

Ancient 55

Chapter 55 - 24: Night, Boiling!_2

The other party responded, "If not for the Lock of Nonexistence, you'd have been killed by the Judgement Court long ago. You'd better be careful. Without overdrafting your life as a cost, how could someone of your Rank possibly contain those two weapons?"

The value of a Mythical Weapon far surpasses that of an Alchemy Weapon.

But not everyone is qualified to wield one.

To forcibly contain a Mythical Weapon, one must risk having their life and soul devoured.

"As long as we complete the mission of that lord, we can achieve full evolution and be reborn."

The Joker licked his lips. "It's all worth it. I'll have what we need by 6:30 tomorrow evening. Don't forget to cover for me. Before I leave, I'll leave the Ether Association a huge surprise."

A stern voice came through the call.

"Joker, don't cause unnecessary trouble!"

The voice on the other end said, "Even if you have the powers of Deformation, you can't face them head-on."

The Joker's lips curled into a sinister grin. "With that lord's Death Spirit Gu, what is there to fear?"

After a moment of silence, the voice asked, "Suit yourself. Have you found Gu Ci'an's son?"

"He's been in my sights the whole time."

The Joker calmly replied, "As long as his family remains in Peak City, he can't escape. He operates in the open, I in the shadows—I'm always the one in control. As for the Ether Association... ha."

He mocked, "He's Gu Ci'an's son. How much trust could the Ether Association really place in him?"

With that, he hung up, turned away, cigarette in mouth, and disappeared into the shadows.

The Joker had absolute confidence in himself.

He was the Hunter.

And his prey was nothing more than a rookie who had just entered the Extraordinary World.

To him, no more than an ant.

Crushable at any moment.

As for the Ether Association and the Judgement Court, they were nothing but a bunch of fools.

Not worth mentioning.

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At the back gate of Peak City High School No. 2, in the deserted garden.

Gu Jianlin stood by the grass, silently staring at the bloodstains that hadn't been cleaned up.

The blood had dried, forming a dark and mottled crimson.

Animal fur lay scattered across the ground.

By the flowerbed, a pet food bowl overturned long ago; its contents had decayed and emitted a nauseating stench.

Suppressing his revulsion, Gu Jianlin carefully sniffed at the odors.

Piecing together the clues from the animal carcasses he had witnessed last night.

The overturned food bowl, the scattered fur, the blood splattered on the ground, the stained grass, the footprints crushing the greenery, the impressions in the soil, and the graffiti scribbled on a love letter—all these clues formed a connecting chain.

It was almost enough.

Gu Jianlin closed his eyes, step by step constructing the killer's psychological profile in his mind.

Their cruelty, their pathology, their madness.

Chilling to the bone.

"Male, forty-six years old, dark personality, grew up in foreign slums, possibly witnessed shootings and experienced domestic violence, enjoys torturing animals. Perennially single, later received higher education, mentally unstable."

Gu Jianlin paused. "And possesses inhuman traits."

Excellent, it matched the information on record.

Sure enough, it's you, Joker!

For an instant, he opened his eyes, a bizarre image flashing before him.

Blade-sharp arthropods, slashing open an animal's abdomen amidst a spray of blood.

Barely human laughter, rasping with insanity, as blood splattered across a face.

A bloody hand reached into the animal's belly to extract a still-beating heart.

Meanwhile, a thin white thread glimmered faintly in the darkness, caught in the grass.

Scenes of broken imagery flitted through his mind like a thrill of speeding past roadside scenery.

Gu Jianlin turned and searched carefully through the grass, eventually finding a strand of delicate spider silk!

It was so fine that it was almost impossible to notice without close observation.

He pulled out a tissue, carefully wrapped it up, and pocketed it.

The psychological profile was nearly complete. The next step was cross-referencing it one by one.

This time, Gu Jianlin had to find someone in the entire school capable of hiding their identity.

The workload was unprecedented.

But for him, it was also a challenge.

No matter, he could skip all his classes today—plenty of time to take it slow.

He was a patient man.

"Let's play a little game: Guess if I can... find you early."

Gu Jianlin put on his Bluetooth earphones, starting the music on his phone, looping a single track.

Accompanied by the gentle flow of classical melody, a soulful male voice began to sing.

"The alley of '83, December clear skies, the seventh chapter of the night..."

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The campus shrouded in twilight.

The teaching building, the laboratory building, the administrative offices, the basketball court, the swimming pool, and the public restrooms.

In some classrooms, the math teacher wrote diligently on the chalkboard, fifty students below watching intently.

No one noticed the teenager wearing earphones, rushing past the door.

In the laboratory building, the chemistry teacher was yelling at the top of his lungs as chaotic students fumbled clumsily with reagents.

Outside the window, someone withdrew their gaze and turned away.

On the basketball court, the game raged on, school team members in blue and red jerseys clashing fiercely, drenched in sweat.

The sound of heavy panting mingled with the pounding of the basketball hitting the ground.

In the stands, a solitary figure watched them quietly, a lollipop in their mouth.

At the swimming pool, girls in swimsuits frolicked in the water, their well-developed figures stretching freely. Droplets of water shimmered on their pale skin as they swam gracefully like fish beneath the surface.

Next door in the gymnasium, younger students in lace ballet skirts spun effortlessly on one toe.

Their skirts swept like lilies unfolding, a sight of pure beauty.

The headphone-wearing teenager watched them silently before turning to head into the restroom.

At the men's restroom, someone caught a glimpse of a figure flashing past the door, spooked as if seeing a ghost.

A pretty teacher walking out of the women's restroom almost bumped into the earphone-wearing teenager, letting out a startled cry.

Under the shade of trees, the teenager stared absentmindedly at the security booth in the distance, a stray cat rubbing affectionately against his ankle.

In the vast school grounds, Gu Jianlin moved like a wandering ghost, brushing hurriedly past everyone.

Continuously profiling the personas of those around him, committing them to memory.

It was as if his mind housed a palace of memories, filled with books, each chronicling a unique psychological profile that laid bare one's truest self.

Before becoming an Ascender, he might not have been capable of such extraordinary feats.

But ever since awakening, his profiling abilities seemed to have heightened.

Perhaps... this was the evolution of life.

By the end of the day, he had even uncovered the hidden agents the Ether Association embedded within the school.

At this moment, the sun was setting.

The music in his headphones had looped countless times, starting yet another cycle.

Gu Jianlin adjusted his headphones, walking quietly toward the cafeteria, his right hand resting on the gun at his waist.

He moved swiftly through the darkness, footsteps quickening.

Almost as if stepping to a rhythm.

"We can forget, forgive."

"But we must uncover the truth."

"The iron bars that were moved."

"The final piece of the puzzle falls into place."

Bang.

The cafeteria doors swung open with force, allowing a chill breeze to blow in, stirring dust across the floor.

The sunlight vanished as darkness surged in, engulfing the figures eating at the tables.

As if sensing something, one of the diners raised their head.

Standing in the shadows, Gu Jianlin locked eyes with them.

The music in his headphones reached its crescendo.

"I heard the footsteps I was waiting for, the soft soles of shoes."

"As the door swung open, the evening wind swayed, the kerosene lamp flickered."

"The typewriter stopped at the murderer's name, I turned around..."

"The night sky above Westminster Cathedral began to boil."

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Silence.

The hand holding the spoon froze mid-motion.

Gu Jianlin calmly took a seat across the table, his face emotionless. He wore his neatly pressed school uniform with earphones in place.

A lollipop dangled lazily from his mouth.

"Not much to write home about the cafeteria food, huh?"

The teenager slapped a pink love letter onto the table. "You shouldn't have exposed so much to me, Joker."