragments remained, but even so their traces could be found all over the world. Han Fei was unwilling to leave just like that but at that moment, a harrowing scream came from the 3rd floor.

“That sounds like Ah Cheng’s boss!” The trio rushed up the stairs. When they arrived, they were shocked by what they saw. The floor, walls and ceiling were covered in white paper. All of them had the same demand—Give me back my face!

Dragging the unconscious murderer, Han Fei rushed down the corridor. He remembered the general direction of the scream and thus made his way deep into the 3rd floor. “The doorknob has no dust, someone has recently opened this door.” Han Fei stared at the room before him. He had Bai Xian record everything before he kicked the door down. The window in the room was left open and the curtains fluttered in the wind.

“Don’t come in yet! Brother Bai, keep on video-taping!” Han Fei suddenly shouted.

“What’s wrong?” Bai Xian and the guard became nervous.

“There's a smell of blood in this room.” Han Fei’s eyes narrowed. He stared at a big and new leather luggage at the corner of the room. It was the one Ah Cheng’s boss brought out from his car. The luggage was here but the man had disappeared. Han Fei started to open the luggage and black hairs leaked out from between the zippers and the bottom of the luggage started to bleed.

“A dead body?” A strange odor permeated the air. Bai Xian who was recording started to dry heave. Han Fei, who was closest to the luggage, didn't react. However, he did notice the chilliness radiating out from the luggage. Inspired, he slowly looked up at the mirror embedded into the wall. A faceless woman sat on top of the luggage he was opening. He blinked and the woman disappeared. By then Han Fei had unzipped the entire luggage. Inside the luggage were one white shoe, a latest phone, and a woman whose face was ruined.

Bai Xian’s phone dropped to the ground. After a few seconds of shock, he retreated rapidly until his back touched the wall. The guard also moved to curl up at the corner. Han Fei wanted to explore the hospital further but when he saw the dead body, he didn’t dare to move anything inside the room. This was because the situation had changed. All he needed to do now was to preserve the crime scene and wait for the police.

When he left the movie festival, Han Fei already contacted the police. They waited for 10 minutes when the siren arrived. Li Xue and several officers entered the room. The murderer was sent to the hospital. Han Fei, Bai Xian and the guard sat along the wall to wait for questioning.

Bai Xian and the guard encountered something like this for the first time. They panicked and stammered. Bai Xian even vomited. In contrast, Han Fei was much calmer.

The victim’s info was soon retrieved. She was Zhou Li, Ah Cheng’s boss’ lover. She was pretty and capable. She helped the boss deal with many under the table deals. After the police confirmed the woman’s identity, it confused Han Fei even further. At the movie festival venue, he clearly heard Ah Cheng’s boss talking on the phone with his lover. The police looked through the call record of the man’s phone left inside the luggage. He had been talking to the dead but he didn’t seem to notice it.

“Ah Cheng’s boss was very much unlike himself at the time, he must have been influenced by something.” Han Fei sucked in a cold breath. “The white shoes, the faceless woman and the painter,

what have they done to the man?' Ah Cheng's boss was their first target but their next target might be Han Fei.

After calculating the time, Han Fei found Li Xue. He had been outside for far too long already. He needed to rush back home.

"Wait, aren't you supposed to be at some kind of event?" Li Xue knew Han Fei's new movie was about to be released. When she got Han Fei's call, she thought Han Fei was about to invite her to the event. When the phone rang, she even thought about what to wear but when she picked up the phone, she understood Han Fei would never disappoint. The first thing he said was he had found a dead body.

"I was but something happened so I came here with my friend." Han Fei took this opportunity to praise Bai Xian.

"In the past you gave tips to the police but this time, you've appeared directly at the crime scene and became the first witness. If this continues, will you end up capturing the killer yourself eventually?" Li Xue hoped that Han Fei would mind his safety.

"Don't worry. I know what I'm doing."

"Do you? You brought an actor to search for evidence inside a building abandoned for a decade. Do you think this is some kind of live horror show?" Li Xue thought she was already a rule-breaker at the station but compared to Han Fei, she was a goody two shoes.

"I'll be more careful next time." With Han Fei's aid, the evidence collection went smoothly. The suspect wasn't that careful when he dumped the body, he didn't seem to want to hide his trace. After everyone was questioned, Han Fei took back Bai Xian's phone. Of course the recordings had been copied by the police as evidence.

"Brother Bai, do you feel better now?" Han Fei found Bai Xian and the guard at the corner. Their faces were white.

"How come it doesn't affect you at all?" Bai Xian was confused.

“I work with blood at work, so I’m used to it.”

“But didn’t you work as a comedy actor before Twin Flowers?” Bai Xian was also an actor. Real blood and fake blood, they couldn’t be more different.

“Hmm, anyway, here’s your phone. The screen is slightly cracked.”

“It’s alright. Even if it’s not cracked, I don’t think I’ll be using it anymore.” Bai Xian held the wall and stood up. He looked weak. “Have you deleted the videos in it? If you have not, help me delete them. I won’t be touching any recording apps any time soon.”

Chapter 422 Light the Altar

The event that night scarred Bai Xian deeply. He didn’t even dare to accept his phone. It felt like he was already considering changing his number so Han Fei couldn’t reach him anymore.

“I believe this is a limited edition Deep Space Tech phone, are you sure you’re going to dump it because of the videos inside?” Han Fei didn’t get it. If he had the latest Deep Space Tech phone, he would not let it go so easily. He would fight to get it back even if it was stolen by ghost.

“Really, I don’t need it anymore.” Bai Xian took another step back as Han Fei walked towards him with the phone. When he saw what Han Fei was holding, his face paled even more. “Why didn’t you leave the white shoes with the police?”

“You mean this?” Han Fei unwrapped the murderer’s jacket which was used to cover up the white shoes. “I want to study them closer.”

“Study them? My god, I’ve seen actors stealing props from sets, but I have not seen an actor swiping evidence from a crime scene! I think you better leave them with the police!” Bai Xian’s scalp was numb. As the senior, he felt he had the responsibility to prevent Han Fei from making more mistakes. In the end, the white shoes were taken by the police as evidence.

Han Fei and Bai Xian were then released by the police. When they walked down the corridor lit up by the police’s searchlights, they ran into the security guard. The man squatted at the corner wearing a uniform that didn’t fit him. He looked lost.

“The man is quite pitiable to have been lied to by his own brother.” Han Fei intended to talk to the guard to get his contact number. He was worried that the white shoes might take revenge on the guard. However, before Han Fei got close, the guard stood up dumbly. He stared at Bai Xian behind Han Fei and then pointed. “You look so similar to my idol, his name is Bai Xian.”

Earlier the guard was too nervous to notice he was in the company of a big celebrity.

“You got the wrong person.” Bai Xian picked up his pace and darted out like the wind. “My name is Hei Yin.”

Han Fei and Bai Xian returned to Bai Xian’s car. Bai Xian looked at Han Fei who sat in the passenger seat. He laughed self-deprecatingly. “Truly not everyone can be a hero, I think I should stay as an actor. Now I think I understand why you didn’t care about the glitz and glamor.” In the entertainment industry, everyone felt like they were shielded inside a bubble. They floated in the sky but that also meant that they had detached themselves from the world. Bai Xian learned a lot that night. He was taught some great lessons. He was about to share more with Han Fei when Han Fei suddenly gave him back his phone. “What’s wrong?”

“Director Zhang has given you 20 calls, what should we tell him?”

“Damn! I’ve forgotten all about him!” They quickly made a video call to Director Zhang. They wanted to include the police cruisers behind them as evidence but once the call was connected, Director Zhang’s stern face filled up the screen. “This is the first time I have to take the stage to accept nominations on an actor’s behalf in my life as a director. Where the hell are the both of you now?”

“We’re still in the countryside. The police just arrived.”

“Then there’s no need for you two to return anymore. The event is almost over. Take care of yourself.” Even though Director Zhang was angry, he understood the situation. His words were ultimately of concern. To be frank, Director Zhang was both angry and glad that night. The actor he cultivated was nominated for many awards and that made him proud.

After hanging up, Bai Xian drove Han Fei home. When he saw where Han Fei lived, he was shocked. “Han Fei, you’ve earned so much already, why are you still living in this place? I’d advise you to buy a home

for yourself in the intelligent city. It's worth it whether you plan to live there yourself, or for investment." Bai Xian had a point. "Plus, you're a celebrity now. It's too unsafe for you to stay in a neighbourhood with patrols and guards."

"Brother Bai, you underestimate this neighbourhood." Han Fei got down from the car. "Your neighbourhood might have security and photon computer's defences, but my neighbourhood is constantly watched by the police. As long as the Butterfly is still out there, my neighbourhood is the safest place in Xin Lu." With a professional smile, Han Fei bade farewell to Bai Xian.

As Bai Xian drove away, he thought to himself, 'The man has such a simple life, perhaps I should pursue that simplicity too.'

Han Fei hurried home before midnight. He looked at the clock on the wall and sighed. Eating, showering, and preparing, when Han Fei was done, it was almost midnight. He crawled into the gaming hub. "The plastic surgery hospital is looking for the Butterfly's trace. I need to complete my plan before they realize the Butterfly has already been vanquished." Putting on the helmet, Han Fei started gaming.

The feeling of wetness came from all over his body. It seeped into his soul. When the city was dyed red, Han Fei's consciousness was bleeding as well. The blood was not his but they leaked out from behind him.

Opening his eyes, Han Fei found himself standing at the spot where he logged off last time. He looked at his hands and his pale skin was free of blood stains. "What is that blood world that appears during the login screen? It seems to be viewable by Unmentionables only..." Hearing Han Fei's mumbling, the living room door opened. Ying Yue and Drake walked in.

"Boss, a large number of monsters bound by life thread have appeared around Ziggurat. They appear to have noticed the Butterfly's absence." Drake looked worried. It was not easy for them to find a safe space but people kept trying to ruin that.

"The monsters from the hospital have their own life threads, and it looks like they've made their move." Han Fei glanced at his Life Points. It was thanks to his masterful acting that he managed to look so calm despite only having 1 life point. "Wait a moment." Han Fei looked at his character profile. When he saw that he had been given a new curse, anticipation grew in his heart. He scrolled down. Thanks to the work he did in real life with the police, Han Fei's afterlife karma continued to grow, it was now 101 points.

'To level up the altar, I need to have a minimum reputation too.' Han Fei scrolled to the reputation page and noticed his reputation had rocketed to 97 points. He had no idea how his neighbours managed that. It felt like they had vented all the negative emotions they had been harbouring. This gave Han Fei a bad premonition. 'I fear that in the future, whenever I tell others my name, a bunch of ghosts will jump out to ambush me.'

However, Han Fei had no choice. This was the minimum requirement to level up the altar. 'For normal Unmentionables, everyone knows their name but no one dares to mention it... I think I understand now why the system warns the players from building their own altar before level 30.' As a player less than level 20, his name was now known to innumerable Lingering Spirits.

Han Fei shivered at the thought of Lingering Spirits chanting his name in hatred. 'I didn't expect my reputation to spread so quickly. I better call my neighbours back, they have done too good of a job! If this continues, my reputation might reach 200 points soon. Especially Big Sin, I have to catch it back!'

Walking out from the room with Drake and Ying Yue, Han Fei planned to go to Ancestral Hall Street. The moment his reputation reached 100, he would upgrade his altar instantly. Before he left, Han Fei paid a visit to the jumper woman. When she was relatively conscious he invited her to Ancestral Hall Street with him.

With the company of the jumper woman, Han Fei felt more at ease.

On the way there, Han Fei completed a Grade G Mission. Han Fei had completed all the missions available at Ziggurat, but he still couldn't reach level 20. Han Fei reached Ancestral Hall Street. He entered the hall at the centre of the street alone. The tenants from Ziggurat guarded outside the door, they were all waiting for Han Fei to light the altar.

Chapter 423 Soul Mist

Sitting on the black coffin left behind by the Singer, Han Fei held the music box. He hummed along to the melody that came out from the music box and tapped on the coffin lid. His reputation continued to increase. It was like Pandora's box had been opened, his neighbours' desire and resentment were all unleashed.

Time passed by slowly and Han Fei noticed his character profile page had changed again. When his reputation reached 100, Han Fei put down the music box and slowly walked towards his altar. Pulling back the heavy black cloth, his figurine sat inside the altar. It was Han Fei who was laughing madly, it felt familiar and strange.

‘Finally the first stage is over.’ With only 1 Life Point, Han Fei managed to survive for days in the cryptic world. This was something he wouldn’t dare to imagine in the past. No one could have done this, not even Fu Sheng. Although to be fair, Han Fei had already done many things Fu Sheng couldn’t, Han Fei merely hadn’t noticed it.

Han Fei reached his arm into the altar. When his fingers touched the figurine, the memory fragments inside his mind started to tremble. A terrifying cackle came from the deepest end of his memory. The figure who stood alone at the blood red orphanage lifted his head, he attempted to escape from his prison.

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve satisfied the requirement to level up the altar, will you level up the altar?”

Yes!” After he pressed the yes button, Han Fei could feel his finger being drawn to the figurine. The bond between Han Fei and the altar was thickening, it was like they were bound by some kind of invisible thread. At that moment, Han Fei noticed the figurine inside the altar appeared to have come alive. Harming the figurine would be equal to harming Han Fei. The afterlife karma in his profile drained rapidly. When the afterlife karma reached zero, the figurine radiated an indescribable liveliness. After consuming Han Fei’s 100 afterlife karma, the figurine opened its eyes!

The eyes were filled with madness and the flame of despair, it was like looking at the madly laughing Han Fei! ‘It’s so similar...’

The bond between the figurine and Han Fei consumed both of them like fire, burning their memories. The shapeless flame spread through Han Fei until it was just about to reach the black box.

“Notification for player 0000! Your altar has reached level 1! The player will receive a random ability of an Unmentionable depending on the player’s constitution and property of their soul.

“Notification for Player 0000! Your altar has unlocked its first ability—Soul Mist.

“Soul Mist: Your soul is forever shrouded in mist, no one can see the real you, not even yourself.

“After this ability is activated, the area around the altar will be surrounded by mist. Even Unmentionables can’t see through the mist. With this ability, your physical condition, character profile and soul will be obfuscated by mist, no one can see through you.

“Notification for Player 0000! The second leveling up of the altar requires 500 reputation, 500 afterlife karma. Please level up as soon as possible because the spreading mist might attract the attention of the scariest presence in the cryptic world!”

A light mist drifted out from the altar. It covered the figurine, the ancestral hall and continued to spread. Standing in the mist, Han Fei didn’t feel out of place. If anything, he felt comforted. After his altar increased to level 1, Han Fei gained his first Unmentionable level ability but it was once again a passive ability. ‘Soul Mist can influence Unmentionables, even Unmentionables can’t read through me, but... what’s the point, I still can’t beat them anyway!’ The type of ability a player could own was based on 2 criteria. The first was the player’s constitution. Han Fei was only level 16, even though his stamina was 26, that was still too low to sustain an intense attack by an Unmentionable. The second was the player’s soul property. Han Fei had no idea what that was and the system didn’t provide much elaboration. As the mist dissipated, the tenants from Ziggurat rushed into the hall, they were worried about Han Fei.

“Boss, did you create this mist?” Drake carried the Mirror God and stood inside the mist. They noticed with surprise that even though the mist looked normal, it could eclipse the senses of the spirits. “This is strange! You are standing before me and I can see you but I cannot feel your presence! Is that the power of this mist? It can affect Lingering Spirits?”

“Even Unmentionable will be affected, much less Lingering Spirits.” After the altar was upgraded, Han Fei took out the food left behind by Xu Qin from his inventory. He feasted on them to heal. As his Life Point returned to normal, Han Fei was no longer that worried.

“The most difficult period is over, it’s time for retaliation!” Han Fei’s eyes glowed wickedly.

“But... no one has really attacked us.” Drake blinked.

“The Ziggurat belongs to us. The trespassing by ghosts from other areas is a blatant provocation.” Han Fei tightened his fingers. A bladeless knife appeared in his palm. “With the spreading mist, the outsiders will have no idea what has happened here. We should use this opportunity to deal with all the trespassers. This way the others would be more cautious and wouldn’t send in more people blindly.”

Han Fei gained a basic understanding of the hospital from real life. The area had at least 3 Pure Hatreds, however even if they had 3 Pure Hatreds, they didn’t dare to storm into Ziggurat, this meant that they were still weaker than Butterfly. “Butterfly has prepared for years to evolve into an Unmentionable but it was defeated during the Night of Resurrection. However, if we failed, the Butterfly who had 2 altars would become even scarier.

“The ghosts from the other areas only knew that a giant change had happened at Ziggurat. The black mist had disappeared but they still have no idea what has happened to the Butterfly. Now that my Soul Mist is covering up this area, the more aggressive we are, the more afraid they’ll be. They will have the false impression that the Butterfly has not died but has become stronger.” Han Fei shared his thoughts. Before they possessed power that could really rival the Butterfly, they had to rely on psychological warfare.

“I haven’t encountered a mist like this before. Looks like your altar is very unique.” The Mirror God leaned on the mirror and widened his eyes to look outside. The mist stuck to the mirror surface and turned the Mirror God blurry too.

“The Soul Mist will continue to spread. We’ll kill every trespasser that is enveloped by the Soul Mist. That way, the ghosts in other areas will be afraid and cautious, buying us more time.” Han Fei had no idea how far the mist would spread. He just wanted to muddle the waters. To be honest, Han Fei was forced. Normally people wouldn’t dare to approach the altars in the cryptic world, but Han Fei’s was a unique case. If someone stumbled across his altar, Han Fei wouldn’t even be able to defend it. The mist had shrouded everything and the outsiders wouldn’t know the mist actually came from the altar.

With the aid of the tenants, Han Fei started a second cleansing around the Ziggurat. Soul Mist was Han Fei’s ability. It didn’t affect him, if anything, it appeared to buff him. For example, he could tell the general direction of the enemy caught in the mist. Also when he was inside the mist, his Life Point recovery, speed and strength had great increase. Furthermore, Han Fei noticed that the friendlier the spirit was with Han Fei, the lesser they would be impacted by the Soul Mist. The mist itself was harmless but all the outsiders trapped inside the mist were killed.

The life threads snapped. The Pure Hatreds hidden in the other regions were worried. But when they turned to the Ziggurat and saw the mist, they were concerned. They couldn't see through the mist so rushing into it blindly would be a great risk.

In just one night, while the other Pure Hatreds hesitated, the soul mist had spread throughout Ziggurat and had swallowed a street on the plastic surgery hospital's side. Only then the Soul Mist stopped spreading. 'The spreading speed and the coverage of the Soul Mist appear to be related to the intensity of the laughter's soul and consciousness.'

With the help of Zhuang Wen, the trespassers were cleaned up easily. But they were not yet done. Han Fei stood at the edge of the hospital. "If I were the Butterfly, I would seek revenge." Covered by the Soul Mist, Han Fei and his neighbours entered the territory of the plastic surgery hospital.

In the past, Han Fei didn't want the jumper woman to come this way because once she left Ziggurat, she would be discovered. Her presence couldn't be eclipsed but with the Soul Mist, that problem had been solved. "We need to hurry up, we mustn't give them the time to react!" Han Fei's Soul Mist only had the power to obscure but he planned to create the impression that the mist was equal to death.

The territory of the hospital was completely different from the Ziggurat. The buildings here were twisted and slanted like there were constant earthquakes. The deeper they went, the more absurd the environment was. There were almost no human-shaped spirits around the plastic surgery hospital. All the Animated Regrets and Lingering Spirits had lost their human shapes. Some of them had no face, others had ruined bodies. Plastic surgery was to make oneself look prettier and handsomer but the ghosts around the hospital looked uglier than normal.

They were incomplete and grotesque like the most beautiful part of their souls had been taken away. If Ziggurat still had some semblance of a neighbourhood, the plastic surgery hospital was like the nightmare of a patient.

Han Fei only reached the outermost street of the area but he had already seen many horrifying images. In this area, humans had lost their most basic humanity and were treated more like an object. 'The Ziggurat contains the memory fragment of the previous manager so it preserves some kind of humanity. This area is what the real cryptic world should look like, no wonder Fu Sheng would choose the path of destruction.'

Even after seeing many acts of cruelty, Han Fei's conviction was not shaken, this was his biggest difference with Fu Sheng. They didn't venture deep into the hospital area. Han Fei and his neighbours

cleaned out the street consumed by Soul Mist. Under the protection of the Soul Mist, they left behind the imprint of the Butterfly.

“The Pure Hatreds from the hospital will come to investigate, I have to confuse them somehow.” Spider was gone, the senior monster had moved into Rest in Peace, the strongest spirit at Ziggurat was Zhuang Wen but Zhuang Wen was not even a real Pure Hatred. “The hospital is situated between Ziggurat and the theme park. I need to turn the conflict towards the theme park.” With his neighbours’ help, Han Fei’s name was widespread. His plan now was to disguise himself as a Pure Hatred from the hospital to provoke the theme park, the Soul Mist was perfect for that.

“I should meet up with Xu Qin and find Big Sin first.” Han Fei’s reputation was still rising, he was honestly quite afraid. Using the tenancy chat group, Han Fei tried to gain contact with Laughing and the rest but there was no reply. Han Fei frowned.

He waited for about 10 minutes when he received a reply from another Ziggurat tenant, “We are being chased by something and we’ve separated!”

“Where are you now?”

“We’re inside the mall at the intersection of Happiness Street and Longevity Street! You better stay away, the thing is covered in hatred!” The tenant stopped replying. Han Fei thought back to the map left behind by the previous manager. The mall mentioned by the tenant was between the theme park and hospital. The place was marked out with a question mark by Fu Sheng.

Chapter 424 Ten Fingers

In the map left behind by the previous manager, only a small part was marked by a question mark. Han Fei had no idea what they meant because he had not visited a building with a question mark before.

“I know that mall.” The Mirror God suddenly said. The mist was so thick that he couldn’t see Han Fei that clearly anymore. “A long time ago, the owner of the mall was a very unique ghost, he managed to retain his rationality and the memory from his previous life. In the cryptic world, he provided sanctuary for the locals who had no place to go.”

“He was such a kind person?”

“Yes, before meeting you, he was the biggest dummy I’ve ever met. Clearly, the things he was doing would not lead to a good end.” Mirror God sounded self-deprecating. “The intersection of Longevity Street and Happiness Street was a rather unique place, it was not governed by any Pure Hatred. The spirits that escaped from other areas would gather there to seek sanctuary at the mall. Before there were Unmentionables, the area around the mall could be considered the safest place in this world, because no Pure Hatred dared to massacre the mall as it meant challenging the mall owner.

“Initially everything was fine but soon the mall owner realized he underestimated the sin within humanity, his greatest enemy was not the ghosts from the other areas but the ghosts he had offered sanctuary to. There were good and bad people, the same goes for ghosts. Some souls were soaked in evil.” Mirror God’s tone was filled with regret. There was black flame burning in his eyes but no matter what, he couldn’t leave the trap of the mirror. “The mall owner was ambushed by his own people. That night he lost all of his stock and he almost perished.”

No one interrupted Mirror God, everyone waited for him to continue but he seemed to realize something and stopped talking. “If you want to go there, I can lead the way but I do not advise you to enter the mall. The stock sold inside the mall is not normal stuff. Things like soul, flesh, memory and organs have been tagged and priced. At that place, you will see the cruelest truth of this world.”

The Ziggurat was the new player area of Perfect Life, once the player ventured out of it, the player would see the real cryptic world.

“At the very least, I run a convenience store. This visit can be considered a learning trip, and I should see if I can buy some new stock from the mall.” Han Fei couldn’t contact his neighbours and thus he had the reason to go out.

“I knew I couldn’t stop you.” The Mirror God drew something on the mirror. It looked like a hand holding a skull. “If you encounter someone with this symbol on their body, leave immediately. They are the people who ambushed the mall owner. Their souls are filled with sin and they kill for joy. Whenever they kill a Lingering Spirit, their souls will be carved with a new skull, trapping the Lingering Spirit’s memory inside their bodies. Most of them cannot be reasoned with, but 10 of them are an exception. They are all extremely cunning and hide inside the mall. They call themselves the Ten Fingers.”

“Are there Pure Hatreds among the Ten Fingers?” Han Fei asked.

“I know that several decades ago there were no Pure Hatred among them but now I suspect there will be at least one of them who have evolved into a Pure Hatred.” The Mirror God said carefully, “It’s not easy for the Lingering Spirit to evolve into Pure Hatred, they have to ignite the black flame of hatred and let the flame burn off everything. Then they have to revive in the ashes of memory. However, the Ten Fingers appeared to have gone down a more extreme route. They used pure sin to replace hatred, they have turned the hatred inside them into sin. They satisfy and improve themselves by damaging others and creating despair.”

“The Ten Fingers are the only dangerous thing at the mall? The mall is at the intersection of multiple areas but it has not been absorbed by any territory yet, this is very strange.” Even though the Ten Fingers sounded scary, Han Fei believed the mall should have more secrets than that. With his understanding of Fu Sheng, the man wouldn’t have marked down the place with a question mark without reason.

The Mirror God shook his head. “That’s all I know.” After getting a basic understanding of the mall, Han Fei stopped wasting time. He led Zhuang Wen and walked through the mist. They exited the street and raced down the alley alongside the edge of the plastic surgery hospital. After they left the mist, Zhuang Wen’s hatred couldn’t be hidden anymore. She would be discovered by the Pure Hatreds at the hospital. But the biggest problem was Zhuang Wen was not always conscious. If she got into a fight with other ghosts, she wouldn’t stop until she or the other party was dead. Even Han Fei couldn’t get her to calm down. For the sake of security, Han Fei chose the steadiest method.

As they made their journey, Han Fei took out the red paper doll from his inventory to sense Xu Qin’s location. “Please let everyone be fine!”

...

“Die!” “Go to hell!” “Do you think you can hide from me? I see your eyes! You are staring at me and your pupils are trembling!” The shelf was pushed over and the cans fell to the ground. Soaked meat pieces mixed with broken glasses before they dissolved into bubbling blood water. The stench permeated the air. An arm carved with skulls retracted from between the shelves. It plucked off something red and stuffed it into the mouth. “Still want to run? Han Fei?”

The arm fell and the flesh stuck to the skull tattoos. The five fingers twisted together and the arm became unnaturally large. It spread through the first floor of the mall like old roots. “Struggle, yes struggle for me!”

The black long tongue licked the fresh blood from the shelf. A humanoid monster filled with skull carvings grabbed the top edge of the shelf and looked around. It was almost 3 metres tall. Its eyes radiated sin. Its body was like coagulated blood, it looked barely human.

“Found you!” The shelf not far away suddenly exploded. Several figures in red ran down different directions. Some of them rushed towards the exit and others towards the windows on the first floor.

“Now that you’re here, don’t even think of leaving. You’re such precious stock, you should be sold on the shelves. You will look so pretty on them.” The humanoid monster dragged its mutated arm and moved towards the exit. The old shutters of the mall slowly fell. The shutter was made entirely out of blood and flesh. It was like a red waterfall. When the shutter almost closed, someone cried and instantly the despair of all the ‘merchandise’ at the mall was ignited at the same time!

The innumerable cans started to crack. The crying gathered the despair into a kind of controllable power, it blocked the shutter and stopped it from closing. The different figures scurried away. The figure among the cries revealed himself. He was just a small boy but he contained unimaginable power. After everyone escaped, the boy made to leave. The monster carved with human skulls was still quite a distance away from him. The others didn’t flee after leaving the mall, they were waiting for him outside the shutter.

The despair gathered by the crying slowly dissipated. As the boy turned to leave, a thin figure jumped down from the signboard of the mall and landed before the shutter. He looked similar to a normal person but all 10 of his fingers were cut off and his body burned with black flames fueled by hatred and sin.

“Do you think you can escape?” The man lifted his head. The edges of his lips were torn open and they were sewn together by thread. He stood between the boy and the other red figures. He scanned the people around him but strangely enough, the reflection of the people in his eyes was all dismembered. In the man’s world, everything that he saw was torn apart and dismembered, there was nothing symmetrical and complete in his world.

“So beautiful.” His neck twisted in an impossible angle. The man’s eyes stared at a woman holding table knives and wearing a red dress. “Each curse is a flower blooming on the soul, you have the prettiest wedding dress.” The man took one step forward. The boy was about to do something but he was enveloped by a black shadow and then disappeared.

“You will make the perfect merchandise. No one will afford your price but never mind, you’ll be my personal collection, something not for sale.” Something wiggled inside the man’s broken finger stumps. He wanted to take another step when he sensed something. His eyes turned towards an alley near the mall. In the darkness, a woman was looking at him.

In the eyes filled with blood, there was black flame dancing. Her lips repeated the same curse, “If I touch you, you’ll die!”

Chapter 425 'Pure Hatred'

The torn lips curled upwards, the thin man licked the threads around his lips. Zhuang Wen’s dismembered body was reflected in his eyes. “An abandoned failure can have such a strong hatred?” He smiled brighter, “Looks like I’m quite lucky today, such merchandise is incredibly rare.”

He took one step forward and disappeared into thin air. The next moment he materialized at the alley. A black shadow followed behind him. Every human face on his body was screaming in pain.

“This alley leads to the outer city, have you been to the edge of the night? Or you’re running back from it?” New fingers grew out from the man’s hands. However each finger looked different, like they had been taken from different people. One of the fingers contained a pattern similar to the ones on the Mirror God. Inside the dark alley, the man stood about 10 metres away from Zhuang Wen.

Black flame appeared to flicker on the surface of the man’s skin. The flame would leave behind light red scorch marks. The human faces were strung together by the red marks. They looked grotesque. Sin radiated from his soul. The man sized Zhuang Wen up. In his eyes, Zhuang Wen was already dismembered, each of her body parts stored inside prepared containers. “You will fetch a good price.”

Instigated by the intense sin, Zhuang Wen was losing her mind. The black flame in her eyes burned without concern. While the black flame could bring her power, it would burn away her humanity too.

“Yes, that’s right. Let me see if you have the right to be placed on the top floor, chosen by our most esteemed patrons.” The threads on the man’s lips unraveled. While he prepared to attack, he didn’t forget to turn back to warn the figures who ran out from the mall. “Don’t think about escaping, you won’t be able to.”

The shutter creaked noisily. Under the streetlight, the building casted a giant shadow, enveloping everyone inside it. The people who just escaped from the mall appeared to be caught in some kind of invisible waves. Their bodies were bound by the shadow and they could barely struggle.

“The mall’s previous owner didn’t discover the secret of this place.” The man laughed loudly, “This is not a mall but a platform for soul exchange. Your life experience dictates the weight of your soul and all your effort is for this moment, to have yourself priced.”

Opening his arms, bathed in the shadow, the man’s 10 fingers slowly closed. The building behind him surfaced with 10 trapped souls. Once you were dragged into the mall, there was no escape. The figures who had just escaped from the mall started to walk involuntarily back towards the mall. This mall at the intersection of many territories was like a whirlpool, sucking everything in.

The threads on the man’s face snapped. An indescribable stench leaked out from the wounds, it was the smell of decomposing soul. Faced with such hatred, the madness inside Zhuang Wen couldn’t be controlled anymore. The black flame burned her skin as she walked towards the man. Her eyes focused on the man. The walls crawled with blood and cracks. But in that silence, the streetlight before the mall entrance suddenly flickered and then went out. The smile on the man’s face froze like he could feel something. He turned to look at the street which connected the mall and the plastic surgery hospital. There was something hidden in the dark, he couldn’t sense it but it was definitely there.

Bang! A window faraway suddenly shattered. The glass pieces fell into the mist. The culprit was not even seen.

“What is that?” As the mist spread, the windows on the street shattered one after another. An intense danger was rapidly approaching! The man’s eyes darted about. The broken world in his eyes was enveloped by the mist. He realized that he couldn’t see the things inside the mist!

The smile on his face had disappeared. He revealed an expression that was completely different from when he saw Zhuang Wen, serious, surprised and a well-hidden anxiety. He had not encountered something like this before, even a Deep Red Pure Hatred couldn’t hide before him. However, this new arrival had eclipsed all of his senses, or rather he didn’t even have the right to see the thing. What was coming?

The man had encountered many ghosts and been through unimaginable torture, only unknown could cause him fear now. The mist rolled. It looked harmless but in the cryptic world, appearance was always deceiving.

'Should I run or stay to block the mist?' The black flame in the man's eyes flickered. His 10 fingers tightened. When the mist approached, he suddenly tightened his hands!

The shadow of the mall cracked to form an abyss. Like a beast opening its maw, it chomped at the outer edge of the mist. However, it couldn't sense anything. Even the endless ghosts and merchandise trapped inside the mall couldn't sense the ghost inside the mist!

'What kind of power is this?' Just as the mist was about to envelope the giant mouth, the man actively pulled back. This was a bet he was not going to make. Using the shadow of the mall, the man retreated rapidly. He waved his 10 fingers and the shadow formed layers of protection around him. When he controlled the shadow projected by the mall, the people previously trapped by the shadow immediately retreated. They rushed towards the plastic surgery hospital.

The man wanted to stop them but the jumper woman chose that moment to charge out from the alley. The mist was rolling in. The man chose to evade after some hesitation but Zhuang Wen chose to attack. Her bloody face was twisted as she screamed at the top of her lungs.

At the same time, the mist had arrived. The mist didn't care what it had entrapped, the ending for those trapped inside it was singular, which was death. The song of soul-summoning drifted out from the mist, the song pierced through the soul!

The man's expression shifted when he heard the song. When he retreated, the mist had already swallowed Zhuang Wen. There was screaming as blood and flesh exploded. Zhuang Wen was shattered in an instant. The negative energy and broken body parts were consumed by the mist. The soul of the jumper woman tried to escape but it was captured by something!

Her struggle only managed to agitate the mist slightly. Hearing the screams from inside the mist, the man's expression changed again. He retreated rapidly to avoid the mist. In less than half a minute, the ghost with black flame was fully consumed. Her trace was completely wiped from the dark night. After the mist had its fill, it slowly dissipated.

The thin man widened his red shattered eyes. He saw a flickering figure in the mist. The man was wearing a cattle mask. His soul was fleeting like the mist and deep like the sea. The man slowly turned around. Evil, insouciance, like god or demon!

“An Unmentionable!” The thin man retreated back into the mall. His heart trembled. He pulled back his presence. In his world where everything was dismembered, only that figure remained complete, he couldn’t find any flaws or weakness in that soul.

‘The plastic surgery hospital has found an Unmentionable?’ He had seen an Unmentionable’s altar but he had not seen an actual Unmentionable before. However, as the local of the cryptic world, he understood this very clearly, “Once an Unmentionable appears in an area, a big tragedy will be imminent! Many souls and spirits will disappear until no one dares to mention that ghost’s name anymore!”

‘The altars around the mall have been consecutively destroyed and there is a name that people keep repeating lately.’ The man’s 10 fingers joined with the shadow of the mall. He disappeared silently. He was reminded of that name but he was unwilling to voice it anymore. ‘A new tragedy has appeared, I wonder if he’s like Fu Sheng who wanted to murder everyone.’

The shutter of the mall fell. The thin man melted his body into the mall. ‘I need to be prepared and imbue my soul into that thing.’ His clothes shredded. The threads on the man’s body tore him apart. He dissolved into a pool of horrible-smelling black blood before seeping deep underground. As the black blood submerged, 9 other figures walked out from the corners of the mall. They were of different sizes but all of them had carvings of human skulls on their bodies.

8 of them dissolved into black blood and seeped underground. The last one hid inside one of the containers, disguising itself as merchandise. After all the black blood disappeared, the yin energy that surrounded the mall disappeared and the giant shadow casted by the mall returned to normal.

As the thin man returned underground, the mist cleared up. A man in a mask collapsed to the ground. A piece of his chest had collapsed in. The light disappeared from his eyes. He could barely keep himself conscious.

“Building manager?” “Han Fei?” Zhuang Wen, who was supposed to be dead, shielded beside the masked man. Her body had been separated into 3 parts. The youngest girl was unharmed. The other 2 parts were shredded into pieces and the girl was slowly piecing them together.

“Drake, what happened earlier?” Laughing and Xu Qin asked. Their fate was sealed when they were captured by the thin man but the pure hatred from the ‘hospital’ suddenly decided to attack. They used

this opportunity to escape but when the mist faded away, they realized the thing inside the mist was not a Pure Hatred from the hospital but Han Fei.

“We shouldn’t stay here, we need to retreat first.” Mirror God tapped on the mirror. Hatred burned in his eyes, he appeared to see his own finger being attached to that thin man.

“But the red dress and the weeping kid are still trapped inside the mall.” Laughing’s face was pale, his laughter was sad.

“Ten Fingers already knows the secret underneath the mall. They have sealed up the mall so temporarily no one will be able to enter or leave.” Mirror God sighed. “They appeared to be frightened by the building manager. Before they come out from the underground, all the merchandise inside the mall will be safe, after all, they will fetch a good price.” Seeing no one move, the Mirror God added more sternly, “Ten Fingers has become a Pure Hatred, even if we throw ourselves at him, we wouldn’t be his match, do you want Han Fei’s sacrifice to be for nothing?” Mirror God pointed at Han Fei on the ground. “He forced himself to connect with the altar to activate its power. Sacrificing his soul and consciousness as a price, he managed to cause the mist to billow down the streets. It lasted only a few minutes but it almost claimed his life. When the mist was about to thin, even I was worried for him. Thankfully he reacted quickly.”

“The mist that can eclipse one’s senses came from the manager’s soul?” Lee Zai was shocked.

“Yes, but the mist does only that, it has no damaging effect on its own.”

“But I saw the windows of the buildings on the street explode like they were attacked.” Lee Zai was tricked by the performance too. He thought they were dead for sure.

“The rest of us hid inside the mist to shatter the windows, this was something Han Fei planned. He’s very good with these things.” Mirror God interrupted Lee Zai. “We need to create the impression that an Unmentionable has appeared at the plastic surgery hospital so we need to retreat back to the hospital. We’ll discuss this further when we’re safe.”

After Han Fei was unconscious, the Mirror God took over. “Zhuang Wen’s black flame will be silenced only when the little girl is here. But as the girl slowly pieces herself together, the black flame will reignite

and attract other people's attention so we need to return to Ziggurat before her body is reconstructed or else Ten Fingers might realize Zhuang Wen merely had faked her death."

The Mirror God tapped on the mirror. He had Xu Qin carry the fainted Han Fei and they retreated swiftly.

Chapter 426 Second Choice

The tenants from Happiness Neighbourhood had just left the territory of the plastic surgery hospital when the buildings behind them were enveloped by a layer of black curse. The curse was like lichen growing all over the buildings, consuming their lingering presence. After dealing with their traces, the strange curse continued to follow the gang, maintaining a fixed distance.

The gang walked through the maze of complicated alleyways. If not for the map provided by Han Fei, they wouldn't know most of these paths. The tenants from both Happiness Neighbourhood and Ziggurat moved at top speed, the closer they were to the Ziggurat the safer they would be.

While some of them started to relax, the Mirror God frowned, he kept urging everyone to move faster. As they were about to return to the Ziggurat's territory, the Mirror God suddenly ordered, "Stop!"

The shadows halted and then looked ahead. Placed at the entrance of the alley was an old man's head. The grey hair stuck to the face, the old man's eyes were open and they stared at Han Fei in Xu Qin's embrace. When the tenants from Happiness Neighbourhood saw the head, their faces shifted. They were very familiar with this face because they had lived with its owner for about a decade already!

"Fu Sheng?" Xu Qin's bloody lips opened to mutter a name. It was worth-noting that she no longer called him manager because in the eyes of every tenant at Happiness Neighbourhood, the only building manager was Han Fei. The old man could barely keep his eyes open, he was extremely weak.

"You know him?" When Laughing saw the old man's head, he broke out in cold sweat. He knew that the Butterfly had torn the manager of Ziggurat into pieces and sealed them inside different figurines to prevent him from resurrecting. The old man's head was constructed from the shattered figurines.

"Don't get distracted! Behind us!" When the Mirror God saw the old man, it was like he had turned into a different person, he was nervous and sensitive. It was like he had a natural fear of Fu Sheng.

With the Mirror God's warning, the group only realized the alley behind them had been covered by curse. All the light was consumed and a blurry figure stood in the abyssal darkness. He had no actual shape, he was like a song, as long as someone was willing to sing this song in the dark night, he would never disappear. The weak song echoed in everyone's ears. The song came out from Han Fei's shirt. Xu Qin peeled back Han Fei's jacket. An old old music box fell to the ground. The message left on the box carved into everyone's eyes.

"The music box from the black coffin? Why would the manager bring this with him?"

"The music box contains the Singer's obsession, the song it plays contains the presence of an Unmentionable. To make his disguise more convincing, Han Fei must have carried this with him." The Mirror God stared at the head not far away and it dawned on him, this was all part of Fu Sheng's plan all along. He left behind a broken altar and the Singer's music box. As long as Han Fei wanted to light the altar or even if he approached the altar, it would trigger a chain event.

To build an altar, Han Fei's name had to be known by many. Fu Sheng thus knew that Han Fei would have to leave Ziggurat, even if Han Fei was unwilling, he would be forced to leave by certain things. The map Han Fei contained was left behind by Fu Sheng so Fu Sheng knew Han Fei would pass by this alley eventually.

They had just escaped from a Pure Hatred and now they encountered the Singer. Everyone was nervous, they had no idea how much the Singer had recovered.

"I am the manager for both the Happiness Neighbourhood and Ziggurat, I left behind all the altars in these two areas. Even though I'm dead, my memories live in your hearts." The old man's lips opened, his voice carried on the wind. The former Unmentionable only had an old, wrinkled head left.

"You once wanted to kill everyone." The Mirror God stared at the old man and uttered.

The old man didn't object, he lifted his eyes weakly to look at Han Fei. "Give him to me. You won't be able to save him. His soul is corrupted, even if he's repaired, he won't be himself anymore."

"You knew from the start his soul and consciousness would be injured when he used the power of the altar since he is a living person! You purposely had him inherit that altar!" The Mirror God glared coldly

at the old man. Fu Sheng never trusted anyone. In a way, he was a kind person but the Mirror God never liked him.

"I didn't force him to make any choice, he had chosen all the paths himself, including the one at the start..." The old man's voice lowered, "I know you all want to protect him but only I can save him now, your only choice is to hand him over to me." The head didn't plan to fight the group, that was not part of his plan from the start. No matter what the old man said, the tenants from the Happiness neighbourhood refused to hand over Han Fei. The old man's expression turned complicated.

"Some of you have known me for a decade and that is incomparable to the few months he has spent with you?" The Singer blocked their exit and the old man's head blocked their way ahead, the atmosphere in the unknown alley froze.

"Fine, I know the answer now. Perhaps I have chosen the wrong path from the start." The old man forced a smile. "You should already notice that he is a living human. His skin has warmth and his heart is beating powerfully. He is different from you, even the strongest bond cannot change that simple fact." The old man paused before deciding to reveal the rest. "Both he and I came from the place where the sun would rise, we were lucky enough to have seen hope so it made us value the things here even more. I made the decision to kill everyone because I've seen that last bit of hope. His soul is not yet complete, perhaps he might make the same decision as I do in the future."

"At least for now, he is not like you." The Mirror God said frostily, "I don't know how many pieces your memory has been split into but if you dare to destroy our last hope, then we will ruin the rest of your memory fragments!"

"Has he promised to find a body for you? I have given the same promise but why didn't you believe me and you chose to believe him?" The old man's head represented one of Fu Sheng's memory fragments, his personality, memory and attitude was different from the other fragments.

"You should have memories of Ying Yue who lives on the 8th floor. You have the power to help her but you refused using the excuse that you couldn't use spirit farer to harm living humans." The Mirror God glanced at Ying Yue. The girl who lost her sight stood before Xu Qin, the girl wouldn't leave Han Fei.

"Using that skill to murder living humans, how is that different from the sinful ghosts in the cryptic world?" The old man had his own moral compass. He tried his best to change the cryptic world but in the end, he realized he was the one being changed.

“Then continue on your path and leave us be!” The Mirror God slammed on the mirror and it cracked. He was furious but he still couldn’t leave the mirror. The negotiation shattered but the old man appeared to have predicted that. He looked at Han Fei who was protected by the tenants. His eyes shone with worry and also a well-hidden envy.

“I will not attack and I can promise that I will not harm him.” The old man softened his tone. “I was the one who sent him to this world, I was the one who gave him the altar, he is also my last hope, why would I harm him?”

“The injury on his soul is getting more serious. Did you not notice his body temperature dropping? If he doesn’t find help soon, he’ll become a ghost and stay here forever.” The old man’s murky eyes studied everyone, “You also don’t want your last hope to be ruined, right? Do you wish for Han Fei to sink into despair like you do?”

A living human couldn’t survive after using the power of the altar. The tenants didn’t know how to cure Han Fei, they only had one choice left, which was to trust in Fu Sheng’s memory fragment. Of course, this was all planned by Fu Sheng. Even one of his fragments was powerful enough to set up such a complicated trap, this showed how scary he was when he was in his prime. But even so, he had failed.

As Han Fei’s body temperature dropped and his soul started to wilt, the group had no choice but to trust Fu Sheng.

“I will not do anything to him, I will only have him make another choice.” The old man signaled for Xu Qin to carry Han Fei into the old building by the street. Then he had everyone leave the room. Only the old man’s head and the unconscious Han Fei remained in the building.

“Actually there are so many things that I cannot tell them. If there is another choice, who would want to be the madman aiming to destroy the world?” The old man’s head touched the back of Han Fei’s head. When the memory fragment touched Han Fei, the head started to turn blurry. He used his own consciousness to mend the wounds on Han Fei’s soul. “No matter your choice this time, I hope you’ll succeed. I can still help you now but when you venture further into the darkness, you’ll have to face it alone.”

As the old man's head disappeared, the unconscious Han Fei opened his eyes but he was still in a suspended conscious state. It was just like how he was when he completed his first manager mission, He'd make this decision based on pure instinct.

"Okay, it's time for you to make your second choice!"

A black box was hidden inside Han Fei's body. Now the black box was exposed in the wound of the soul. After Fu Sheng summoned the box out, he looked at Han Fei expectantly. One side of the box represented destruction, while the other salvation. By opening the box, one would eventually see what was hidden inside it!

The black box represented all the secrets and truth. Even Fu Sheng had no idea what was really inside the box. Han Fei lifted his arms mechanically. He had experienced many life and death situations in the cryptic world. Compared to last time, he had gotten more used to the cryptic world and knew more about it.

His left hand held the edge of the black box and then his right hand did the same. Like before, he chose both salvation and destruction at the same time. The black box opened to reveal another black box. It had not changed. However, when the box was open, a sense of death and life entangled with each other before they surged into Han Fei's soul. His wound was rapidly recovering. His consciousness and soul became stronger than before.

"Even after seeing so many crazy and cruel things, after experiencing torture and torment from the Butterfly, why do you still make this choice?" The old man sounded disappointed. He sighed. But before he faded away, he still wished Han Fei the best. "The path you chose is extremely hard but I hope you'll walk further than I did."

Fu Sheng's second memory fragment collapsed, he used all of his power to heal Han Fei. When Han Fei regained his rationality, the old man's head had disappeared. It was similar to what happened on the 9th floor of Happiness Neighbourhood. Sitting up in bed, Han Fei could feel his consciousness getting stronger. It had completely overshadowed the blood red orphanage in his mind.

"Notification for Player 0000! The Singer's hatred towards you has decreased by 5, current Hatred Point is 95! When Hatred Point is lowered to 0, you'll have the opportunity to increase his friendliness points!

“Notification for Player 0000! You have gained full control of your altar. You can exhaust your Life Point to force the Soul Mist to appear, 1 Life Point for 1 second of soul mist.”

“Notification for Player 0000! Congratulations for obtaining the blessing of an Unmentionable for the first time! Intelligence +1! You’ll gain a random negative status!”

The system notifications pinged in his ears. Han Fei’s eyes fluttered open. “Fu Sheng’s memory fragment has appeared?”

He pushed open the door. The Singer was gone, only the neighbours from Happiness Neighbourhood remained.

Chapter 427 Absolute Truth

“Building manager!” Seeing Han Fei walk out from the building safely, his neighbours from Happiness Neighbourhood surrounded him, “Are you alright?”

“What happened? Why are you all looking at me like that?” Han Fei had never felt better, he comforted everyone and then turned to the Mirror God. Mirror God was the most rational and mature of everyone present. Before Han Fei fainted, he had Mirror God guide everyone should anything happen to him.

“The memory fragment of the previous building manager appeared. It was his plan for you to trigger the altar. From the start, it was his wish for you to inherit that altar.” The Mirror God paused before continuing, “He wishes for you to walk his old path.”

“Fu Sheng used his personal experience to tell me that his old path will only lead to a dead end, I will not make the same choice as he did.” Han Fei caught the Mirror God’s meaning immediately.

“Sounds like you already knew Fu Sheng would appear.”

“Yes.” Han Fei nodded. “Whenever I open my eyes, I see a world frozen in red. The Singer had been waiting for me, holding Fu Sheng’s head. He hoped that I would go find him.” While Han Fei spoke, Xu Qin walked to his side holding a bloody wooden plank. “The Singer took away the music box, it was the only thing Fu Sheng left for him but in return, he has left you with this wooden plank removed from the altar.”

“You’ve let the Singer go?” Han Fei shook his head. “He is in his weakest state now. If not for the things that happened, we could have gathered all of our strength to kill the Singer.” Han Fei turned back to the building he just exited. Fu Sheng said he didn’t care about any ghost in the cryptic world but he had shielded the Singer. “He voluntarily surrendered the altar so that I could inherit it. He forced me to activate the altar, thus causing me to get injured. That way I wouldn’t be able to target the Singer. He has completed his goal while managing to protect the Singer, he is truly a cunning old fox.” The Butterfly had heavily injured the Singer when it shattered the altars. This was a perfect chance for Han Fei to take down the Singer.

Accepting the wooden plank from Xu Qin, when his finger touched the plank, Han Fei heard the robotic voice.

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve obtained a unique Grade G Item—Murder Map.

“Murder Map: The owner of this map was a madman dominated by hatred. He has marked out all the places he had massacred. If you’re his friend, remember to stay away from these places.

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve obtained the item required to unlock the hidden profession, Executioner. After you’ve explored all the locations marked out on the Murder Map, you would activate the hidden profession, Executioner.”

The wooden plank was small but many small paths were marked out on it. This Murder Map could fill in the blanks in the map left behind by Fu Sheng at Happiness Neighbourhood. “With this map, our exploration will be easier.” Placing the wooden plank in his inventory, Han Fei looked around and his expression darkened, “There are people who are still trapped inside the mall?”

“Weep was unable to escape because he helped us keep the door open; the red dress voluntarily walked deeper into the mall because she said there was something calling her, something that can help her evolve into a Pure Hatred.” Laughing was smiling but he looked so sad.

“We can’t abandon them.” Han Fei said without hesitation. His determination made many people willing to follow him. Perhaps this was his biggest difference from Fu Sheng. Many times, Han Fei didn’t weigh the pros and cons but he’d rush into things for the sake of his friends. It was how he had won people over to his side.

“The mall used to be a place where patrons could exchange souls. There is a black altar hidden underneath the mall. The altar serves a very evil spirit, his biggest hobby is to collect different souls. If someone can sacrifice to him rare souls, he will satisfy the person’s desire based on his mood.” The Mirror God stopped hiding. He knew Han Fei planned to infiltrate the mall to save the other neighbours so he told him everything he knew.

“Based on his mood?”

“Yes, if the Unmentionable was in a bad mood, he not only wouldn’t satisfy the patron’s wishes, he would consume the patron along with the offered souls.” The Mirror God looked into the night sky, he hadn’t thought about the past for a long time already. “The owner of the altar was vanquished by Fu Sheng and his children. The souls he collected and the altar were abandoned under the mall. After a long time, those souls joined with the altar to form a unique space. Everyone who enters the underground of the mall will be affected by the energy left inside the altar. They will be dragged by these rare lingering spirits into the altar owner’s memory world.”

“Ten Fingers can draw power from the altar?” Han Fei cared more about that.

“Even though Ten Fingers has become a Pure Hatred, he hasn’t gained full control of the altar. After he was frightened, the first thing he did was to seep underground. He probably intends to rush to get the altar’s approval, to become the altar’s new owner.” The Mirror God knew the mall very well. “The shadow projected by the mall was actually the amalgamation of endless souls. They form the Spirit Shadow. If he had controlled the altar, Ten Fingers would be able to project the Spirit Shadow freely and not rely on the mall.”

“Ten Fingers represents 10 ghosts and one of them is a Pure Hatred. We won’t win him in a face to face fight, looks like we’ll have to target that altar.” Han Fei stood before the Mirror God. “Mirror God, if you are to contest the ownership of the altar with the Ten Fingers, how confident are you that you can win?”

Mirror God shook his head. “I can’t even leave this mirror, much less fight for an altar.’

“Then who do you think among us is the perfect candidate to fight for the control of the altar? Our biggest advantage now is that you know things about the mall that Ten Fingers doesn’t. We can send a group of people to distract their attention, pretending to fight for the ownership of the altar, while the

rest can go save the red dress and Weep.” After Han Fei shared his plan, he realized Mirror God was staring at him, “What’s wrong?”

“Inheriting the altar is not a question of strength but a question of who can earn the approval of the Evil Spirit who occupies the altar. And the best candidate among us is you.”

“Me? You have to be joking, why would someone like me get the approval of an Evil Spirit?”

“I don’t mean that you’ll become an Evil Spirit or you resemble him, I merely feel like you have the best chance.” Mirror God explained.

“Ten Fingers is a Pure Hatred. If I am to contest with him over the ownership of the altar...” Honestly, Han Fei didn’t have that confidence.

“No, it’s too dangerous.” Xu Qin and Drake stopped Han Fei, they didn’t want him to take such a big risk.

“But this is the best solution.” Mirror God ignored Xu Qin and Drake, he kept his eyes on Han Fei. “If you’re willing, I can help you. Once you successfully enter the Evil Spirit’s memory world, Ten Fingers won’t be able to harm you. Once there you only need to try your best to earn the Evil Spirit’s approval.”

“So I won’t face Ten Fingers head on?” Based on Han Fei’s understanding, the memory world of the Evil Spirit should be something like the manager mission, however the owner was an Unmentionable, so his memory world should be bigger and more bizarre.

“Ten Fingers will appear in the memory world too, but before they gain the altar’s full approval, they can’t use their powers.” The Mirror God warned. “The most important part of this plan is how to infiltrate the mall and enter the Evil Spirit’s memory world without anyone knowing. No one else can do this but you because your soul is shrouded in Soul Mist. As long as you don’t actively expose yourself, Ten Fingers shouldn’t be able to spot you.”

“That’s why I’m the perfect candidate?” The longer they dragged this out, the more dire the situation for Weep and the red dress. After giving it some thought, Han Fei nodded. “Tell me what to do.” Han Fei agreed for 2 reasons, one, he trusted his neighbours, two, he needed to save his neighbours.

“Before the Evil Spirit was killed, he would open all the doors of the mall at midnight to conduct soul exchange. I know a path that can lead us underground, bringing you close to the altar.” The Mirror God hesitated for a long time before he shared this secret. “The path is only reserved for the most despaired individual. 1 minute after the path is open, everyone inside the path will be seen as merchandise by the Evil Spirit, therefore the path offers entry but no exit.”

“Understood, I will enter that path tomorrow at midnight, while I fight with Ten Fingers for the control of the altar, the rest of you will go into the mall to save Weep and the red dress.” Han Fei said.

“I will go with you.” After saying that, the Mirror God turned to walk deeper into the mirror as if in preparation for tomorrow.

“Everyone should rest and prepare, we’ll make our move tomorrow at midnight.” Han Fei forced a smile. “Don’t look so sad. The mall is dangerous but this is a good chance to improve yourselves. The mall has a lot of merchandise, there will be something useful to all of you.” After encouraging everyone, Han Fei turned to the mirror. He had a feeling the Mirror God was related to that altar. Everyone exited the building and returned to the Ziggurat. After giving some orders to his neighbours, Han Fei found a safe room and logged off.

“I’ll need to log in earlier tomorrow.” The mist was dyed red and the world turned bloody. Han Fei’s consciousness was firmer than before, he could hear a voice coming from behind him. “I...” He turned around and Han Fei couldn’t see that bloody man. He opened his eyes and he was back in the real world. Removing the gaming helmet, Han Fei didn’t feel drowsy at all.

“This is such a strange feeling.” Crawling out from the gaming hub, Han Fei stood before the window. His heart was calm. “What is a soul? Is human consciousness a soul?”

Han Fei rummaged through his fridge for food, he realized his appetite had gotten bigger. Before he started playing Perfect Life, Han Fei once suspected he had anorexia because he had no interest in eating no matter how delicious the food was.

“The game has healed me from my soul to my body.” Taking out his phone, Han Fei glanced at his unread messages. One of them came from Bai Xian. The brother did change his phone and phone number. The message contained his new phone number. Other than Bai Xian, all the messages came from Huang Yin. Huang Yin also became a real outgoing, happy person, this was the game’s effect too.

“Brother Huang, is there a problem?” Han Fei called Huang Yin.

The call was hung up and then Huang Yin called back with the encrypted number. “Han Fei, have you seen the news lately?”

“You’ve been on the news?”

“It’s related to Perfect Life. 6 players have died in less than a week since the game entered OB. Even though the law enforcement said that their deaths might not be related to Perfect Life, there are already many negative voices on the internet.” Huang Yin said.

“But what does that have to do with us? This should be Deep Space Tech and Immortal Pharma’s concern.”

“Their deaths are too suspicious, I suspect they have accidentally wandered into the cryptic world.” Huang Yin sent Han Fei a document. “During CB, some players have been searching for the black box and cryptic world, they believe firmly in these things’ existence. After the will of the Immortal Pharma CEO was released, the number of professional players searching for the black box skyrocketed! With the guidance from the CB players, they formed a large organization to collect everything related to the black box and the cryptic world. They call themselves the Absolute Truth.”

“Absolute Truth?”

“It’s an ironic naming convention. Absolute truth is something that is always valid, regardless of parameters or context. Since everyone thinks the cryptic world and the black box are just a lie, they insist on proving this ‘lie’s authenticity to the whole world.” Huang Yin continued, “These people are closest to the cryptic world, every day, they are in game trying to explore ways to enter the cryptic world. And out of the 6 players who died, 3 of them came from Absolute Truth.”

Han Fei frowned. “That’s too high of a ratio.”

Chapter 428 Succession Mission

"I suspect the death of 3 Absolute Truth members has to do with the cryptic world. The rumors said that they have heard the summons from the darkness." Huang Yin's voice was hoarse, he hadn't rested for a long time already.

"Summons?"

"It feels like certain things from the cryptic world are trying to come out. They used some kind of secret method to call after these explorers, seducing them to open Pandora's Box." Huang Yin sent a video to Han Fei. "This is a video taken by one of the victims in the game. He was a senior archaeologist. He suffered from agitation. After his divorce, he had been living alone. He started the game to heal himself but during the process, he accidentally discovered something interesting. He started to study the NPC's history. He was so drawn by it that he played the game nonstop for 32 hours." Even though the gaming hub would help adjust the player's physical condition, prolonged gaming would hurt the body especially for the elderly. "Pay attention to the last part. The old man started to mumble to himself in the game. Before he was forcibly kicked out by the system, his in-game character had already collapsed on the ground like he had lost his soul."

Han Fei looked at the video. Initially the old man started a conversation with an NPC, the NPC's family member died and the old man discovered their funeral ritual was different from real life. Out of curiosity, the old man started to explore further, he wanted to know more about the culture. He started to visit the NPC with deaths in the family, he recorded the video to study the culture. He noticed that the NPCs would mention a deity who could guide the dead souls. The deity had no name but the NPCs knew that whenever he appeared, the dying would hear his soul-summoning song. The old man walked around the town to collect more clues but before he could find any result, the old man himself died.

"All the NPCs the old man approached were in the name list of important NPCs noted by Absolute Truth as well. However, the group hasn't discovered this connection yet."

"You have to help me pay attention to the group's movement. Also, how many people have seen this video? Does Absolute Truth have this video?" Han Fei didn't want this to go big. The people from Absolute Truth were charmed by the stock of Immortal Pharma, they did things without thinking them through.

"This video is highly confidential, only the core members will know about it." Huang Yin then sent a very long password to Han Fei. "In Absolute Truth, there is a hidden map explorer unit that only a small number of core members can join. I barely inched my way into it using my identity as a black-market dealer. The group's members are all real elites, they come from different professions and they are influential characters in real life. They are the brain of Absolute Truth."

“Black market dealer? How many identities do you have?” Han Fei asked casually.

“I have 7, the top player, Huang Yin; the escaped convict, Blood Doctor; the philanthropist, Mr. Happiness; the black-market dealer, the Masked Man; the best friend of the Mayor’s adopted son; the most mysterious black box hunter; the urban legend, Nightmare.” Huang Yin revealed everything to Han Fei.

“Brother Huang I’m impressed, you’ve managed to do so many things in just a few days.” After the torture by the Butterfly, Huang Yin was no longer the same man he was.

“This is all thanks to you. Before level 50, I will have a lead over the other players but I’m not that confident after level 50. Many players have shown extraordinary talents, it’ll be harder to stay in the lead.” Huang Yin was humble.

“Perfect Life will be harder as time goes on, but you still have enough time to improve yourself.”

“I will try my best. Right, the password that I just sent you is the login password for Absolute Truth’s explorer unit. Using that password, you can enter their inner website. The members of the explorer unit share info among themselves, some of them might have already found some other entrance to the cryptic world.” Huang Yin said seriously, “Never underestimate human beings and human nature, they could do anything.” After hanging up, Han Fei looked out the window and he kept pondering, ‘The cryptic world is shrouded in darkness, what have the scariest ghosts been planning every day? Do they wish to leave the cryptic world too? Fu Sheng was so powerful, even the weakest of his children was an Unmentionable but even so, he has failed. He was unable to open the last layer of the black box and saw the end of the darkness. Could I succeed where he failed?’

Touching the back of his head, even though there was no wound, Han Fei still felt a heart-drilling pain. ‘It’s pointless thinking too much about it because the black box is in my brain, that is an unchangeable truth. The only thing I can do is to move forward to bring everyone towards the only hope.’

The sun rose. Han Fei bathed in the light, the chill on his body was chased away and his soul was warmed. He took a sip of warm tea. Han Fei rescheduled his morning activity and stayed at home to search for all the info he could on the mall. Han Fei felt desperation from Fu Sheng’s various activities. Perhaps the things that Fu Sheng worried about had begun. Xin Lu had been in development for many

years, there were many malls built, big and small but there were almost no deaths reported in any of them, so Han Fei's investigation hit a roadblock.

Around noon, Huang Yin gave Han Fei another call. The gist was that Absolute Truth had started to officially look for paths to the cryptic world, even the workers from Deep Space Tech had intervened. The existence of the cryptic world was just a legend but more and more people were willing to believe it, perhaps this provided a spark of interest in their boring daily lives. Han Fei couldn't stop others, the only thing he could do was to try to survive and help the other players if he ran into them in the cryptic world.

After night fell, Han Fei went downstairs to have his dinner. Due to his increasing appetite, the boss would smile brightly whenever he saw Han Fei because Han Fei would spend a lot at his shop. But the waitress was rather afraid of Han Fei because she had this feeling that Han Fei was having his last meal every time. There was some kind of melancholic courage radiating from the man. Han Fei didn't know the waitress' real thought. He would smile at her whenever he paid, most of the time, the waitress would evade him 'shyly'.

Han Fei returned home and this time he didn't wait for midnight but logged in 2 hours earlier than normal. The blood hadn't changed, as his consciousness and soul became stronger, he could hear the voice that came from his back clearer. The person who leaned on his back appeared to be trying to tell him something.

Opening his eyes, the blood was replaced by mist. Han Fei pushed open the door, Drake and Ying Yue were guarding outside. "Where's the Mirror God?"

"He's still inside the mirror, he hasn't shown up." Drake pulled down the black cloth covering the mirror, the mirror was empty. Through the death chat group, the tenants knew that Han Fei had returned. They gathered to prepare for their departure that night. Some of them sincerely wanted to help Weep and the red dress, others hungered after the merchandise at the mall. In any case, if the merchandise was absorbed by the tenants, all of them would get stronger.

When there was an hour left until midnight, the mirror started to change. Blood cracks appeared on the mirror surface and the Mirror God suddenly materialized. He was still the same but he gave off a feeling that was very different from before. Upon closer inspection, one would realize that his chest was hollow. Like the Butterfly on the Night of Resurrection, the Mirror God had placed his heart somewhere else.

“Han Fei, before we go to the mall, I need to ask you one last time, are you sure you want to do this? If something happens during the process when you fight for the control of the altar, you will end up worse than death. Every part of you will be made into merchandise, your soul will be split into pieces and you will see yourself being eaten piece by piece. Are you ready to face that?” The Mirror God was serious.

“I’m ready.” Han Fei nodded.

“In that case, I will do my best to help you.” The Mirror God pointed at the mirror surface. “Come and stand before the mirror. Place your forehead and chest on the mirror.” Han Fei obliged. He felt the chill of the mirror and then the system pinged. “Notification for Player 0000! Your passive, Mirror God’s blessing has been raised to Grade F! You can now effectively avoid mirror-type curse, you will not be tricked by mirrors. When you look into the mirror, there is a small chance you might see the Mirror God.”

Before Han Fei could study his upgraded passive, the Mirror God spoke, “Remember what I’m going to say next, no matter what you encounter in that Unmentionable’s memory world, do not give up on hope. Do not forget your name. When you feel lost, find a mirror, there will be answers in the mirror.”

“Thank you.”

“That is the best I can do to help you.” All the ghosts departed again. They walked out from the mist and stopped when they reached the mall. “When you guys get closer, you’ll be instantly detected by the monsters inside the mall so you’ll have to leave the rest to Han Fei.” They had reached the most crucial part of the Mirror God’s plan. Han Fei would use Soul Mist to hide their presence and carried the Mirror God to sneak into the mall’s underground. “Remember, the rest of you should only make your move when the floor of the mall starts to bleed and the spirits inside the mall start to run amok.” The Mirror God hadn’t been so chatty before, he was the most nervous there.

Telling the other neighbours to stay away, Han Fei carried the mirror alone and walked out from the alley. “When the bell for midnight struck, the mall’s always closed backdoor will open, we only have a minute. Do not hesitate after you enter it, follow the worker’s path and head downwards, the altar is at the lowest floor.”

“Okay, I’ve memorized the layout.” Han Fei counted his heartbeat. When there were 30 seconds to midnight, he carried the mirror and walked out from the shadow. He hurried towards the backdoor. Due to the Soul Mist, even Pure Hatred couldn’t sense Han Fei. Mirror God used this to try to sneak into the

underground of the mall. Every step was perfectly calculated. When Han Fei reached the backdoor, the rust on the door started to peel. The smell of blood seemed to drift out through the confines of time.

Han Fei grabbed the door at midnight and an unfamiliar voice rang in his mind. "You are the rarest soul I've seen. Your heart and mind are home to several selves, you have the right to enter this door." Before Han Fei even did anything, he was sucked into the door. When he came to his senses, he was already inside the mall.

"Notification for Player 0000! You've successfully discovered a Grade G hidden map—Midnight Mall!

"Warning! The Murder Map has been triggered, there is great danger inside this building!"

Han Fei didn't even have time to care about the notifications. He pushed open the worker-only door on the left and then ran down the stairs. Not long after he left, a large shadow appeared near the backdoor. An arm carved with human faces reached out from the shadow to try the backdoor. It only sighed in relief when it realized the door couldn't be opened. However, the shadow didn't fade away. It stopped at the backdoor and then also turned into the worker's path.

"Han Fei, you need to hurry, something is coming from behind." Mirror God warned and Han Fei sped up. There were many warehouses under the mall and the layout was very complex. If Han Fei took the wrong turn, he would have to turn around and he'd be captured by the shadow. This was a game where he couldn't make a single mistake. Han Fei was highly focused. With the Mirror God's guidance, he passed through the rooms. There were many strange items stored in the warehouses, it showcased the cruelty of humanity. For a moment, Han Fei felt he was running through Dante's Inferno. Finally at the end of all the merchandise, they saw a black altar, the altar had been scorched, it was charred black.

"Quick!" Mirror God urged. Han Fei opened the door of the altar, at the same time, a splintering sound came from behind him. The mirror was cracked. When Han Fei opened the altar, the mirror shattered. "My soul will be sold in exchange for your chance to enter the altar, that is the price to pay at this platform! But as long as you are alive, I will not perish!"

The black cloth on the altar fell to the ground. Han Fei and all the mirror pieces disappeared like they had entered the altar.

"Notification for Player 0000! You've triggered the succession mission for Grade E altar—Midnight Mall!

“Midnight Mall: Complete the previous altar owner’s last wish, fulfill his regret and earn his approval. Warning, due to the great difference between the mission difficulty and player level, the player will get additional hints.

“Succession Missions are different from Manager Missions. With each death, the player has a large chance to be assimilated into the owner’s memory! So be careful!”

Chapter 429 Memory World

When the mirror shattered, Han Fei’s mind went blank. He barely remembered touching the altar. His consciousness and soul were drawn by some force and his brain pounded with pain. When his vision returned to normal, Han Fei realized he was laying on a single bed that was rather moldy.

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve activated the Grade E Succession Mission. You shall not quit the game before you complete the altar owner’s final wish!

“Warning! The time flow in the memory world is different from the cryptic world, after all, you exist in the owner’s memory. Be careful. Once you die in the memory world, there is a high chance you will be assimilated into the altar owner’s memory, entrapping you in this world forever. Succession missions are highly dangerous, please be conscious and rational at all times. When you are in the memory world, there is a random chance for you to trigger altar missions. Completing these missions will provide you with rewards and aid you to fulfill the overarching succession mission.”

Holding his pounding head, Han Fei sat up in bed. He glanced at his menu, he was in a unique state and couldn’t go offline. ‘I find myself in this situation again.’ The exit button was Han Fei’s hail mary. When he was deprived of that choice, he’d be more careful than usual. ‘The system mission notifications are always succinct. The fact that the mission description this time is so long has to mean that this mission is extremely dangerous.’

Han Fei scanned his surroundings. This was a rental about 30 cubic metres wide. The bathroom was squeezed together with the kitchen, there was no bedroom. The bed was placed in the living room. The place was sparse. The wall was puffy from water damage, the ceiling was green with mold. The tiles were cracked with small worms wiggling through.

‘Shouldn’t I be at the mall? Where am I?’ Han Fei stood up to look for useful items. There were some rotten vegetables on the table, a small bag of rice in the kitchen, a broken fridge which was filled with books and study materials. Looks like the owner had turned the fridge into a bookshelf. ‘Looks like the owner of this room has just graduated, he’s studying for something.’ All the books carried notes at the margins, the owner was hardworking at his study.

“Hmm?” As Han Fei leafed through the books, he noticed a patient’s record and a photograph. The photograph was taken inside this room. A shy boy was sitting in front of the bed with a bowl of rice while a middle-aged woman was lying in bed. The woman looked at the boy with a deep apology. Oxygen pipes were connected to her nostrils and her skin was pale. She was in great pain but she didn’t want to worry the boy. The photograph looked old but the patient’s record was new. Based on the patient’s record, the mother’s condition had worsened recently and the operation required a lot of money. A charity organization had donated to the operation but the money had been taken away by the father. The neighbourhood started another charity fund after they found out but this time, no one was willing to donate anymore. The mother was burning money staying at the hospital and her operation couldn’t be delayed any longer. After much begging, the hospital finally agreed to perform the operation but the boy had to clear the debt one month after the surgery.

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve triggered a random mission in the altar owner’s memory world—Wish 1, Surgery fee.

“Wish 1, Surgery Fee: The player has to obtain 50000 RMB within 30 days. The player can use any kind of method, completion of the wish will garner the player great reward. Warning! The decisions you make in the memory world will affect the final result.”

‘Earn 50000 RMB in 30 days?’ Han Fei could do that in real life but he was in the altar owner’s memory world, he had no idea what he could do to earn money. A date was marked on the last page of the book, 31st December. Han Fei had to collect the money before that day. Han Fei studied the book closer and he noticed something interesting. The notebook had 31 blank pages and each page had been marked out with a date, corresponding to the days in the month of December.

“Notification for Player 0000! You’ve discovered a unique item—Notebook.

“Notebook: Keeping a diary is a good habit, you can use it to record... the last month of your life.” Despite the less than stellar description, Han Fei kept the item, perhaps the altar owner had diary-writing habits.

'I should be experiencing the altar owner's life. Living in this kind of high pressure environment, it's easy to go crazy.' Closing the fridge, Han Fei's stomach grumbled. 'Wait, I can feel hunger and thirst in the memory world?' This memory world was very different from the cryptic world. This place was very real. If he stayed here long enough, he'd easily mistake this place for the real world.

'When I attempted the manager mission at Yi Ming Private Academy, Jin Sheng only reconstructed the feeling of pain and despair, but here, even the bodily needs like hunger have been reconstructed. Looks like the memory world of a Lingering Spirit and an Unmentionable are very different.' The altar owner had been dead for a long time already but his memory world was still so fresh, this was the scariest thing. 'I need to solve the issue of hunger but there's not much rice left in this house anymore.' Han Fei picked up the rotten vegetables and walked into the kitchen. He grabbed the bag of rice and poured it into a bowl. He opened the faucet to collect some water. The tap water was murky and even smelled funny. Han Fei didn't have time to be picky. After he cleaned the leaves, he cooked a simple bowl of porridge. As the warm porridge entered his stomach, the feeling of hunger faded away and Han Fei didn't feel so oppressed anymore. 'To eat is to be alive, even in this dangerous world, one has to eat.'

Han Fei went to wash the bowl and at that moment, he heard a ringtone coming from under the bed. He dried his hands and rushed to grab it. Han Fei found an old phone under the bed. "This is the owner's phone?" He answered the phone and immediately an angry roar came out from the speaker. "Where the hell are you? Are you going to be late on your first day of work?! You promised the superior that you will not disappoint!"

"Work?"

"Are you still asleep? Yesterday, you came crying and begging for a job at the mall. You said you desperately needed money. I pitied you so I gave you a part time job at night!"

"I'm sorry, I'll be going now!" Han Fei hung up and the pieces fell into place. "So that is how the owner started to work at the mall. But why would working at a mall force a living man into an Unmentionable?" Han Fei adjusted his hair in the mirror. When Han Fei stared at the mirror, he felt like someone else was looking back at him. It was a very strange feeling. When he averted his eyes, it felt like his mirror reflection didn't.

Han Fei grabbed the phone and found the keys. He opened the living room door. "Notification for Player 0000! Are you sure you want to leave?"

'There's a system notification for leaving the house?' Han Fei was surprised. When he did other missions, the system rarely 'spoke'.

Han Fei chose yes and when he walked out the front door, the system announced, "Notification for Player 0000! You've triggered a random mission in the memory world—Wish 2, Survive.

"Wish 2, Survive: Survive for 30 days, only by being alive can you change everything.

"Notification for player 0000! Your current hunger level is 30, when the hunger level is more than 70, your mood will turn bad; when the hunger level is more than 90, your physique will be affected; when the hunger level reaches 100, you'll get sick and it's easier for you to die.

"Currently, your physical condition is good. Physical conditions are delineated into 6 levels, perfect, good, normal, weak, bad, dying. Your physical condition will affect your physical ability.

"Your current mental condition is rather disappointed, and the maximum mood point is 50. When your mood point is lower than 50, your physical condition will slowly deteriorate; when your mood point is lower than 40, you will feel mentally unfulfilled; when your mood point is lower than 30, you'll find it very hard to focus; when your mood point is lower than 20, you'll see strange things and you'll get sick easier; when your mood point is lower than 10, your fatality rate will drastically increase and you will suffer from suicidal tendency."

After reading all the updates, Han Fei noticed something, "The wishes are all positive, one is to survive, the other is to cure his mother. So in essence, the owner is a good person." But the purer one's heart, the deeper they'd sink into darkness.

Han Fei walked out the door and he realized the memory world was just like real life. Walking down the dark staircase, the voice-activated lights were delayed. Han Fei had to clap several times before they lit up. This was an old building. It had 4 floors. Most of the tenants were on the 1st and 2nd floor. The landowner didn't rent the rooms beyond the 3rd floor. Many warning signs were posted in the stairwell.

'Everything feels so real.' Even though it was already night time, the place was noisy. Han Fei could hear couple arguing, children crying, television ads and even people having sex. Han Fei's room was at the end of the 2nd floor corridor. He didn't hurry to leave but memorized all the rooms that had sounds coming out from them. From the sounds, Han Fei speculated about the tenants' personality and age.

Han Fei didn't run into any danger walking out from the building but he didn't dare put his guard down. He turned back to look and there were several families who had their lights on in the old building. Han Fei's gaze moved and then turned to walk away from the building.

However, when Han Fei turned around, the light in his eyes changed. When he turned back to look earlier, Han Fei noticed there was someone staring at him from a dark room on the 3rd floor.

'I better head to work first.' Han Fei had no idea where the mall was, thankfully, there were posters for sales at the mall on the walls and telephone poles. They provided the location of the mall. Han Fei lived in an area meant for imminent removal due to government projects. There was no one out at night. To reach the mall, Han Fei had to cross 2 alleys and 1 abandoned small garden. These places weren't that scary in the day but it was quite creepy at night.

Han Fei entered the first alley and noticed a man curl up at the corner. He was giggling dumbly. His clothes were tattered and his body and face were stained with mud. He leaned against a wooden box and a dog with an injured leg stayed inside the box.

'A homeless man?' Most people would stay away from a seemingly mentally unstable homeless man but not Han Fei. When Han Fei walked further into the alley, the homeless man suddenly stood up. He grinned at Han Fei and reached his open hands towards Han Fei.

"I'm sorry but I have no money." Han Fei admitted. He walked away and the homeless man chased after him. Curiously enough, the man only stepped on Han Fei's shadow and did nothing else. This continued until Han Fei left the alley.

'I better move faster.' Han Fei ran into the 2nd alley. The 2nd alley was lined with squat houses. The houses looked abandoned. Han Fei crossed the 2nd alley but he didn't enter the garden, instead he took a longer detour. This was because he saw the swings in the garden move on their own and he believed he heard children laughing. There was a concrete bridge at the end of the garden. Standing on the bridge, Han Fei could see the mall already. Han Fei continued his journey but at that moment, he heard something drop into the water. It sounded like someone had jumped down from the bridge. Han Fei leaned against the bridge rails and looked down. Since the streetlights were all broken, Han Fei couldn't see anything but darkness.

"This world feels like an absurd real world." Han Fei walked down the bridge. He was only 10 meters away from the mall. He jogged the rest of the way and finally arrived at his destination. The streetlights

near the mall were working normally but perhaps it was the voltage, the lights kept flickering. 'I've finally arrived.'

Han Fei lifted his head to look. The large mall was shrouded in darkness, he felt strangely oppressed standing there. The mall had been built for years and the outer walls required a new paint. Even the giant neon sign board was not right. The mall was called 8888 Mall, an auspicious name.

However, some of the signboard fuses forming the individual numbers had burned so instead the board read, DEAD Mall.

Chapter 430 First Day of Work

The mall in the dark was like a slumbering beast, the entrance was its maw. However, Han Fei had no choice but to walk into the belly of the beast. The mall had 3 main entrances, A, B and C as well as a worker-only entrance. After dark, entrance A and B would be closed, and only entrance C and the worker-only entrance could be used.

Currently Han Fei was at Entrance C and it was the only entrance with lights. "Hello, I'm new here..." Once Han Fei entered the door, he could hear arguments. Two people in guard uniform stood beside the wall while a middle-aged man wearing the mall's worker id tag was scolding them.

"We use money to hire you to be guards, not to come play games on your phones! Thanks to you people, we have lost our merchandise again! If I catch you slacking one more time, I'll show you the door!" The middle-aged man didn't hold back at all.

"But we went on patrol, there was no one on the 3rd floor at the time..."

"Excuses, I am sure you barely paid attention during the patrol!"

"Fine, but can you stop pointing your fingers at us?" The other guard countered with a rising voice.

"Did that offend you? As a guard, you don't even know that the surveillance cameras are down, is that how you conduct yourselves as guards?" The middle-aged man looked around 50 plus but he had a big temper.

“But the cameras were fine, it just so happened to break down that day, what do you expect us to do?”

“Yes, things are that coincidental! It has to break down when the merchandise gets lost!” The middle-aged man poked out his round belly. “I can’t believe you two think that I will buy that bullshit. At the end of the day, it’s your choice, if you want to stay then do your job, if you don’t, then get lost! You really think you’re hired here to enjoy life?”

“You...” One of the guards wanted to grab at the middle-aged man’s collar but was stopped by the other guard.

“What, you want to hit me? There are cameras everywhere! Let me see if they will ‘coincidentally’ break down this time.” The middle-aged man challenged, the fats on his face jiggled. As the fight was about to start, the mediating guard saw Han Fei. He dragged the arm of the other guard and headed into the mall with their flashlights.

The middle-aged man was not done. He roared a few more times and then turned to Han Fei. “This is your first day of work and you’re late for a whole hour.” The man gave Han Fei a side eye. His brows frowned as if smelling the mold on Han Fei. “I am willing to give you this chance because I pity you, you need money to help your mother, but if this is your working attitude, you won’t get further pity from me.”

Even though Han Fei was not really the original owner of the rental, being called pitiful did annoy Han Fei. This was a job, not charity work. Despite his personal feelings, Han Fei showed the emotions the man wanted to see, apology, self-blame, fear of losing the job and respect to the middle-aged man. Without saying a word, Han Fei already gave the man the answer he wanted. Only the weak would get satisfaction from bullying those weaker than them. The middle-aged man was stern, he critiqued Han Fei harshly. Han Fei was like a child without any social experience, he agreed with everything the middle-aged man said.

The man was very satisfied with Han Fei’s performance. He didn’t realize that when he turned around, Han Fei’s expression had completely changed. If he was not inside the memory world, Han Fei would show the man the meaning of business killer.

“Come this way.” The middle-aged man led Han Fei through the safety corridor and took the stairs to the corner of the 2nd floor. “This is where you’ll change into uniform and exchange shifts. Your senior

will come get you and show you around. Learn as quickly as you can.” The middle-aged man got a call and then walked away.

Han Fei stayed in the staff breakroom for about 5 minutes before hurried footsteps came from the corridor. A woman around 30 walked in. “Zhu Wei gave you a hard time, didn’t he?” The woman saw Han Fei and she could already tell what happened. “The man has a bad temper, don’t take what he said to heart.”

“It’s fine.” Han Fei noticed the woman wasn’t wearing a guard uniform but a uniform of the mall staff. Han Fei was surprised, he thought he was here to be a guard, “How shall I call you?”

“My name is Huang Li, or oriole. It’s a beautiful songbird, my family once had one.” The woman was the first kind person Han Fei met in the memory world. “So you can call me Sister Huang.” She opened the dresser and handed Han Fei a set of clothes, a ring of keys and a worker id, “The mall’s first floor sells makeup and luxury goods, 2nd to 4th floor are clothes, 5th floor are for toys and electronics as well as a cinema, 6th floor is the restaurants and eateries, the basement 1st floor is where you can find the market as well as a small bookstore and café. Just remember the general locations of the shops. Also do not wander about at night, especially don’t go to the 3rd floor.”

“Why?”

“The 3rd floor is for ladies’ outfits but recently merchandise has been vandalized or stolen. The leader suspects that a thief has hidden somewhere on the 3rd floor during the day and only came out to do these things at night.” Huang Li had Han Fei change into the uniform. “But those have nothing to do with us, we only need to finish our job.”

“Sister Huang, what is our job?” Han Fei really didn’t know.

“Zhu Wei didn’t tell you? My god, he didn’t tell you anything?” Huang Li stopped to look at Han Fei. “Then you better think this over. You might want to quit now.”

“Is this some kind of dangerous job?”

“It’s not really dangerous, it’s just complicated, and you’ll be working the night shift...” Huang Li said with some embarrassment, “Actually the boss of the mall started his business with a secondhand store, so he kept one running 24 hours at the mall near Entrance C. Our job is to man the cashier, take stock of inventory, logistics and so on. The shop also has a few donation boxes. We will gather old clothes and toys from the nearby residents and donate them to the children in the mountains.”

“Well, it sounds like the boss is a good person.”

“He is indeed a philanthropist and he has been blessed with good karma. He is now rich.” Huang Li smiled. “Plus doing good things will make you feel good.” Huang Li led Han Fei to an inconspicuous corner near Entrance C, this was probably the most secluded store at the entire mall. Huang Li opened the door with the key and turned the sign to open. “Today, we’ll work together but after you’re familiar with everything, you’ll be working the nightshift alone.”

Huang Li introduced the various sections and the location of all the products. Then she taught Han Fei how to use the cash register. With his photographic memory, Han Fei learned everything within half an hour.

“You’re such a quick learner! Have you done something similar before?” Huang Li was quite clumsy when she first started the job.

“I’ve worked part time at a convenience store before.”

“With your efficiency, your boss must have been so sad after you left.”

“Well, he was quite sad alright.”

Walking through the shelves, Huang Li and Han Fei reached the back of the shop. Under a row of second hand clocks, Han Fei noticed something covered underneath a black cloth. “What’s this?”

“I don’t know either. Based on the inventory list, it’s called an altar.” Huang Li pulled back the cloth and Han Fei’s eyes widened immediately. Underneath the wall of ticking clocks, there was a black altar and the small doors of the altar were sealed shut with nails. “We sell something like this too? Are there really customers interested in something like this?”

“Yes. Actually, I’ve seen some before.” Huang Li explained, “But strangely enough, those customers will only come at night, you might run into them when you work your shift.”