

Ad Infinitum 751

Chapter 751: Mischief

After a long silence, the honest Shang Jianyao finally couldn't help but ask, "Why are we staying in here and guarding Room 102 without entering?"

The rash Shang Jianyao tugged at the collar of his grayish-green camouflage uniform. "Who says we aren't going in? You're the ones stopping me!

"After clearing Master Zhuang's dream or a psychological trauma, we can become an Awakened who has explored the Mind Corridor's depths. When the time comes, we might directly discover the door to the New World inside!"

During the time they took to return to Pangu Biology from Tai City, the Shang Jianyaos were affected by the adventurous one and the one who sought fun again without Jiang Baimian's urging. They chose a room that didn't have a detailed 'strategy guide.' This resulted in them only clearing the second psychological trauma recently.

In other words, he had to incompletely explore another room before he could be considered an Awakened deep in the Mind Corridor and be qualified to search for the New World's door.

"Don't drag us down even if you have a death wish." The cold Shang Jianyao sat cross-legged on the ground and stared at 102's vermilion door without blinking.

At this moment, the calm and rational Shang Jianyao stretched and straightened his legs from leaning against the wall. He smiled and said, "I come over every day to see when Room 102 will move. What are you guys doing here?"

102 was originally not beside his Mind Room. It was only when the Old Task Force encountered Master Zhuang's dream in Tai City that the room suddenly appeared in its current location.

Jiang Baimian originally imagined that with Master Zhuang awakening and her team leaving Tai City, Room 102 would quickly move elsewhere. However, she never expected that even after they returned to Pangu Biology in late autumn, Room 102 remained fixed.

This Shang Jianyao's answer made his peers fall silent.

After a few seconds, the honest Shang Jianyao voiced his thoughts. "I want to see what illness you've contracted."

"I thought you were planning on supporting me in clearing Master Zhuang's psychological trauma or dream." The rash Shang Jianyao found it a pity.

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao smiled and said, "It's better to find a simpler room and quickly upgrade ourselves to the Mind Corridor's depths. We can consider 102 when we have Yama Tiger's strength from back then."

"Alright." The cold and sinister Shang Jianyao agreed.

The ten of them combined and turned in the direction they hadn't explored.

After walking along the thick, dark-yellow carpet for a while, Shang Jianyao's eyes suddenly lit up as he swept his gaze across the area. He saw a familiar door number: 506!

According to the strategy guide, this room's psychological trauma had a fixed solution—face the danger directly with courage. Therefore, exploring it was relatively safe and simple.

In other words, Shang Jianyao could become an Awakened in the Mind Corridor's depths in a few days.

After considering for a few seconds, the rash Shang Jianyao and the Shang Jianyao that sought novelty voted in favor of the calm and rational Shang Jianyao's suggestion to explore Room 506 in order to enter Room 102.

After an argument, Shang Jianyao turned the brass handle and pushed open the door to Room 506.

As this room was universally acknowledged to be simple, he didn't even bring the Six Senses Beads or the Life Angel necklace.

After taking two steps forward, a dark sea suddenly appeared in front of Shang Jianyao.

He was on an island surrounded by an endless sea in the dim night.

Violent winds howled as they swept past. From time to time, they would stir up mountain-like waves, making humans appear abnormally insignificant under the mighty force of nature.

Huzzah! Huzzah!

Large waves constantly slammed the edge of the island, making Shang Jianyao feel like he was experiencing an endless earthquake.

Suddenly, a black figure appeared from the dark water.

The black figure was massive like another island, but it was hidden at the bottom of the sea.

The black figure vaguely moved.

Shang Jianyao remembered the ‘clearing strategy’ and muttered to himself, “Face the danger directly with courage... Face the danger directly with courage...”

As he muttered to himself, slippery tentacles covered in eyeballs had appeared at some point in time at the edge of the island.

The black and white eyes quickly darted around as they looked at Shang Jianyao.

“Face the danger directly with courage!” Shang Jianyao—who was being stared at—smiled excitedly. The next second, heads drilled out of his head, shoulders, chest, lower abdomen, and limbs.

Long arms and pairs of legs grew out as well.

The ten Shang Jianyaos appeared on the tottering island in this way. They then rolled, walked, and ran toward the tentacles that were covered in eyeballs, rushing at the gigantic black figure hiding under the boundless sea.

“The hymn of humanity is the hymn of courage!” Shang Jianyao shouted as he rushed forward.

The eyes on the slippery tentacles froze for a second before they screamed in unison, “Don’t come over!”

The tentacles suddenly retracted into the sea, but the Shang Jianyaos had no intention of stopping.

At this moment, the dark clouds in the sky suddenly split.

The entire world quickly shattered as it shook violently.

...

Tarnan, Serene Dream Hotel.

The lady boss—Aynor—sat up trembling while hugging her blanket.

That scared me to death! Why did I have such a terrifying dream!? She quickly switched on the lights.

As the white light ruled over the bedroom and dispersed all the darkness, Aynor heaved a sigh of relief, but she didn’t dare to attempt to sleep.

...

“Does this count as clearing it?” The Shang Jianyaos combined again and muttered to themselves in confusion.

He didn’t sense any improvement in his mind and abilities.

After he looked up again and examined his surroundings, he realized that he was in a relatively strange place.

The decorations here were similar to the C-14 project team he had been to. The metal walls separated complicated equipment.

The humans coming and going wore white coats and light-blue masks.

“It was only a dream previously, but it’s a psychological trauma now?” Shang Jianyao stroked his chin.

His expression gradually became excited.

Such scenes always reminded him of the term ‘research institute.’

Shang Jianyao was just about to delve deeper into this psychological trauma when he suddenly recalled something and flipped his wrist to look at his watch.

“It’s almost 8!” he exclaimed.

The Shang Jianyaos then unanimously agreed to end this exploration.

...

In the real world, Shang Jianyao—who was lying in bed—opened his eyes. He sat up a little and placed the pillow behind him.

Shang Jianyao had just adjusted his posture when the radio outside the window sounded. A familiar, slightly childlike voice sounded in his ears. “Good evening, everyone. I’m Newspoint broadcaster, Hou Yi. It’s 8 p.m. now...

“The Board of Directors convened a meeting today to discuss the production assignments for the last quarter of this year. The Board of Directors and Vice President Ji Ze pointed out that the company’s overall situation in the first three quarters was stable and developing in a moderate and good way. They requested that everyone not relax or slack in the last quarter...

“The Board of Directors also discussed the scale of the end-of-year bonuses and next year’s labor insurance and related benefits...

“In order to liven up the atmosphere in the last quarter of this year and better the employees’ emotional states, the Entertainment Department has decided to hold the Spring Welcoming Singing Competition in the coming days. The top three in the competition will have a chance to appear on the stage for the end-of-year performance...”

Shang Jianyao’s eyes lit up as he seriously considered which song he would sing this time. He was so focused that he didn’t listen to the subsequent news.

He fell asleep at some point in time.

In the middle of the night, Shang Jianyao—who had slept in the afternoon—woke up. He suddenly sat up, draped himself in a thick, military-green cotton coat, picked up the thick, black plastic flashlight, and walked out of the room.

After relieving himself in the public bathroom, Shang Jianyao flipped his wrist to look at his watch and quietly walked in the opposite direction of home.

He arrived at Zone C, Room 11—outside Long Yuehong’s house. He then squatted at the base of the wall opposite Room 11 and placed the flashlight under his chin, prepared to turn it on at any moment.

“You want to scare Little Red?” the honest Shang Jianyao asked his peer in a low voice.

The Shang Jianyao that liked to joke chuckled and said, “Otherwise?”

“But how do you know that he would go to the bathroom at this time?” The honest Shang Jianyao expressed his confusion.

Even people with the habit of getting up at night wouldn’t go to the public bathroom at the same time every night. Furthermore, Long Yuehong’s house had a small bathroom!

The Shang Jianyao that liked to joke and pull pranks replied calmly, “When you were suppressed by them in the morning, I took the opportunity to control the body and implanted the thought of ‘go to the public bathroom at three in the morning to relieve himself’ in Little Red.”

“But how can you be sure that you will wake up at three in the morning?” the honest Shang Jianyao asked.

He didn’t notice any implanted thoughts in himself.

The mischievous Shang Jianyao shook his head. “I can’t be sure. If I don’t wake up, I’ll treat it as helping Little Red train his courage.”

Just as he said that, he suddenly exclaimed, “There are only three human consciousnesses in the room... Little Red isn’t here!”

Apart from Long Zhigu—who was studying in university and staying on the corresponding floor—the Long family of five should have four human consciousnesses. Furthermore, as a regular visitor to the Long family, Shang Jianyao knew which room Long Yuehong was in and confirmed that there was nobody inside.

The honest Shang Jianyao laughed. “Got it. Little Red went to sleep at Little White’s!”

“Lame,” muttered the Shang Jianyao that liked to joke. He stood up and returned to Zone B.

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622nd floor, Zone B, Room 59.

Long Yuehong—who had woken up due to his need to pee—carefully removed Bai Chen’s hand and leg from his body and crawled out of the warm blanket.

He didn’t bring a thick cotton coat with him, so he could only make do with Bai Chen’s to resist the cold in the room and in the corridor.

After wrapping himself in a thick coat, Long Yuehong took a key and left the room with a flashlight.

He didn't forget to close the door. Then, in the cold and dark aisle, he walked toward the public bathroom with the yellow beam of light guiding the way.

At three in the morning, the corridor was silent.

Chapter 752: Familiar Night

Although Long Yuehong had experienced such situations time and time again since his first memory, humanity's fear of the darkness and the unknown never disappeared. Unless one had mental problems, even the boldest person couldn't help but feel a little scared when walking alone in the quiet, late-night corridor.

As the flashlight swept across the area, Long Yuehong recalled Shang Jianyao saying: Sing to yourself if you are afraid while walking alone at night!

Previously, he had scoffed at this. After all, he had lived on that floor for 23 years. Even if he discounted the little bit of childhood memories, he had nearly 20 years of familiarity with the corresponding environment. He wouldn't take the wrong path with his eyes closed.

In such a situation, the fear wouldn't be too serious. It could be completely overcome.

But now, on the unfamiliar 622nd floor, the darkness always ruled over the corresponding area after his flashlight beam moved away. It made him involuntarily feel a chill.

No matter how terrifying it is, can it be more terrifying than the nights in those city ruins??Long Yuehong muttered to himself silently as his courage seemed to return. His strides became wider, and his pace became faster.

As for the idea of boosting his courage by singing, he ultimately didn't use it. Wouldn't it be disturbing someone's sleep on such a quiet night?

Thanks to the similar layout of the residential floors and the need to consider the layout of the sewage pipes, as well as Long Yuehong using the bathroom on this floor before lights out, it didn't take him long to reach his destination.

This was the public bathroom at the intersection of Zone B and Zone C.

In the men's bathroom, the dim yellow light swayed in the cold, gloomy night wind. It was dim and indistinct, reminding Long Yuehong of the ghost films in the Old World's entertainment.

This thought flashed through his mind. With his 20 years of rich experience, he determined that someone had switched on a flashlight while squatting in the bathroom.

Don't you know how to conserve energy!??Long Yuehong—who was a D7 employee—remained thrifty in this regard.

The energy allocation quota in Pangu Biology was only determined based on one's rank and position. It couldn't be bought with contribution points even if one wanted to!

Of course, this was only on the public level. In private, there were people who allowed others to use electricity at their home as long as the price was right.

Long Yuehong retracted his gaze and walked to a small urinal to relieve himself. In order not to have splashback, he also didn't turn off the flashlight and lodged it on the back of his hand—on the back of the T1 mechanical arm.

After doing the shake and zipping up, Long Yuehong subconsciously looked at the spot where the yellowish light was swaying.

Suddenly, his gaze froze slightly.

He saw a faint plume of smoke fill the yellowishness. It sometimes swelled and sometimes tumbled as if it had a life of its own.

As Long Yuehong frowned slightly, he vaguely heard a suppressed groan. This groan sounded faint as if it were restraining some kind of pain.

Long Yuehong's mind became extremely clear. His first reaction was to leave the public bathroom and formulate a plan. However, he then realized that this was the company. If anything really happened, everyone would be affected, and he couldn't retreat.

Confirm the situation first. If something goes wrong, quickly report it to the Order Supervisory Department...?Long Yuehong quickly made a decision. He switched off his flashlight and walked to the cubicle.

The closer he approached, the more obvious the smoke became. The groans that carried some kind of pain became clearer.

Upon seeing his target at hand, Long Yuehong jumped over.

The next second, he exchanged looks with the man squatting in the cubicle.

After a brief pause, the man turned anxious and angry. "What are you looking at?"

Long Yuehong's mouth quivered. "Why didn't you close the door?"

The man held a cigarette in one hand and held the door with the other. He laughed in anger. "It's late at night, and there's nobody. What's wrong with me opening the door to get some air?"

Long Yuehong composed himself. "Where did you get the cigarettes from?"

Within Pangu Biology, apart from most of the deceased older generation and a few people who got hooked, the other employees didn't smoke. Therefore, Long Yuehong didn't think in that direction.

This was a luxury good in a sense.

If not for the fact that his stomach hadn't been cleared out and that his butt hadn't been wiped, the man squatting there would've jumped up and beaten Long Yuehong up.

He snapped, "I exchanged it from a settlement in the Blackmarsh Wilderness when I was outfield! What's wrong? I'm an employee who just joined. It's normal for me to be addicted to cigarettes!"

As he swept his gaze, his pupils suddenly dilated, reflecting Long Yuehong's iron-black arm.

Long Yuehong saw the other party clearly; he had relatively dark skin, and he had a mouthful of yellow teeth. His face was pockmarked, and his eyes were clearly bloodshot. It was obvious that he was a foreign employee who hadn't undergone genetic enhancement. It could only be said that he wasn't ugly or terrifying.

Despite the embarrassment, Long Yuehong still asked, "Then, why did you groan just now?"

"Can't I be constipated, Bro?" The man's attitude became rather good.

Long Yuehong laughed dryly. "I just came back from the field, and I'm still quite tense. I overreacted a little. Sorry."

"Understood, understood." The man looked very amiable. He paused and said, "Can—can you not stand in front of me like this? Uh—no, can I close the door?"

"Sure, sure." Long Yuehong was especially grateful that the light was dim and couldn't illuminate his face.

Just as he said that, the cubicle door swung back to a close.

The man inside fell silent for a few seconds before asking, "Which company are you from? Where did you get the mechanical arm?"

"I'm from a special operations team." Due to confidentiality, Long Yuehong could only give a vague answer. He then curiously asked, "Why are you concerned about a mechanical arm?"

The man in the cubicle sighed and said, "I'm a foreign employee, and I'm not qualified to undergo genetic enhancement. I also have to go out on missions on the surface often. In order to survive—to survive until an internal transfer can be carried out—it's very worth it to exchange an arm for a mechanical arm."

Long Yuehong thought for a moment and sincerely said, "It's very expensive."

“Sigh...” The man in the cubicle sighed again.

Long Yuehong didn't tell him that he could perform a biological prosthetic limb transplant for free if he lost his arm during the mission. There were just no options to choose from. Furthermore, it was impossible for him to obtain those with good abilities. This was because losing an arm meant excessive blood loss. The probability of not being resuscitated was significant, especially when he was on the surface and couldn't be treated in time.

He turned around and walked out of the public bathroom.

With this comparison, he suddenly felt that his current situation was pretty good.

It's even better if I don't have to go out on missions again...?As Long Yuehong thought, he casually shone the flashlight around. He saw many graffiti-covered walls drawn with chalk. Some were deep, some were childish, and some were exaggerated. They were all unique.

This was identical to the scene in many places on the 495th floor. It was the same for the other residential floors.

For some reason, Long Yuehong was inexplicably happy.

This was a sign that foreign employees had begun to integrate into the company, and it was also a symbol that their descendants were being born.

At the thought of this, he returned to Zone B's Room 59 with a faster gait.

After taking three to four steps, Long Yuehong stopped and turned his ear. He seemed to have heard something.

After listening carefully, he didn't discover anything apart from snoring.

As expected, I haven't completely relaxed...?Long Yuehong shook his head in self-deprecation and walked toward Zone B, Room 59.

...

The next morning, Room 14 on the 647th floor.

Long Yuehong and Bai Chen walked hand in hand and realized that Shang Jianyao was alone in the office.

He sat with a pompous posture, leaning back in his chair to its limits with his feet on the table.

Long Yuehong released Bai Chen's hand and subconsciously asked, "Where's Team Leader?"

Shang Jianyao replied with a bright smile, "Guess."

Lost again?? Long Yuehong wanted to answer, but he suddenly felt a chill at the back of his neck and jolted awake.

If Team Leader were loitering in the corridor and heard me bad-mouthing her behind her back, things would be troublesome! Her hearing is different from before! Long Yuehong suddenly looked back and didn't discover anyone passing by outside.

But from the corner of his eye, he saw Bai Chen secretly retract her hand from the back of his neck.

Long Yuehong looked over and saw the corners of Bai Chen's mouth curl up slightly with a serious expression.

He also smiled.

"Woof, woof, woof!" Shang Jianyao barked.

Long Yuehong was feeling a little embarrassed when the phone in the office rang.

"Quick, pick it up," he quickly said to Shang Jianyao.

Shang Jianyao had a nonchalant expression. “They must be looking for Big White. She’s not around, so picking it up will require us to come up with a reason for her. It’s better not to pick it up.”

“That’s true.” Long Yuehong thought for a moment and felt that it made sense.

Bai Chen didn’t object.

The ringing stopped after a while.

After about ten minutes, Jiang Baimian walked into the office. She didn’t explain anything and greeted her team members with a normal expression.

Not long after Jiang Baimian sat down, the telephone rang again.

She picked up the receiver and brought it to her ear. After listening for a while, she tersely made a few acknowledgments before turning to Shang Jianyao and shouting, “Hey, it’s for you!”

Chapter 753: “Casual Chat”

Shang Jianyao jumped up and shouted into the receiver from afar, “Why— Are— You— Looking— For— Me?”

He enunciated each word clearly. When he reached the last word, he had already run to Jiang Baimian’s side and taken the receiver.

The entire process was smooth and natural. It perfectly showcased his coordination, balance, running speed, and timing.

Jiang Baimian was first stunned before she understood and mouthed to Shang Jianyao, “Do you need me to add some special effects?”

This fellow was mimicking a scene from an Old World drama serial.

As Shang Jianyao smiled at her, he spoke to the person on the other end of the line.

After a few sentences, he put down the receiver and said in high spirits, “Director Su is looking for me.”

Director Su Yu was in charge of the Security Department.

“Why is Director Su looking for you?” Long Yuehong asked in confusion.

Shang Jianyao shook his head. “I don’t know either.”

Jiang Baimian deliberated for a few seconds and guessed, “You’ve already come clean that you are an Awakened. The price you paid is mental problems, so the C-14 project team’s tests and the psychiatrist’s evaluations will become unnecessary. The observation will probably be directly handed over to Director Su—who is also an Awakened and a board member.”

Professional matters were left to the professionals.

Shang Jianyao was stunned for a moment before he shouted, “No!”

“Why?” Bai Chen didn’t understand this fellow’s reaction.

Shang Jianyao had a disappointed expression. “It’s quite comfortable chatting with Dr. Lin. The canteen exclusive to the C-14 project team also has very delicious food.”

Jiang Baimian held in her laughter and said, “I can only say that I’m sorry for your loss.”

Shang Jianyao fell silent for a while before letting out a long sigh. “One has to know how to look forward. I wonder how the food at the board’s exclusive canteen is...”

At this point, his eyes lit up again, and he looked eager.

...

Underground building, fifth floor, Management Zone.

Shang Jianyao met Director Su Yu in Room 506.

Su Yu stood around the sofas and pointed opposite him. He smiled and said, “Come over and have a seat.”

At this moment, the guards in bionic artificial intelligence armor had yet to leave the room.

Shang Jianyao looked at the office area with a large wooden table and a black high-back chair and asked Su Yu in confusion, “Director Su, why don’t we talk over there? You can sit where you are, and I’ll just sit opposite the table. That seems more formal.”

Before Su Yu—who was wearing a gray combat uniform—could answer, the honest Shang Jianyao continued, “This is to show politeness.”

Su Yu—who was in his forties—blushed and coughed. “We’re just having a casual chat, not business. Have a seat. Have a seat.”

His thick eyebrows, large eyes, and square face—which was covered in pockmarks due to the elements—instantly returned to normal.

After the guards left the room, Shang Jianyao sat on the long sofa opposite him.

Su Yu smiled and said, “I’ve already read the report submitted by Old Jiang’s daughter. I want to hear you say it again—from your perspective.”

Shang Jianyao assumed a posture. “That’s a long story.”

Su Yu habitually wanted to say, “It’s fine; feel free to tell me.” However, he remembered this fellow’s usual behavior and suppressed that thought. He only smiled and didn’t say a word.

Shang Jianyao waited for a while before sighing regretfully. He then seriously recounted the Old Task Force’s experience from the steelworks factory ruins to Tai City.

Without a doubt, he depicted the version that Jiang Baimian had reviewed. The only difference was him emphasizing the small jade Buddha's role.

This was rarely reflected in the telegram's content in the past, but the report Jiang Baimian submitted also mentioned that the Old Task Force had only truly confirmed that the item obtained from the steelworks factory ruins was sufficiently special after the incident in Tai City.

As Su Yu listened, he nodded from time to time and said, "With that jade Buddha and the Six Senses Beads, you can discover the New World node even without the Life Angel necklace."

At this point, he praised, "You guys found a way to deal with a New World node the first time you encountered one—by flushing it with high-intensity electric currents. Both your abilities and brains are indeed outstanding."

Shang Jianyao became modest on Jiang Baimian's behalf. "It's just luck."

Su Yu thought for a moment before asking, "Apart from that, what changes have you undergone?"

Shang Jianyao instantly revealed an 'I won't be sleepy if we talk about this' expression. "When I encountered Master Zhuang's dream in Tai City's No. 1 Senior High School, I tried to sleep at the school entrance to observe the changes that would happen around my Mind Room."

"What did you discover?" Su Yu's expression unconsciously turned solemn.

Shang Jianyao smiled. "A room appeared out of thin air—102!"

"102..." Su Yu's pupils slightly dilated as he muttered to himself. After a few seconds, he let out a long sigh. "So Room 102 corresponds to the Kalendaria, Master Zhuang. Apart from Yama Tiger, an Awakened from the company also entered this room and went completely crazy."

As he spoke, he picked up the porcelain cup and took a large gulp.

Shang Jianyao curiously asked, "How can you be sure that the person also entered 102?"

“Every Mind Corridor-level Awakened in the company will report the door number they plan on exploring to the Board of Directors before the exploration of a new room. This way, there’s still a chance of being rescued,” Su Yu replied calmly.

Smack!

Shang Jianyao slapped his thigh. “I didn’t report mine!”

Su Yu was stunned for a moment before asking, “You entered a new room, a room that wasn’t given in the information? Before exploring the Mind Corridor’s depths, just follow the instructions given in the information and clear the psychological traumas step by step!”

As for seeking their own door that led to the New World later, that was a relatively private matter. However, nobody would easily attempt an unfamiliar destination unless they couldn’t find anything in the rooms mentioned in the information.

This was also the reason why he didn’t warn Shang Jianyao previously. Who would abandon the easy for the difficult?

Su Yu couldn’t help but wonder if he had underestimated Shang Jianyao’s mental illness.

Perhaps he isn’t just suffering from a split personality. There are other problems, or perhaps the split personalities like to go to extremes??Su Yu quickly speculated the reason.

Shang Jianyao nodded without hesitation. “That’s right.”

He raised his finger and counted them one by one. “522, 912...”

Su Yu listened in silence and asked with a frown, “You didn’t explore 102, right?”

“I’m not stupid!” Shang Jianyao replied truthfully.

This made Su Yu feel that he appeared relatively stupid for asking this question.

He organized his words and said, "Write up the general situation of those rooms later and submit it to me. Consider this a contribution. There's a corresponding reward. Don't worry; it's definitely generous."

Shang Jianyao didn't hide his excitement. "Sure, sure!"

Su Yu took a deep breath and said, "You should've opened 102's door and looked inside. What exactly did you see?"

Shang Jianyao didn't hide anything and simply described it. "The dream in Tai City's No. 1 Senior High School and a scene suspected to be the entrance of Linhe Village in Dajiang City..."

Su Yu listened very attentively. After discussing this matter, he asked in concern, "Are you alright?"

Shang Jianyao nodded. "We're all fine."

Su Yu wasn't surprised and tersely acknowledged it. "Actually, the severity of your price will slowly deepen before you enter the New World; it won't be too exaggerated. It's the same even when you explore the Mind Corridor's depths."

Upon mentioning the power node deep in the Mind Corridor, Su Yu took the opportunity to ask, "How many rooms are you missing?"

Shang Jianyao assumed a posture of recalling and calculating. "In theory, one more."

He was definitely honest.

"Not bad." Su Yu nodded slightly. "It seems like you gained a lot from exploring new rooms."

"It was alright," Shang Jianyao replied humbly.

Su Yu reminded him, "Once you reach deep in the Mind Corridor, there are two major changes: The first is that you can separate your aura and create items yourself."

“The second is that if you grasp a certain person’s mind coordinates, you can open the corresponding passage and descend directly. This will also allow the chaos in your Sea of Origins to be restrained to a certain extent.

“There’s no qualitative improvement in strength.”

Clap! Clap! Clap!?

Shang Jianyao clapped for Director Su.

Su Yu’s eyebrows twitched slightly as he said, “Any questions?”

Shang Jianyao thought for a moment and asked seriously, “Director Su, why don’t you organize Mind Corridor-level Awakened to hold regular gatherings to exchange thoughts, sing, and dance? This can effectively enhance team cohesion!”

Su Yu frowned. “The negative price of every Mind Corridor-level Awakened is relatively serious. If we forcefully gather them together, not only might they not be able to become friends, but it’s also easy to become enemies.”

Shang Jianyao nodded and laughed. “I thought of another reason. If we allow Mind Corridor-level Awakened to know each other and succeed in forming a team, it will be difficult for the Board of Directors to manage them!”

Su Yu’s expression immediately froze.

“Watch it. You will be silenced if you tell the truth!” The honest Shang Jianyao grumbled at his rash peer.

Su Yu undoubtedly heard this.

He rubbed his cheeks and smiled. “That’s about it for today. I might request you to go through two to three physical examinations in the future.”

“No problem!” Shang Jianyao replied firmly.

After he walked out of Room 506, Su Yu leaned back and placed his left hand on the armchair's armrest. He looked at the air ahead and fell into deep thought.

At this moment, the door opened again with a clang.

As Shang Jianyao resisted the guards' interception, he jumped up and shouted, "Director Su, I have another question! Can I have lunch in the canteen on this floor?"

Su Yu rubbed his temples and forced a smile. "Sure."

Finally, Shang Jianyao quietly left.

Su Yu took nearly a minute to regain his composure. He gently patted the sofa's armrest, looked at the air in front of him, and muttered to himself thoughtfully, "102..."

Chapter 754: Happy

On the 647th floor, Room 14.

After Jiang Baimian finished writing up the contributions that she needed to submit today, she stood up, rubbed her shoulders, and said to Long Yuehong and Bai Chen, "Since we have nothing to do, let's go to the training room for some exercise."

"Alright!" The person who replied wasn't Long Yuehong or Bai Chen but Shang Jianyao, who had suddenly appeared at the door.

Jiang Baimian glanced at him and scoffed. "Didn't you say that you wanted to experience the board's exclusive canteen? Why are you back so early? It's not even noon!"

As far as she knew, there was no so-called Board of Directors exclusive canteen at all. There was only the management's exclusive canteen. Of course, the directors had special treatment when they went to any exclusive canteen for management. It was equivalent to having a private room with special dishes served.

Shang Jianyao sighed in disappointment. “It’s because I’m too early that I could only wait in the corridor on the fifth floor. The guards found me unsightly and that I was a stain on the environment, so they kept urging me to leave.”

The fifth floor of Pangu Biology’s underground building was the Management Zone.

If you weren’t an Awakened in the Mind Corridor and had a high status, those guards definitely wouldn’t just be persuading you...?Jiang Baimian smiled and said, “And you came back just like that?”

“Otherwise? I’ve always been law-abiding and a model employee.” This was indeed how Shang Jianyao thought of himself.

Jiang Baimian laughed. “It will be difficult for you to go to the fifth floor again. Without the higher-ups there inviting you and obtaining permission in advance, you won’t be able to enter.”

This was still a relatively relaxed situation. If anything happened, the alert level would rise. Employees who didn’t obtain permission couldn’t even press the corresponding elevator button if they wanted to go to the fifth floor or lower.

As for the fire escape routes, they would definitely be sealed. Furthermore, there were many of them. The ordinary employees and management used different stairs.

“It’s fine. I’ve already spoken to them; they will open the door for me when the time comes.” Shang Jianyao smiled smugly.

“Spoken to them?” Long Yuehong asked in confusion.

Shang Jianyao nodded in all seriousness. “That’s right. I made many friends there.”

Made friends...?The corners of Long Yuehong’s mouth twitched in response.

Jiang Baimian asked in exasperation and amusement, “Since you’ve already made friends, why did you return? Can’t you just stay on the fifth floor?”

Shang Jianyao frankly replied, “What they said does make sense. I agree that me squatting there waiting is quite unsightly.”

Did you make friends with them to be convinced by them??Jiang Baimian rolled her eyes and gave up on following Shang Jianyao’s train of thought.

She pointed in the direction of the changing room. “Let’s go to the training room.”

“The spot you’re pointing in doesn’t seem right,” the honest Shang Jianyao pointed out.

Jiang Baimian flew into a rage out of humiliation. “So you don’t change before training?”

“Oh!” Shang Jianyao clapped, making Jiang Baimian feel like killing him.

Long Yuehong and Bai Chen didn’t dare to interject or speak.

After the team members changed and entered the training room, Jiang Baimian was in no rush to find someone to spar with. Instead, she did some aerobics to warm up her muscles bit by bit.

As she practiced, she glanced not far away and teased, “Why are the two of you so affectionate when you’re stretching each other? Give me back my eyes!”

Long Yuehong immediately felt embarrassed, while Bai Chen was completely unaffected and replied, “You can also find someone to help you stretch.”

Jiang Baimian opened her mouth and was speechless.

Rage rose in her that she had no qualms about doing anything. She turned her head to Shang Jianyao and said, “Come, let’s have a fight first!”

Shang Jianyao gasped exaggeratedly. “Don’t hit the face!”

The two of them put on their armor and boxing gloves, walked to the middle of the training room, and began sparring.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bang! Bang!?

Jiang Baimian attacked like a raging fire. Her fists were like dragons, beating Shang Jianyao as he ran around cowering.

“Why did you use all your strength today?” Shang Jianyao asked in confusion as he ran and blocked.

Jiang Baimian smiled brightly. “I’m happy today!”

To be honest, she was indeed in a good mood. As she had successfully returned home last night, she took the initiative to mention that only the Eighth Research Institute remained to be found for the subsequent missions when faced with Madam Xue’s complaints of ‘not knowing when she will be out on another mission’ and ‘don’t make us parents die after our child.’ She then said that the subsequent missions would be left to the company. They only needed to do some of the things assigned to them and didn’t have to go out all the time.

This made her parents very happy.

Jiang Baimian’s mood improved when she saw that they were happy. Therefore, she made Shang Jianyao experience her happiness.

...

495th floor, Zone C, Room 11.

After dinner, Long Yuehong—who hadn’t gone home to sleep yesterday—nervously opened his door.

Long Dayong, Gu Hong, and Long Aihong sat in their respective seats as they watched the LCD screen on the television cabinet by the wall.

Long Yuehong had used contribution points to exchange for this before his last mission.

It was said that a company had moved it out of Swamp Ruin 1, and the company had returned several screens to them.

This thing was actually useless in Pangu Biology. After all, the Entertainment Department had only recently considered the possibility of forming a television station. The LCD screens in the company's Rec Center were really just used to show some information or to give people who liked to sing during weekends a background when there were the corresponding activities.

In very few cases, the Entertainment Department would send specialized personnel to play Old World films to enrich the employees' leisure lives.

However, the Long family had a laptop that Long Yuehong had brought back with him; it contained a large amount of Old World entertainment. Compared to the small laptop screen, it was clearly better to play the content on a larger LCD screen.

"I'm back." Long Yuehong glanced at the flickering scene on the LCD screen and recognized that it was a drama serial that he found garrulous.

"Okay." Gu Hong nodded.

Long Dayong turned his head to look at the door and casually said, "Ah, you're back."

With that said, he cast his gaze back at the LCD screen.

Long Aihong didn't even raise her eyelids. She didn't say a word and was abnormally focused.

Although he didn't receive the attention he deserved, Long Yuehong heaved a sigh of relief. He then casually found a seat in the living room and sat down to watch the television with his family.

After an episode ended, Gu Hong seemed to come to a realization and reprimanded Long Yuehong. "Why didn't you say anything when you entered?"

Long Yuehong didn't know how to respond. His experience was to just ignore the comment.

As expected, Gu Hong's focus quickly shifted. She smiled and took out an irregular cube made of light-yellow paper from her pocket.

Gu Hong then looked at the window and suppressed her voice. "Here, a Babymaker talisman!"

"What talisman?" Long Yuehong reached out to take it with a confused expression.

Gu Hong smiled. "The Babymaker talisman! It can bless your wife with a child soon."

Long Yuehong glanced at his mother suspiciously. "Where did you get it?"

He remembered that only the older generation had such a culture of using Babymaker talismans. At his parents' generation, genetic enhancement technology had already matured. Many problems of infertility had never been inherited, so there was no need to pray for additional blessings.

However, nothing was absolute. Genetic enhancement could only be said to have eliminated some problems in advance, but the effects of everyone's enhancements were different. Some were good, and some were bad. For example, Long Yuehong himself was only 1.75 meters tall after genetic enhancement.

Gu Hong replied righteously, "From your grandmother!"

"Alright." Long Yuehong casually accepted the Babymaker talisman and stuffed it into his pocket.

As Bai Chen had asked him to stay at home today, he had nothing to do and decided to visit the Rec Center to have a chat with his old classmates and friends he hadn't seen in months.

After entering the Rec Center, Long Yuehong casually swept his gaze around and suddenly felt a little down. He saw the newly transferred Rec Center's PIC.

This lady didn't live on the 495th floor; she only came here to work every day.

Sigh, why would a nice person like Grandpa Chen be infected with the Heartless disease... What a sudden disaster...? Long Yuehong sighed inwardly and walked to a corner of the Rec Center.

The Old Task Force had now preliminarily confirmed that the reason Chen Xianyu—the former PIC of the 495th floor’s Rec Center—was infected with the Heartless disease was that a few New World powerhouses from the company had temporarily returned during First City’s uprising to guard against any accidents. This inevitably resulted in a portion of the Heartless virus leaking from the New World into Pangu Biology.

Long Yuehong had just sat down, and before he could adjust his mindset and search for an acquaintance, he heard Shang Jianyao’s voice.

“Everyone, everyone, what song do you want to hear? The Spring Welcoming Singing Competition is about to begin. I need more practice.”

Long Yuehong looked over with a blank expression and saw Shang Jianyao wearing a dark-blue coat and holding a microphone as he stood in front of the Rec Center’s LCD screen to seek everyone’s opinion.

Beside his feet, the small black speaker with a blue bottom was prepared to fire at any moment.

The people playing cards, playing chess, and chatting in the Rec Center replied, “It has to be more festive!”

“It has to make people happy listening to it!”

...

Shang Jianyao listened seriously and waved his hand. “Give me a minute.”

He squatted down and adjusted the small speaker’s playlist.

Before long, he stood up, and music sounded.

Shang Jianyao’s body began to sway with the rhythm, and his voice sounded through the microphone. “Congratulations on becoming rich.

“Congratulations on being wonderful.

“The best ones, please come over.

“The bad, please?leave1...”

Chapter 755: Confronting ‘Danger’

The catchy festive song livened up the Rec Center. The employees present chatted and laughed, and they would hum from time to time. It made Long Yuehong feel like he was celebrating the new year.

For almost all Pangu Biology employees, the Lunar New Year was definitely the best and most relaxing period. They would choose to throw problems to the back of their minds as long as it wasn't life-threatening or urgent. They would first celebrate the Lunar New Year before anything else.

At the end and beginning of the year, every family would've saved up for a year and were willing to use a portion of their saved contribution points to reward themselves and their family. When the time came, Pangu Biology would definitely increase the supply of meat, vegetables, sweets, soda, and snacks. It would also produce rare items that employees usually didn't see.

Long Yuehong connected the Lunar New Year to tables filled with good dishes, sweet beverages, and delicious sweets, new clothes, as well as kids enjoying all kinds of fun games.

Before joining the Old Task Force, he had looked forward to the Lunar New Year the most in the year. Although he could often eat good food now, he still missed the atmosphere.

The Lunar New Year is at the end of January; there are about four months left...?Long Yuehong looked forward to it.

The bustle at the Rec Center on the 495th floor lasted until it was almost lights out. There was a pause in the middle because Shang Jianyao insisted on listening to the radio.

In a happy mood, Shang Jianyao washed up before the lights went out and went to the bathroom.

After lying down, he massaged his temples and closed his eyes.

...

Mind Corridor, Room 506.

Shang Jianyao smiled as he turned the brass handle and pushed open the door.

As expected, he entered a place that was suspected to be a laboratory. The silver-white metal walls partitioned many small rooms, and inside were different complicated instruments.

Shang Jianyao looked around and focused on the people coming and going. They were all wearing light-blue masks and white coats, and they were in a rush or unsmiling.

Shang Jianyao stopped a person in a white coat as if he were familiar with him. “What is this place?”

The man in the white coat turned his head to glance at him, and his gaze instantly turned sharp. “Who are you? How did you sneak in? Who instructed you?”

Without waiting for Shang Jianyao to come up with an answer, he pulled back and shouted, “Guards! Guards! The experimental subject has escaped!”

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Black-clothed guards ran over from all directions holding submachine guns. Several of them were even wearing military exoskeletons.

“How terrifying!” The expression on Shang Jianyao’s face didn’t match his words. He began to mutter to himself, “Face the danger directly with courage... Face the danger directly with courage... So I have to force my way out?”

In the blink of an eye, Shang Jianyao stomped his feet and jumped toward the door that seemed to lead to the corridor.

He didn't rashly use his abilities. This wasn't because he had experienced the cruise ship trauma and had learned his lesson. He was afraid that an Awakened's abilities would bring about unnecessary changes and cause him to encounter an irresistible influence. After all, the strategy guide had clearly written that abilities could be used for any psychological trauma related to Room 506.

The only reason he didn't do so was: this made things more interesting!

Using abilities directly would make the problem much simpler. The danger level would be reduced by at least one-third!

As he ran, Shang Jianyao suddenly 'fell' and slid forward for a distance. This wasn't because he had been affected by an Awakened ability but an action of his free will.

Badump!

One of the guards was caught off-guard and couldn't stop in time before he was knocked over.

Shang Jianyao pounced on him and picked up a black object. He then did a pulling action and threw the black object at the nearest guard wearing a military exoskeleton.

With the comprehensive warning system's help, the guard preliminarily determined that it was a grenade because everyone carried one.

He quickly ducked to the side and hid behind a machine. The nearby guards did the same.

The military exoskeleton wasn't kinetic armor; it didn't completely cover the body. It couldn't prevent the wearer from suffering damage when it encountered an explosion or shrapnel.

Pa!

The black object landed to the side without exploding.

“Haha.” Shang Jianyao laughed. “Sorry, I threw the wrong item.”

He slung a submachine gun over himself and held a black grenade in his left hand. He threw and caught it repeatedly.

The black object from before was quietly lying on the ground—it was a black leather shoe.

Upon hearing his words and sensing that there was no explosion, the guards ran over.

Shang Jianyao shook his left arm and threw the real grenade upon seeing this. At the same time, he rolled to the corridor.

Ta! Ta! Ta!

Rows of bullet holes appeared randomly from where he had previously been standing.

Boom!

Just as the black grenade flew out, it was hit by a guard wearing a military exoskeleton and detonated in advance.

The blast and shrapnel effectively stopped the other guards from rushing into the corridor.

Shang Jianyao jumped up and laughed boisterously again. “Thanks!”

He then muttered to himself, “Face the danger directly with courage... Face the danger directly with courage...”

He ran to the end of the corridor, where there were still a few guards.

Shang Jianyao raised the submachine gun he had snatched and fired in a sweeping motion.

Amidst the sparks, some of the guards fell to the ground, and some hurriedly searched for cover. They were momentarily unable to stop Shang Jianyao's approach.

At this moment, Shang Jianyao suddenly felt a sense of numbness in his body.

Bang!

He fell to the ground and muttered excitedly, "Awakened..."

His voice suddenly rose. "There's no grudge between us, so why are you intercepting me? How much did they pay you? I'll pay double!"

His half-body paralysis quickly subsided.

He implanted the Awakened with the idea that everyone should peacefully coexist and walk their own paths.

Upon seeing that his abilities had taken effect, Shang Jianyao propped himself up with one hand and jumped to his feet.

His target was the end of the corridor.

Behind him, the guards rushed out one after another. In front of him, the enemies—who had been in a rush to hide—reorganized their defense line.

Shang Jianyao opened his mouth again, attempting to shout.

At this moment, the Shang Jianyao that sought novelty hissed in his mind. "That's not right. This isn't called facing danger directly."

"This isn't considered dangerous at all. The room owner's greatest fear that she finds most dangerous is to be captured! I have to face this danger!"

With a swoosh, he stopped and raised his hands. He then slowly squatted down and placed his palms on the back of his head.

Black figures flew over as guards pinned him down.

Before long, Shang Jianyao was tied up and gagged.

He widened his eyes, curious about what would happen next.

He was soon fixed to a metal bed. A few humans in light-blue masks and white coats walked over.

“What do you plan on doing to me?” Shang Jianyao asked in fear.

The white coat leader blurted out in surprise, “Aren’t you gagged?”

After asking, he realized that a new mouth had grown out of Shang Jianyao’s forehead. This belonged to the one who sought novelty and was filled with the desire to act.

“That’s right!” The mouth opened and closed in frustration. “I forgot!”

He then said, “Begin. Do whatever experiment you want. I won’t say a word and will only watch!”

The next second, the mouth disappeared.

However, pairs of eyes appeared on Shang Jianyao’s cheeks, chin, chest, abdomen, and the back of his hand one after another without blinking.

The eyes of the people in white coats became extremely terrified.

Someone shouted, “Men! Men, inject him with anesthetic—using the standards of an adult elephant!”

Shang Jianyao's ten pairs of eyes witnessed a syringe—which was as thick as his forearm—inject the liquid into his body.

He muttered to himself, “Face the danger directly with courage... Face the danger directly with courage...”

Just like that, he fainted and had a good sleep.

When he woke up, the laboratory was empty.

“What kind of change is this?” Shang Jianyao sat up cross-legged and stroked his chin. “The room owner was indeed captured back then and was also injected with anesthetic. What he saw when he woke up was this scene? His psychological trauma is this place, not this matter. Therefore, it's considered a success no matter how I escape?”

The ‘strategy guide’ provided by Pangu Biology was to escape the place and advance bravely.

This also counted as clearing this psychological trauma; nobody had tried to be captured previously.

...

495th floor, Zone C, Room 11.

Long Yuehong was lighting a lamp and packing up his clothes.

After finishing this matter, he sat down and planned on resting before washing up. Since he had nothing to do, he took out the Babymaker talisman his mother—Gu Hong—had given him.

As his finger stroked the yellowish talisman's surface, Long Yuehong suddenly felt that something was amiss.

This piece of paper was relatively new and didn't look like it had been passed down from his grandmother's generation.

Chapter 756: Corpses

As a Security Department employee who had been on the surface for extended periods, Long Yuehong realized that the Babymaker talisman's paper was relatively new. It didn't look like it had been passed down from the previous generation.

He instinctively straightened his back and raised his guard. He then looked around and listened for a few seconds.

After confirming that there was nothing abnormal, he tried to unfold the irregular, square paper talisman.

As the light-yellow paper unfolded, a pattern outlined in vermilion handwriting entered Long Yuehong's eyes. This looked like a warped human silhouette, but it also looked like a few strange words stacked together.

Long Yuehong studied it for a while but didn't find the corresponding item in his memories, nor did he find it vile.

The talismans left behind by the Old World did resemble this. As for whether it was useful, that was another matter.

Long Yuehong felt more comforted.

There's no problem... I'll consult Team Leader tomorrow. She knows the Old World's folklore very well...?Long Yuehong heaved a sigh of relief and prepared to return the talisman to its original state.

He failed shamefully.

He failed despite following the folding lines. He only barely managed to fold it into an irregular square, one that was completely different from the original.

At this moment, a scene suddenly surfaced in his mind: Shang Jianyao standing behind him, leaning toward his ear, and saying gloomily, “Oh no, you can’t restore this talisman. Something terrifying will happen...”

Long Yuehong quickly shook his head and threw this horror story-like connection to the side.

He planned on getting Little White to help restore it tomorrow. He felt that Bai Chen was much better than him in this regard.

After putting away the Babymaker talisman, Long Yuehong stood up and went to the cramped bathroom at home.

...

Mind Corridor, Room 506.

Shang Jianyao sat on the metal bed and looked around, realizing that he and the instruments were the only ones left in the hall. It was empty as if it had been abandoned for a long time.

He stood up with his feet on the ground and scoffed. “What unprofessional villains! Why didn’t they destroy the equipment when they gave up on this experiment base?”

A head burrowed out of Shang Jianyao’s left shoulder and retorted his peer. “Maybe they encountered an accident and had to evacuate in a rush?”

The rash Shang Jianyao chuckled. “Why don’t you say that all the humans here had evaporated into thin air?”

“It’s not impossible,” the honest Shang Jianyao argued.

As they spoke, they jointly controlled their body and made it walk to different instruments so that they could confirm their uses and search for the corresponding experimental records.

The honest Shang Jianyao gave his evaluation first. “This instrument is very strange. It seems to be a product of crossbreeding between an MRI machine and an electrocardiograph...”

The rash Shang Jianyao immediately suggested, “Why don’t we switch it on and give it a try?”

“How? Who will do the honors?” Zen Master Redemption stuck his head out from the chest.

This was a literal depiction of a Buddhist phrase: ‘one could drink alcohol and eat meat as long as Buddha was in the heart.’

The rash Shang Jianyao replied without hesitation, “Me!”

The head that originally belonged to the honest Shang Jianyao directed the right hand to stroke his chin and smile. “Is there such a possibility? The room owner doesn’t have sufficient scientific literacy. Back then, he was too flustered, nervous, and in a rush. He only wanted to escape and didn’t make any observations. Therefore, the instruments in his psychological trauma are products of overlapping impressions. They don’t correspond to the actual effects, so it’s impossible to test their true effects.”

The honest Shang Jianyao drilled out from the other shoulder. “Big White said: Make bold assumptions and carefully verify them. This is only an assumption. There has to be a subsequent verification process!”

“Let me do it!” The rash Shang Jianyao boldly walked toward the instrument.

After some work, he felt that he might’ve only done an electrocardiogram.

After testing the instruments and flipping through the drawers, the Shang Jianyaos entered the corridor in disappointment and searched for other rooms.

He pushed open the door next door, and his gaze suddenly froze.

In different parts of the room bathed in pure white light were transparent glass columns. The columns were filled with a light-yellow liquid, and naked humans were soaked in them.

This was somewhat similar to a scene they had seen in Wasteland Ruin 13’s secret laboratory. However, the human bodies soaked here meant that something was clearly amiss.

Some of them had two heads; others had a vertical eye cracking out of their foreheads. Some had soft skulls, and their faces were half-deformed. Some were covered in black scales, some seemed to have lost their skin, and some had flesh sprouts growing out of their faces. Some had five hands and seven legs...

Shang Jianyao sometimes gritted his teeth, and sometimes his eyes lit up. He walked into the room and ventured deeper.

The deeper he went, the more abnormal the humans soaked in the glass columns became. Shang Jianyao gradually discovered a few corpses that could give people nightmares late at night.

One of the heads was sliced open from the middle, and pale flesh connected the left and right parts.

Another specific surface was covered in black and hairy spots.

The most memorable body had its limbs and body extremely atrophied. Its head was twice the size of a normal person's, and it floated in the liquid like a jellyfish.

"They also do genetic mutation induction?" Shang Jianyao's expression gradually turned cold. "They are in the same field as the company and the White Knights? Or are they some research institute that was the company or the White Knights' former incarnation?"

He looked around as he walked. He didn't encounter any more danger, but he didn't discover anything valuable.

Just like that, he entered one room after another before walking out in disappointment.

When he felt a little exhausted, the metal door to the experimental base appeared in front of him.

"It's almost over? Is walking out considered clearing this psychological trauma?" The calm and rational Shang Jianyao stroked his chin.

The rash him smiled smugly. “This is because I have the courage to face danger. If it were anyone else, they most likely wouldn’t wake up after being injected with such a large dose of anesthetic. They would also become a vegetable in reality.”

“From the strategy guide’s point of view, this room is indeed quite simple.” The Shang Jianyao that sought novelty had a look of regret and disappointment.

“Shall we leave?” Zen Master Redemption Shang Jianyao asked.

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao thought for a moment and said, “Let’s go out. It seems like the room owner didn’t notice many valuable clues back then.”

The Shang Jianyao that abhorred evil said, “Before leaving, I want to blow up the room with soaked corpses.”

“This is only another person’s psychological trauma. There’s no point in blowing it up. Are you that serious when you play games?” The ruthless Shang Jianyao was peeved and amused.

“Yes!” Shang Jianyao—who abhorred evil—nodded.

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao laughed. “Then, blow it up.”

Boom!

As a gigantic fireball appeared in the corresponding room, Shang Jianyao pushed open the metal door and walked out.

Sunlight shone into his eyes, and the entire world instantly turned illusory.

In the blink of an eye, buildings appeared in front of him—buildings that were part of the same complex.

Shang Jianyao rubbed his temples and chose to leave.

495th floor, Zone B, Room 196.

He opened his eyes and examined himself. “I’m still unable to separate my powers to fuse it into an item in reality... Just a little short... It should be enough after clearing another psychological trauma.”

Shang Jianyao laughed. “We can still explore Room 506 and try the second psychological trauma.”

He didn’t plan on trying the third spot because it was clearly written in the strategy guide: “After grasping the key points, this room is relatively safe. It can be used as a ‘base’ for rookies to temper their minds. Therefore, it’s not recommended to explore to a relatively deep extent to prevent affecting the room owner. If you happen to encounter a fluctuation in his mind, it’s best to provide him with a certain level of help. Don’t kill the golden goose...”

As a group of polite people, the Shang Jianyaos naturally didn’t want to disturb the room owner.

...

The next morning, Room 14 on the 647th floor.

Long Yuehong stood up, walked to Jiang Baimian’s desk, and took out the Babymaker talisman. “Team Leader, can you help me see if the symbols on this talisman are normal?”

“Talisman?” Jiang Baimian curiously took the talisman.

Shang Jianyao came over, and Bai Chen walked over.

Jiang Baimian unfolded the talisman and said as she read, “I don’t recognize this symbol. I can only say that it’s indeed similar to the ones in the Old World’s talismans. What talisman is this?”

Long Yuehong hesitated for a moment before answering, “Babymaker talisman. My mother got it from my grandmother.”

“Oh.” Jiang Baimian resisted the urge to tease him.

Bai Chen fell silent.

Shang Jianyao slapped the table and pounded the bench while laughing. “If this is useful, won’t this action be more effective?”

He seriously assumed a rocking posture while cradling a baby—this was the Life Ritual Church’s salutation.

Jiang Baimian coughed and looked at Long Yuehong in an attempt to soothe over the atmosphere. “Do you think there’s a problem?”

“I think this piece of paper is a little new. It doesn’t seem like it was passed down from my grandmother’s generation,” Long Yuehong said truthfully.

Bai Chen was immediately a little concerned and cast her gaze at the Babymaker talisman again.

Jiang Baimian nodded slightly and said, “I’ll go back tonight and help you search up this symbol. Most of my information is on the computer at home. You can also ask your mother and grandmother. What if they just replicated the original one because it was too old and tattered?”

As she spoke, she tore off a piece of paper and drew the pattern on the Babymaker talisman.

Long Yuehong tersely acknowledged it. “Alright.”

He paused and voiced his worry. “I’m just afraid that they are believers of a Kalendaria and joined some strange Church.”

If that happened, the problem would be very, very troublesome.

Clap! Clap! Clap!?

Shang Jianyao clapped for Long Yuehong.

Jiang Baimian also praised, “Not bad. You are sufficiently vigilant.”

Shang Jianyao immediately crossed his arms and placed them in front of his chest.. He then took a step back and suppressed his voice. “Always be vigilant!”

Chapter 757: Solution

Jiang Baimian glanced at Shang Jianyao and reminded Long Yuehong, “Since you have the corresponding worries, you need to carry out your questioning with technique. Don’t let anyone suspect anything.”

“Got it.” Long Yuehong nodded heavily.

Shang Jianyao had a look of ‘worry.’ “I’m not too confident in your oratory skills. Will you really be fine dealing with such matters?”

Long Yuehong immediately hesitated and didn’t dare to guarantee anything. After all, he wasn’t in charge of negotiations most of the time while out on the Ashlands. To put it more tactfully, he was ranked fifth in negotiations with external parties among the Old Task Force members.

Shang Jianyao smiled. “I have two solutions to ensure that nothing goes wrong.”

Although Long Yuehong didn’t trust this fellow’s solution, he still felt there was no harm in asking. He took the initiative to ask, “What’s the solution?”

Shang Jianyao looked at Bai Chen. “First, bring Little White with you and get her to be your second brain to help you negotiate.”

Jiang Baimian—who was drinking water—almost choked.

Long Yuehong seriously considered the feasibility of this method and slowly shook his head. “It won’t work. It’s not good to bring Little White to my house in a rush without informing them in advance. After all, we have already decided on the weekend. We’ll talk about it when the time comes.”

He felt that Bai Chen's first meeting with his parents had to be sufficiently formal and that he couldn't rashly change plans. This would affect Bai Chen's image in his parents' hearts.

"Then, you can wait until the weekend to ask." Bai Chen gave her suggestion.

Long Yuehong fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "If there's really a problem with this matter, it will only worsen the trouble if it drags on."

Clap! Clap! Clap!?

Shang Jianyao clapped. "Not bad; you have your own ideas!"

You sound like you're trying to sow discord...

?Jiang Baimian muttered, planning to hold Shang Jianyao back if he continued.

Long Yuehong was just about to explain when Shang Jianyao changed the topic. "The second solution is for me to implant a set of thoughts on how to negotiate with foreign parties in you. The reference target is..."

He paused and said, "Drum roll~ Me!"

"Forget it then," Long Yuehong replied without hesitation. "Even if you implant a corresponding thought into me, I can't use Inference Clowning."

"Then, Big White's?" Shang Jianyao enthusiastically did a sales pitch.

Long Yuehong was tempted, and Bai Chen nodded slightly.

Jiang Baimian chuckled. "Can you weave the complete set of thoughts I have when I communicate with outsiders?"

Even I can't do it myself!

“No.” Shang Jianyao shook his head frankly. He then sighed. “It would be good if Old Ge is here. He has established the corresponding models and database.”

Long Yuehong took an inconspicuous deep breath. “It’s better if I do it myself. I’ll be careful and pay attention to the environment and reactions. If the scene really isn’t suitable, I’ll leave it for the weekend.”

Jiang Baimian and Bai Chen were just about to nod when Shang Jianyao’s eyes suddenly lit up. “Why don’t we change our train of thought?”

“Change our train of thought?” Long Yuehong had always known that Shang Jianyao’s train of thought was unconstrained and impossible to guess.

Shang Jianyao’s smile lit up. “I’ll ask on your behalf.”

“Don’t joke around.” Long Yuehong instinctively reacted.

Shang Jianyao added, “I’ll use Thought Guidance to make your grandparents, parents, siblings, and other relatives think that I’m you. Isn’t this equivalent to you asking?”

He spread his palms with a ‘trust me’ expression.

Long Yuehong subconsciously analyzed the situation and realized that it was actually feasible. However, he felt abnormally terrified when he imagined how his family, relatives, and friends would treat Shang Jianyao as him and chat happily with him.

He quickly shook his head. “No, it’s fine.”

Shang Jianyao tried to persuade him. “Life is short, so why not give it a try?”

Smack!?

Jiang Baimian slapped his arm with her right hand. “Stop bullying Little Red. Go busy yourself.”

Upon seeing her stand up, Shang Jianyao diverted his attention. “Where are you going?”

Jiang Baimian casually replied, “Minister Xenny asked me to go over for a report. She wanted to talk about the details that weren’t written in the report.”

According to the procedure, this was the second last segment. After that, it was time to calculate their contribution and distribute the rewards.

“Oh, oh.” Shang Jianyao asked, “Do you want me to lead the way?”

Jiang Baimian fumed at being hit in a sore spot. “Isn’t it just the deputy minister’s office on the 646th floor? I can find it!”

It wouldn’t be a problem to walk slower and think more!

As she spoke, she passed through the office and walked out of the room.

After walking for dozens of meters, she encountered a former comrade and chatted with him. After chatting, she accidentally got lost.

Looking at the familiar rooms around her, Jiang Baimian calculated and observed the door numbers.

She was still relatively good at remembering numbers.

After walking back to the spot she had previously lost herself by following the door number, Jiang Baimian saw Shang Jianyao standing there with his hands in his pockets.

“What are you doing here?” Jiang Baimian asked first.

Shang Jianyao had an innocent expression. “I came out to use the bathroom.”

He casually pointed in the direction he had come from.

Jiang Baimian received the ‘hint’ and identified the correct path. She then waved her hand and said, “Go.”

She turned around and walked to the right stairwell.

As she waited for the elevator, she ran through the layout of the 647th floor in her mind.

The bathroom closest to us doesn’t seem to be at that intersection...?Jiang Baimian suddenly exclaimed.

At this moment, at Room 14’s door, Long Yuehong looked at Shang Jianyao—who had walked back—and asked in confusion, “Why are you going there?”

“I got lost.” Shang Jianyao smiled with a look that warranted a beating.

Long Yuehong could only say, “Fortunately, Team Leader isn’t around.”

...

On the 646th floor, in Xenny’s deputy minister’s office.

After knocking on the wrong door, Jiang Baimian finally found the right place.

Xenny—who had long chestnut hair and looked to be in her thirties—didn’t warmly invite Jiang Baimian to sit on the sofa. Instead, she pointed at the chair opposite her desk and said, “Have a seat.”

“Minister, what else would you like to ask? The report is very detailed.” Jiang Baimian took the initiative.

Xenny picked up the sky-blue porcelain teacup and took a sip. “I’m mainly concerned about your health. How many islands have you cleared in the Sea of Origins?”

“Three.” Jiang Baimian didn’t hide anything. “I’m in the midst of searching for the fourth one.”

Xenny revealed an approving expression. “Your mental fortitude has always been good. It’s reasonable for you to progress so quickly. Yes, there’s no rush. As the number of islands you clear increases, the negative price you pay will worsen. Take more time to get used to it. It will be more conducive for your daily life.”

“I understand.” Jiang Baimian the order of priority.

Xenny then asked, “What’s your next plan?”

Jiang Baimian said seriously, “The first is to find the last of the Five Great Holy Lands—Dajiang City’s Linhe Village. The second is to make a trip to Icefield and strive to lock onto the Eighth Research Institute’s exact location. On the way, we will also go to the city that Shang Jianyao’s father last appeared in to search for clues regarding the Heartless disease.”

Xenny fell silent for a few seconds before saying, “It’s not like you can find where the Eighth Research Institute is hiding after going to Icefield once or twice. The gathering and extraction of information and clues in advance is a relatively important segment. Also, Icefield isn’t suitable for human survival in this season. It’s best if you wait until spring before setting off.”

“We won’t go even if you want us to,” Jiang Baimian replied with a smile.

She had no objections to staying in the company for a few months. Ever since she revealed that she didn’t have to go out often after the next mission ended, her parents had been very happy. They had even skipped the usual blind dates they scheduled for her.

Xenny asked about the four Great Holy Lands again and focused on some details. For example, if there were any traces of humans entering and leaving the cryochamber at the Holm Fertility Center in the past few years.

At the end of the conversation, Jiang Baimian took the initiative to say, “Minister, our team’s Long Yuehong and Bai Chen are a couple. They are planning on registering their marriage soon. Can they be transferred elsewhere internally?”

Xenny smiled. “With your contributions, it definitely won’t be a problem. Besides, newlyweds aren’t suitable for fieldwork.”

“I’m relieved.” Jiang Baimian smiled.

This was the promise she wanted.

...

495th floor, Zone C, Room 11.

Long Yuehong chatted with his parents and sister as they ate dinner. He casually mentioned, “Mom, the Babymaker talisman you gave me doesn’t look old.”

“What do you mean old?” Gu Hong didn’t understand.

Long Yuehong simply explained, “I thought it was a Babymaker talisman used by Grandpa and Grandma, but I realized that it’s quite new.”

Gu Hong thought for a moment. “I didn’t notice. Ask your grandmother later.”

“Maybe she got someone to draw it again,” guessed Long Dayong.

“Who?” Long Yuehong tried his best to make it seem like he was casually chatting.

Long Dayong casually replied, “Some of our ancestors draw such things and have passed down their skills. Many people pray for auspiciousness during festive seasons.”

“Is that so...” Although Long Yuehong didn’t think there was anything wrong, he felt that the answer was too simple.

After dinner, he carried a bag of fruits he had exchanged using his contribution points and headed to the 417th floor where his grandparents lived.

Chapter 758: Art of the Gap

Underground building, 417th floor.

Long Yuehong looked at his watch and confirmed the time. He didn't go to his grandparents' house but went straight to the Rec Center.

As expected, he immediately saw his grandfather—Long Yixuan—holding a thermos and chatting with a group of middle-aged and elderly employees. His grandmother, Zhong Zining, was further inside, playing cards with her neighbors.

Back when he was in university, Long Yuehong was especially envious of his grandfather and grandmother's lives.

Their grandchildren were mostly grown up, and they were almost retirement age. They were still in relatively good physical condition, so apart from not being able to go to the surface, they could live their daily lives rather freely.

Furthermore, after working so hard for so many years, they each had a certain rank of employment. Although they weren't considered high, they had the advantage of not needing to help their children. They were completely self-sufficient for their daily necessities, and they could also have a feast from time to time.

Long Yuehong carried the bag of fruits and sat beside his grandmother, Zhong Zining. He smiled and asked, "Did you win?"

These retired and semi-retired old employees betted small and mainly played for entertainment. They would even split one contribution point into ten portions and leave it on a tab before settling the accounts.

Zhong Zining grumbled, "I didn't win a few rounds."

Although she was grumbling, the old lady with much white hair still smiled and muttered, "Why are you bringing up fruits again? You're about to get married and are about to have children. You have to save up, understand?"

As the saying goes, the youngest son and eldest grandson were most cherished by an old lady. As the firstborn of the Long family's third generation, Long Yuehong had always been doted on by his grandparents and had a good relationship with them.

Long Yuehong smiled and explained, "Little White told me to bring these to you guys as a form of respect."

He had already told his grandparents that his fiancée's name was Bai Chen.

Of course, Bai Chen—whose parents had passed away relatively early—was a wilderness nomad to her bones; she actually didn't have such self-awareness. Long Yuehong had always freeloarded from his grandparents' house for food and drink, and he also didn't have the habit of bringing gifts. Fortunately, the Old Task Force had an Old World folklore researcher and Pangu Biology's model child, Jiang Baimian. From time to time, she would give the young couple some advice.

Long Yuehong was deeply inspired and connected this to a sentence in the song Shang Jianyao sang: Nobody would blame you for being polite!

Zhong Zining exclaimed, "Little White is too polite."

Although she said that, the smile on her face became brighter. At the same time, she took out a few fruits and distributed them to her mahjong friends. "Try it. Try it. A gift from my granddaughter-in-law."

She couldn't hide the smugness in her tone.

So what if your grandchildren were assigned a partner as soon as they became of age? My eldest grandson's wife has a high rank, has many contribution points, and knows how to respect her elders!

Grandma is so generous today... Long Yuehong muttered inwardly.

Fruits within Pangu Biology weren't something ordinary families could eat often. Long Yuehong remembered that his grandparents would hide them well every time they exchanged for fruits. Not to mention outsiders, even his parents rarely gave them fruit. Only people of the younger generation like him would rummage through them and say, "Hurry up and eat. It will spoil if you don't eat it."

Upon seeing the neighbors around the card table stop and eat the fruits, Long Yuehong casually said, "I chatted with Little White about your and Grandpa's names before getting off work today. She felt that they are completely different from my parents, siblings, and sister."

Zhong Zining smiled. "You have to ask your great-grandparents. They were all educated by the Old World, so they might like to come up with such names. Sigh, your great-grandfather and great-grandmother passed away before your father was born. We could only make do by coming up with one."

Although he already knew that his great-grandparents had passed away early, Long Yuehong couldn't help but sigh with emotion every time he heard that. Even if they moved underground, Pangu Biology didn't have a good time in the Chaotic Era or the early years of the New Calendar.

After chatting about the names, Long Yuehong followed the strategy he had discussed with Bai Chen, Shang Jianyao, and Jiang Baimian and took the opportunity to start the topic.

He took out the Babymaker talisman in front of everyone at the card table and asked in anticipation, "Is this really useful? It looks relatively new to me, and it doesn't look like it was obtained from your generation."

Zhong Zining casually replied, "The one I used to wear was already tattered. I specially got someone to draw this after your father said that you were getting married. It was very effective; I wore it back then, and I had five children. None of them died early. Your mother didn't want it, so she only had three."

Long Yuehong immediately asked, "Who drew it?"

Upon seeing his grandmother cast a confused gaze at him, he followed the plan and smiled. "A colleague of mine said that he also wants one if it's effective."

Zhong Zining came to a realization and expressed her understanding. She even felt a little pleased with herself. "It's the Mu family in Zone B. Their ancestor was some Daoist priest; he knew how to make all kinds of talismans."

Sounds fine... Long Yuehong heaved a sigh of relief. He then recalled something: The Eternal Time Church also had Daoists!

Zhong Zining continued, “If that colleague of yours really wants one, lead him to this floor tomorrow. I’ll bring him to request one. It’s best to request for one using a relative close to you by blood.”

“Sure, sure!” Long Yuehong tried his best to remain calm.

The conversation just now was actually a routine that Jiang Baimian had personally designed. Her goal was to push Shang Jianyao out and get him to meet the person who drew the Babymaker talisman openly as Long Yuehong’s colleague and have a nice ‘communication.’

If Long Yuehong’s grandmother was really strange, and the Babymaker talisman directly originated from her... With such a foundation, Shang Jianyao could also visit the old couple without any problems and resolve the problem easily.

The greatest benefit of this solution was that Long Yuehong’s every move was sufficiently normal and that there was nothing worth suspecting. Shang Jianyao would subsequently take over and absolve him from the trouble.

...

495th floor, Zone B, Room 196.

Shang Jianyao lay on the bed, massaged his temples, and entered the Mind Corridor.

Being urged by Jiang Baimian, he planned on clearing Room 506’s second psychological trauma as soon as possible and becoming an Awakened who had explored the Mind Corridor’s depths.

Mind Corridor, Room 506.

Shang Jianyao appeared at the door of a house. He was surrounded by similar buildings that formed a sizable community.

The people coming and going wore clothes of different colors, but these were relatively old. Some even had many patches.

Unlike the white coats in the first psychological trauma, the people here would greet and chat whenever they encountered each other. They seemed to know each other, and it was similar to the situation on each floor of Pangu Biology's underground building's Residential Zone.

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao observed for a while before walking to a middle-aged man in gold-rimmed glasses who passed by.

"Are you on break today?" he greeted as if they were familiar with each other.

The middle-aged man was stunned for a moment before shaking his head and smiling. "I'm just heading home for a meal. You are?"

Shang Jianyao didn't choke at all. "I just came back from outside. The elements really took a toll on me. I no longer look the same."

"Oh." The man in the gold-rimmed glasses felt a sense of guilt, feeling that it was his problem not to recognize the other party.

After implanting a thought, Shang Jianyao casually chatted. "I was sent to the Third Research Institute."

"Isn't that far in the south?" The man in gold-rimmed glasses was abnormally stunned. He had clearly heard of the Third Research Institute.

Shang Jianyao smiled. "That's right. It's almost at the beach. You might not believe it, but the Third Research Institute has now changed its name to Mechanical Paradise. Most of the people I encountered are smart bots."

"It's normal. They study artificial intelligence there to begin with." The man in the gold-rimmed glasses felt that there was nothing wrong.

Shang Jianyao concealed his cold eyes and curled the corners of his mouth. "I heard from their people that the higher the research institute's serial number is, the more advanced and valuable the research project is."

“A meaningless guess. Our research isn’t much different from what the Second Research Institute studies; the only difference is in direction. Who can tell who’s more advanced and valuable?” The middle-aged man in gold-rimmed glasses scoffed at this comment.

“That’s right!” Shang Jianyao replied in a tone of deep agreement.

After chatting for a while, he turned to walk to the old lady, who was taking in the cold air outside a building.

Although the old lady had a lot of white hair, she was very hale and hearty. At this moment, she was sitting on a stool under a tree, sizing up the pedestrians around her.

“You are?” The old lady noticed Shang Jianyao’s approach.

Shang Jianyao smiled. “I’m someone sent by the Third Research Institute to visit your research institute. I want to know if you guys are really the First Research Institute established by the Old World?”

The old lady examined the fellow as if she were looking at a fool. “Did you remember wrong? This is the Fourth Research Institute!”

“How is that possible? Could it be that the higher-ups gave the wrong information?” Shang Jianyao began to put on an act.

During this process, the ruthless him laughed inwardly. So it’s the Fourth Research Institute.

He then frowned. What’s the danger here? This doesn’t seem like the second psychological trauma described in the strategy guide... Could it be that I used an unconventional method in the first psychological trauma and took the initiative to receive the anesthetic injection, so I directly jumped to the third psychological trauma?

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao looked around solemnly, searching for a place that might be dangerous.

Chapter 759: Danger Zone

“Granny, thank you.” Shang Jianyao waved his hand and bade the old lady under the tree farewell.

He skillfully switched identities, greeted people of different ages and conditions, and chatted about all kinds of things to figure out what this place was.

He continued chatting until his mouth was dry and he was mentally exhausted. He roughly confirmed that he was in the Fourth Research Institute’s residential area.

This research institute was located deep in the uninhabited wastelands. Its main building was underground, similar to Pangu Biology.

After the Old World was destroyed, the few farms and ranches under them remained unaffected. They tenaciously survived until Year 21 of the New Calendar.

Yes, in the room owner’s memories, it was Year 21 of the New Calendar.

The people Shang Jianyao encountered in this psychological trauma seemed smart, capable of chatting, and had their own memories. However, they were inferior to the passengers from the cruise ship trauma. This was because once he diverted a topic too far due to his jumpy thoughts, not only would the people here be unable to answer, but they would also spout nonsense. It was incongruous.

According to this, Shang Jianyao determined that the reason they could ask, answer, and chat as if they were normal was that the room owner had spent a long time with them. From time to time, they would have all kinds of conversations that involved many things.

After these memories were subconsciously activated, they allowed the corresponding figures to look rather realistic.

“I still didn’t encounter any danger. I feel at ease as if I’m home.” The honest Shang Jianyao didn’t hide his confusion.

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao deliberated for a moment and said, “Maybe the focus of this psychological trauma isn’t the courage to face danger, so there’s naturally no danger that lurks on the surface.”

The current psychological trauma didn’t exist in the strategy guide given by Pangu Biology. After all, in order not to affect Room 506’s owner, this place was used as a place for new Awakened to adapt to the explorations. Everyone followed the ‘rules.’ They would leave after clearing two psychological traumas at most.

Shang Jianyao suspected that he had skipped the second psychological trauma because he had taken an aberrant path in the first psychological trauma.

“Then, what should we do?” the rash Shang Jianyao blurted out. “We’ve already chatted with everyone, but apart from obtaining some information, we don’t have any clues.”

He was referring to the clues to clear this psychological trauma.

Zen Master Redemption was rather calm about this. “It’s fine if we can’t find it. At most, we’ll change to another room in the strategy guide.”

During the discussion, Shang Jianyao didn’t forget to observe his surroundings.

Coupled with the details he had noticed in his previous chats, he gradually discovered something abnormal: Nobody in this residential area approached the exit!

No matter how complicated their trajectories were, they didn’t enter that area.

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao stroked his chin. “Is it because the room owner’s psychological trauma is at the exit that everyone here ‘subconsciously’ avoids it, or was there a rule that forbade people from approaching that area in the Fourth Research Institute’s residential zone back then?”

He didn’t wait for his other peers to join in the discussion and suddenly handed control over the body to the rash one.

The rash Shang Jianyao immediately turned around and walked to the exit.

The other Shang Jianyaos wanted to give it a try to see if they could trigger a beneficial change. They chose to agree tacitly one after another.

Only the ruthless one controlled his mouth and kept nagging. “Don’t be foolhardy just because we’re skilled! Don’t think that we won’t screw up in such a simple room just because we’ve cleared a psychological trauma that involves the Kalendaria. This is related to the Old World’s nine research institutes. It’s better to be careful!”

As he rambled, Shang Jianyao slowly approached the door.

It was calm.

He turned around and looked at the people in the residential area, only to realize that nobody was paying attention to him.

Shang Jianyao maintained his current posture and retreated step by step toward the sentry iron fence.

Suddenly, the people in the residential area—who were either enjoying the shade, busying themselves, or coming and going—cast their gazes over.

The white-haired old lady sitting on a stool under the tree revealed a terrified expression.

Some of the others were flustered, some were nervous, and some were angry as if Shang Jianyao had offended them. Some were filled with hatred and enmity as if they were using their gazes to say, “Why do you dare to do something we don’t dare to do?”

Rumble!

An explosion suddenly happened at the door. A ball of flames rose up with a plume of dust, turning into a gigantic mushroom.

Shang Jianyao pounced forward in advance and ‘conjured’ a military exoskeleton on him. With this object’s help, he jumped dozens of meters.

He wasn't enveloped by the explosion, but his back still suffered the ravaging of the blast.

Bam!

Even with the military exoskeleton, Shang Jianyao couldn't maintain his balance. He saw stars from the fall and felt like a few of his bones had fractured.

At the same time, the expressions of the people in the residential area changed again.

Their expressions were cold, and the muscles on their faces were stiff. There was no emotion in their eyes as if they had long died. However, they stared at the intruder that was attempting to disrupt their stable lives.

Upon seeing this, Shang Jianyao immediately shouted, "Don't move!"

Wherever his voice reached, everyone stopped moving as if they were playing a game of Green Light, Red Light.

Thud! Thud! Thud!?

Shang Jianyao—who was wearing a military exoskeleton—ran, his back stinging from the pain. Finally, he ran to the building he first appeared in.

With a single step, he left Room 506 and rushed into the corridor. He then lay on the thick, dark-yellow carpet without any regard for his image.

He spread his limbs and panted heavily.

After a while, the honest Shang Jianyao spat. "What a lack of morals! Why didn't they warn us first and fire before bombarding us? How can a normal person bury a land mine of that level at the door? There are still people in charge of guarding that place!"

The ruthless Shang Jianyao scoffed. "This is a psychological trauma, and it's not strictly comparable to reality. As long as the room owner has encountered or even only seen it, the

corresponding matters might pile up in the same place. I told you to be careful, but none of you believed me!”

Zen Master Redemption replied calmly, “Namo Annutara-Samyak-Subhuti. We were only injured by the explosion and suffered some mental damage. It won’t be a problem.”

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao thoughtfully said, “I suspect that it’s not only the main entrance area that’s problematic. Anyone who tries to leave the residential area will encounter all kinds of danger. This is a reflection of the room owner’s corresponding fear.”

“Therefore, facing these dangers is considered clearing the psychological trauma?” The rash Shang Jianyao controlled his body and stood up with a look that said, “Let’s return now and get blown up a few more times.”

He was forcefully held down.

The calm and rational Shang Jianyao stroked his chin. “I have a nagging feeling that it won’t be that simple. Every psychological trauma’s corresponding fear is different. Just avoiding danger and escaping elsewhere is something we’ve already experienced. I think it’s safer to make more explorations to figure out this problem.”

“That’s right, that’s right.” The Shang Jianyao that always had no opinion agreed.

The ruthless Shang Jianyao stood on the side of the peer he hated the most.

Due to the fact that everyone had been blown up and was injured, requiring them to recover mentally, Shang Jianyao left the Mind Corridor and fell asleep.

...

349th floor, Zone C, Room 12.

As her parents had gone to a colleague’s house as guests, Jiang Baimian leisurely stayed in the study alone and browsed through some public information using her father’s account.

Having failed to find any interesting content, she took out the pattern on the copied Babymaker talisman. She opened the Old World folklore database she had established and tried to carry out a search and comparison.

For this reason, she also specially used a drawing tablet to outline the corresponding pattern.

There's nothing that's completely identical. Jiang Baimian busied herself for a while before looking at the computer screen and muttering to herself silently, "I can only say that it looks similar from a cursory glance. In fact, it doesn't follow the corresponding patterns. Of course, it's also possible that my database isn't perfect and has many missing ones."

After pondering for a while, Jiang Baimian deconstructed the pattern.

After deconstructing and restructuring it again and again, she frowned slightly.

From the simplest point of view, the pattern was made up of a woman and a baby. The two had some hieroglyphic meaning, but Jiang Baimian was very sure that they weren't real hieroglyphic texts.

Jiang Baimian shook her head, planning to get more information from Long Yuehong's inquiry tomorrow. "A woman and a baby do seem to work in terms of meaning, but it doesn't seem like much thought was put into it. It's too simple..."

...

The next morning, Room 14 on the 647th floor.

Long Yuehong recounted the information he had obtained from his grandmother and the corresponding feedback.

"Is it my turn next?" Although Shang Jianyao's face was a little pale, he was still very excited.

"I guess so." Long Yuehong suddenly hesitated.

Will it worsen the problem if we let this fellow probe? He has very special characteristics!

“Yes,” Bai Chen replied very firmly.

Jiang Baimian glanced at Shang Jianyao. “What’s wrong? Did you not sleep well last night?”

“Something happened when I was clearing Room 506’s psychological trauma. Fortunately, I’ll recover from my headache in two to three days; it won’t affect my usual usage of my abilities.” Shang Jianyao was rather honest.

Jiang Baimian chuckled. “You can even cause trouble in what’s publicly acknowledged as the simplest Room 506?”

“More trouble is conducive to obtaining more information.” The calm and rational Shang Jianyao skillfully changed the topic. “I’ve already confirmed that Room 506’s owner comes from the Fourth Research Institute.”

Jiang Baimian was immediately interested. “Is that so?”

After discussing this question for a while, Jiang Baimian thought for a moment and said, “I suspect that the key to this psychological trauma isn’t to storm out but something else. Its performance doesn’t seem to focus on danger. It might very well represent another kind of fear.”

Shang Jianyao nodded happily. “I think so too!”

Clap! Clap! Clap!

He applauded himself and Jiang Baimian.

The day passed uneventfully.. When it was almost time to knock off, the four Old Task Force members gathered together again and discussed the matter of Shang Jianyao requesting a Babymaker talisman.

Chapter 760: Mu Qingqing

On the 417th floor, Long Yuehong led Shang Jianyao to meet his grandmother, Zhong Zining, at the Rec Center.

At this moment, Zhong Zining was dancing and working out with a group of neighbors of varying ages.

Shang Jianyao's eyes lit up when he saw this, eager to take off his coat and join in. To his frustration, the music stopped.

Zhong Zining wiped the sweat from her forehead with a towel wrapped around her shoulders and heard her eldest grandson shout for her.

As he walked toward the old lady, Shang Jianyao sighed with regret and envy at Long Yuehong. "Your grandmother's floor is good at organizing activities. The Rec Center's PIC here is too serious and responsible!"

I don't like such music and dancing...?As Long Yuehong muttered inwardly, he casually replied to Shang Jianyao, "If you find it good, you can apply for a room on this floor after you get married. With your rank, the higher-ups will definitely take your preferences into consideration."

He didn't say that, compared to his rank, they cared more about Shang Jianyao's level as an Awakened.

Just as he said that, Long Yuehong softly grunted. He realized that with Shang Jianyao's serious mental illness, it wouldn't be a joyous matter regardless of who his assigned lady was unless the two parties had feelings for each other, allowing them to tolerate and accept each other as they went through thick and thin.

Upon seeing the two of them come over, Zhong Zining glanced at Shang Jianyao and said to Long Yuehong, "Is this the colleague you mentioned?"

Without waiting for Long Yuehong's response, Shang Jianyao nodded obediently. "Hello, Grandma!"

"That's right," Long Yuehong quickly added.

“Mmm.” Zhong Zining nodded slightly and sized up Shang Jianyao for a while. As she recalled, she asked Long Yuehong, “He’s your classmate, right? I remember meeting him at your house. He came to play with you many times.”

“Yes, yes, yes. We were assigned to the same place,” Long Yuehong explained simply.

Zhong Zining smiled and enthusiastically asked Shang Jianyao, “When did you get married?”

“I don’t have a partner yet,” Shang Jianyao replied truthfully.

Long Yuehong couldn’t stop him in time.

This didn’t match the plan!

Zhong Zining was stunned. “Why are you asking for a Babymaker talisman when you don’t have a partner?”

Shang Jianyao replied in all seriousness, “Normally, one should request for a marriage talisman.”

Upon seeing Zhong Zining nod in agreement, he continued, “But after getting a marriage talisman and having a partner, won’t I have to request for a Babymaker talisman after marriage? And if I were to request for a Babymaker talisman directly, it’s impossible for me to have a child on my own, right? It’ll definitely have to give me a partner. Therefore, requesting a Babymaker talisman kills two birds with one stone!”

Zhong Zining was confused, but she felt that the other party made sense.

“That’s true.” She pointed at the Rec Center. “I’ll go back and change first. Then, I’ll lead you to the Mu family to request for the talisman.”

Shang Jianyao sincerely asked, “Granny, can I wait for you here?”

Long Yuehong’s grandparents lived in Zone C, so they still had to pass by the Rec Center to go to Zone B.

“Kid, are you embarrassed? Let me tell you something: Such a personality doesn’t benefit you when finding a partner.” Zhong Zining smiled and said, “It’s fine, it’s fine. Just wait here.”

She then said to Long Yuehong, “Entertain your friend well.”

After watching his grandmother leave the Rec Center, Long Yuehong frowned and suppressed his voice as he said to Shang Jianyao, “Did you use your abilities on my grandmother?”

Otherwise, how could she accept the idea of a single young man begging for a Babymaker talisman so easily?

“I didn’t?” Shang Jianyao had an innocent expression. “Your grandmother is very easy to talk to.”

Long Yuehong was just about to reply with ‘yes,’ when Shang Jianyao added, “Just like you.”

“...” Long Yuehong was immediately speechless.

After dozens of seconds, the music sounded again.

Shang Jianyao took off his coat, held it in his hand, and walked into the dancing crowd. For a moment, he felt like a fish in water as if he were back home.

So you didn’t go to my grandmother’s house because you wanted to take the opportunity to dance...? Long Yuehong came to a realization.

After Zhong Zining returned after changing, Shang Jianyao walked out of the ‘dance floor’ reluctantly and put on his coat.

“You are quite rhythmic,” Zhong Zining praised. “Very few young people usually dance with us.”

“That’s because they have no taste and don’t know how to appreciate it.” Shang Jianyao spoke righteously.

This made Zhong Zining very happy, so much so that Long Yuehong felt a sense of danger that his status as eldest grandson was at risk. Therefore, he tried his best to change the topic.

As they chatted along the way, the three of them entered Zone B and arrived at Room 49.

Not only was the door tightly shut, but even the curtains were drawn.

At this moment, most of the doors to the surrounding rooms were open. People gathered on the streets to chat and kill time.

Knock! Knock! Knock!?

Zhong Zining knocked on Room 49's door.

"Little Mu! Are you home?" she shouted as she knocked.

After about ten seconds, the door creaked open.

It was dim inside with only one lamp switched on. The space wasn't considered spacious, only slightly larger than Shang Jianyao's room. It could barely accommodate a family of three.

At this moment, there was only one person in the room—a woman in her thirties in old black clothes.

Her hair was messy, and her skin was slightly pale. The rest was fine; she was someone who had undergone genetic enhancement with above-average effects.

"You're wasting energy! Why don't you use the street lamps on the street?" Before Zhong Zining explained her intentions, Shang Jianyao advised her with a pained expression.

The woman was stunned. "Talismans have to be drawn in such an environment."

"Oh, oh, oh." Shang Jianyao immediately showed the respect afforded by a professional.

Zhong Zining glanced at him and smiled. “Little Mu, this is my eldest grandson’s colleague. He wants a Babymaker talisman. Ah... Where’s your husband and child?”

“He went to his father’s place. I have a few urgent talismans to make, so I didn’t go,” explained Mu casually. She then asked Shang Jianyao, “Is it urgent? If it’s urgent, it won’t fit into my timetable.”

We need to pay more...?Long Yuehong—who was well-read in the Old World’s entertainment—added inwardly almost reflexively.

“No rush, no rush,” Shang Jianyao replied with a smile. “Auntie Mu, draw whenever you have the time.”

“Auntie...” Mu repeated the term with a nasty expression.

Hey, the one with high EQ should be out at a time like this!Long Yuehong resisted the urge to scratch his head. He had always felt that Shang Jianyao’s EQ was Schrodinger-like.

Zhong Zining laughed and helped introduce them. “This is Little Mu, Mu Qingqing. She’s only a few years older than you.”

Shang Jianyao oohed and aahed and smiled at Mu Qingqing. “Look, we were all born after the company’s genetic enhancement technology matured. You’re only a few years older than me. So...”

Mu Qingqing smiled and said, “Just call me Sister Mu. I’ve always been regretful that I don’t have a younger brother or sister.”

“...” Long Yuehong was dumbfounded. Only then did he realize that Shang Jianyao’s previous lack of EQ was to use Inference Clowning or Thought Guidance without anyone noticing.

How cunning! How cunning!Long Yuehong could only criticize inwardly.

After becoming Shang Jianyao’s sister, Mu Qingqing became much more enthusiastic. “Wait here then. I’ll draw it for you now.”

Zhong Zining—who was watching—explained, “See? Little Mu is a nice person.”

Long Yuehong took the opportunity to say to Zhong Zining, “Granny, now that it’s done, we won’t trouble you any more. We’ll wait. You can head back to the Rec Center to dance.”

He was afraid that the subsequent ‘conversation’ would be too terrifying and end up scaring his grandmother or that she would be embroiled in danger.

Zhong Zining was indeed concerned about her friends at the Rec Center. She didn’t stand on ceremony. After exhorting Long Yuehong, she turned around and walked out of the room.

Shang Jianyao smiled at Mu Qingqing. “Sister Mu, was your talisman drawing skills inherited from your ancestors?”

“Yes, my great-grandfather was a Daoist priest, and his lineage was passed down.” Mu Qingqing combed her messy hair.

Shang Jianyao asked with bright eyes, “Are these talismans really useful?”

Mu Qingqing hesitated and stammered, “It’s effective if you believe in it.”

“Really?” Shang Jianyao pressed.

Mu Qingqing felt that she shouldn’t lie to her brother. After hesitating for a moment, she said, “It might’ve been effective in the past, but it’s hard to say now.”

“Why?” Long Yuehong interrupted in surprise.

Mu Qingqing scratched her head and said in embarrassment, “I wasn’t too interested and didn’t learn it seriously when my father taught me how to draw the symbols. After I realized that I could earn a lot of additional contribution points with this, I realized that I couldn’t remember what the real patterns looked like. I could only redesign it according to my impression of it and try my best to make the process seem mysterious...”

Long Yuehong’s expression froze, and the corners of his mouth twitched. “Your scrawls are not bad...”

Shang Jianyao stroked his chin. “Sister Mu, why didn’t you learn from Uncle again? Why did you have to design it yourself?”

That’s right...?Long Yuehong snapped to his senses.

Mu Qingqing let out a long sigh. “Your uncle passed away five years ago.”

“Sigh... My condolences.” Shang Jianyao was very sincere. He then casually asked, “Uncle shouldn’t be too old five years ago. How did he pass away?”

Based on Mu Qingqing’s age, her father was at most in his fifties five years ago. With Pangu Biology’s current conditions, it wasn’t unlikely for old employees to live to the age of 60 or 70, just like Long Yuehong’s grandparents.

Mu Qingqing revealed a mournful expression. “This might be fate. He suddenly had a myocardial infarction and couldn’t be resuscitated.”

Myocardial infarction...?Long Yuehong’s pupils suddenly dilated.