

Ancient 104

Chapter 104 - 54 People Who Share the Same Disease Sympathize with Each Other

At this moment, Gu Jianlin's emotions were inexplicably complicated.

Even for him, his first impression of the so-called Fallen wasn't great.

Whether it was Li Changzhi back then, or the Joker later on.

Or even these people from the Grave Digger Organization, without exception, they all had severe mental issues. Their labels were brutality and bloodlust, completely swallowed by desire, lunatics as savage as wild beasts.

Even those people in the Ether Association, who couldn't stop mentioning "the son of a Fallen," made him exceedingly annoyed. He only wanted to vindicate his father and prove that the culprit of the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident was someone else—nothing more.

He had never really thought about the Fallen.

Actually, by comparison, Cheng Youyu was even more shocked and confused. The education he received from his family since childhood, as well as the indoctrination after joining the Ether Association, had always painted the Fallen as symbols of evil, as extremely dangerous.

But here, in this refuge, what they felt was pure goodwill.

Why didn't they suspect a conspiracy? The reason was simple.

Aside from the fact that Lu Zicheng wouldn't harm anyone.

Just look at these people. Look what they've come to.

What could they even possibly want from you?

"Big brother, let your comrades... come out first,"

Wanwan softly said, "Although we can't detoxify them right now, they need proper rest. Otherwise, they might be tormented by Nightmares in the middle of the night, which could leave aftereffects."

Gu Jianlin hesitated for a moment. "Okay, thank you."

Cheng Youyu, still having some strength, quickly helped him release their two unconscious teammates.

Wanwan ran ahead and opened the door to a room.

It turned out to be a relatively clean room, with two somewhat comfortable beds fitted with mattresses.

There was even a small electric fan connected to an outdoor power source.

Nie Xiangsi and Zhang Cheng were placed on the two beds, their faces covered in cold sweat, brows tightly furrowed.

They seemed to be having nightmares.

"This room is specifically for sick people. They're affected by a spiritual toxin, and until they take the antidote, they can only rely on themselves to get through it. But they're probably skilled Ascenders, so it shouldn't be a problem," Wanwan squatted down, turned on the outdoor power source, and powered up the electric fan.

The power source had only 15% battery left; it was likely something they normally wouldn't use so freely.

At this moment, Uncle Sun approached from the doorway, pushing a battered wooden wheelchair, placing a handful of white grass on the ground.

When the fan blew the grass, it emitted a strange fragrance.

Once Nie Xiangsi and Zhang Cheng inhaled it, their conditions visibly improved.

Finished with everything, Uncle Sun left without saying a word.

Wanwan dashed back to the rest area, where a water tank taller than herself stood.

She climbed up nimbly onto a stool, filled an entire kettle of water, and took a few gulps straight from it.

She then went to the storage area, picking up a few pieces of firewood to throw into the cooking stove.

Taking out a paper matchbox from her pocket, she frowned slightly at the scant few matches left.

But she still struck a match and lit the fire to boil water.

Finally, she washed some clean cups and poured several servings of water.

"Big brother, give your friends some water,"

Wanwan said, carrying the cups over.

Gu Jianlin silently observed everything, accepting the cup of water. "Thank you."

He noticed the kettle was rarely used, as most of the people here drank untreated water directly.

Evidently, they had boiled water specifically for their sake.

"Little girl, are matches really scarce here?"

Cheng Youyu hesitated and asked cautiously.

"Yes. Aunt Shanshan used to be a Heavenly Master capable of controlling Elemental Power. But because she frequently has to take Heavenly Born Grass to suppress her Deformation, her abilities have started to deteriorate. She's barely managed to retain her Water Element capability, just enough to provide clean water and prolong food preservation. As for lighting fires, there are other ways,"

Wanwan said with a smile. "An uncle once taught me how to start fires by rubbing sticks together."

Cheng Youyu instinctively patted his pocket, trying to find a lighter.

He realized he hadn't brought it out during the chaos of the attack earlier this evening.

Gu Jianlin had many questions he wanted to ask, but when the little girl smiled and ran off again, he held himself back.

Soon after, Wanwan returned alongside the one-armed woman holding a child.

Wanwan now carried three buns, placed on a piece of newspaper.

"Aunt Shanshan made these buns. They may have gotten cold, but they're still tasty,"

Wanwan said, handing the buns to them. "They're meat buns."

Aunt Shanshan smiled gently at them.

Gu Jianlin was stunned and instinctively accepted the three buns.

It was clear they had been handmade; the dough had a few black specks and was somewhat tough.

Cold as the buns were, they still gave off a fragrant aroma.

"We aren't hungry..."

Cheng Youyu hesitated. Given their situation, how could they eat someone else's food?

Wanwan froze for a moment, biting her lip and whispering, "Don't worry, the black specks on the buns aren't dirt. Although we made them ourselves, nothing on them is contagious."

Cheng Youyu realized she had misunderstood, abruptly turning to Gu Jianlin for help.

But Gu Jianlin had already taken a bite of the bun, saying impassively, "Thank you. It's delicious."

Realizing this, Cheng Youyu quickly took a bun and stuffed it in his mouth, mumbling, "Geez, Brother Lin! If you'd said something earlier, I'd have eaten it right away! I'm starving this late at night."

Wanwan stuck out her tongue playfully and walked away with the one-armed woman.

Where were they headed?

They went to the stove and boiled three potatoes.

Wanwan squatted on a bench, nibbling at a boiled potato, seeming thoroughly content.

However, every now and then, she glanced this way.

"Brother Lin,"

Cheng Youyu muttered uneasily, "Do you think she knows you?"

Gu Jianlin finished his bun, took a sip of water, and said nothing.

"Brother Lin, honestly, I think they're telling the truth. I just observed the people here—they all seem to have ties to the Association. Those guards were clearly trained by the Association, and those snoring on the communal beds still maintain tactical sleeping postures."

Cheng Youyu couldn't help but add, "But why would this all be the case?"

Gu Jianlin rose to his feet. "Let's go ask directly."

The older man was keeping watch for his companions, eyes closed and resting.

When Gu Jianlin sat in front of him, the man opened his eyes.

"Something you need?"

The older man asked calmly.

Gu Jianlin had so many questions, he didn't know where to start.

"Uncle,"

Cheng Youyu, more experienced, couldn't hold back. "Why are you all gathered here? My family once mentioned that Heavenly Born Grass from Super Ancient Ruins can suppress Deformation, but that method sacrifices your own life force. Doing this may prevent you from harming others, but if you continue..."

The words "you won't live long" stayed stuck in his throat, unspoken.

The older man smiled faintly. "Because we don't want to hurt others, there's no other way."

Cheng Youyu blurted, "But why live here—"

The older man explained, "There's no other place to live. The outside world is covered in Deep Space and has no place for us. Even the Forbidden Zone is tolerable only thanks to Minister Lu, leveraging the Lu Family's influence and her position to keep us from constantly fleeing. But there are some things even she as Minister can't resolve. After all, Peak City has a Saint."

"I also used to have an old friend helping me out there, but now he's in trouble too. I can't reach him anymore."

He muttered softly, "No idea how that guy is doing."

Cheng Youyu didn't know what to say next and asked, "Then why not live in the city fort?"

Gu Jianlin also couldn't understand why they crammed themselves underground.

The older man was silent for a few seconds before murmuring, "Because the seal on the Immortal Palace is loosening. Half a year ago, something unknown happened, and Black Cloud City suddenly saw the emergence of massive Fallen forces, swallowing up numerous smaller Fallen Organizations. The Grave Digger Organization—have you heard of them?"

"The group behind them, whoever they are, dares even to delve into the deeper layers of the lower levels of the Immortal Palace."

He sighed, "They enslave the obedient and kill the defiant. We refuse to stand with them, so we can only survive in this base an old friend built for us."

Gu Jianlin understood.

A life like this was like that of a mole.

Unable to face the sunlight, unwelcome in the world of normal people.

Yet, in the shadowy world, they couldn't escape living on the edge, risking everything for survival.

They refused to harm others and even took harmful substances, sacrificing their own lives to remain in control.

"In Black Cloud City, money is meaningless. Everything is traded. We use resources mined from the Immortal Palace's outer layers to exchange for what we need. So, young man, I appreciate your kindness,"

The older man said warmly to Fatty. "When you leave here, don't ever mention me to anyone. And don't think about sending us supplies. I'm a wanted man by the Association, accused of being corrupted by Ancient God Power and slaughtering colleagues. If they monitor your actions, whether it's you, your family, or us, it will spell disaster."

Cheng Youyu froze, startled that his intentions had been seen through.

Gu Jianlin's pupils contracted slightly.

A colleague-killing criminal.

So that's what it was.

This must've been why Lu Zicheng wanted him to come and see this place.

Because here lived a group of people, just like his father.

"My father didn't do those things,"

Wanwan suddenly said. "He's a good person, framed by others."

The older man gently patted his daughter's head but said nothing.

Gu Jianlin was silent for a long time and then suddenly asked, "Uncle, do you know me?"

The older man didn't reply, but Wanwan looked at him intently.

"Or perhaps, do you know someone who resembles me?"

Gu Jianlin paused. "His name is Gu Ci'an, isn't it?"

When Wanwan heard that name, she stared at him, her eyes lighting up.

"You really do look like him,"

The older man smiled faintly. "You must be his son. After what happened, I couldn't contact him anymore. I thought he had taken you far away, but I didn't expect you to still be in Peak City."

"Wanwan has been waiting all this time for him to return."

He said, "Old Gu—how is he?"

For a moment, Gu Jianlin didn't know how to respond.

The girl in the man's arms looked at him, her eyes gleaming like crystals, burning brightly in the darkness, filled with hope.

He opened his mouth but couldn't bring himself to speak of his father's death.

"This underground base was actually built by your father,"

The older man gestured toward the darkness. "That room over there—he left it for you. You can go take a look."