

Collapse 116

Chapter 116: Memory Hall_1

In fact, players who managed to crack this code were already pretty close to solving the mystery.

Fatty was still a bit dazed, not quite understanding why Gu Mian had punched in those three numbers.

Gu Mian shot him a glance. "Upon entering this instance, there was a strange, eerie feeling in this house.

"The clocks are running backward.

"Once inside the house, I never came across any asymmetrical text or numbers.

"The clock face had no numbers, the computer no keyboard, and the phone's keys were blurred. Brother Mobile, who might have seen full texts, also disappeared into thin air, along with his piece of paper.

"Exiting this place does not count as completing the 'Escape from Terror Manor' task.

"Zhao Lei always felt that something was wrong with the house, but he couldn't pinpoint what had changed...

"Based on these clues, we can guess that the moment we stepped into this Manor, we were sucked into the World in the Mirror. In the World in the Mirror, clocks run backward, all text and numbers are reversed, and there's no signal, so no contact with the outside world is possible.

"We've been in the World in the Mirror within Terror Manor all along. So, no matter where we escape to, as long as we're still in the World in the Mirror, it doesn't count as completing the task."

After Gu Mian pressed the three keys, the phone screen lit up as if it were starting up.

Looks like this code is correct.

Gu Mian continued, "We're in the World in the Mirror, and the alarm clock in Zhao Lei's room is stuck at nine oh two. If the alarm in the World in the Mirror reads nine oh two, what time does the clock outside the mirror show?"

Fatty's somewhat rusty brain whirred, and then he exclaimed with dawning realization, "Two fifty-eight!"

So Gu Mian dialed two-five-eight. Sure enough, the phone turned on.

Holding the illuminated phone, he walked towards the door, saying, "In theory, the way to escape the World in the Mirror is to step through a mirror."

But Gu Mian had previously tried to touch the mirrors.

The mirrors here were incredibly solid, nothing like portals that could connect two worlds. Gu Mian figured if he charged headfirst into one, he'd likely drop dead on the spot.

Gu Mian continued, mostly to himself, "But I don't know exactly how to step out of the World in the Mirror yet... Perhaps it involves progressing the storyline. The story seems almost over, though. We'll probably unravel the mystery of Zhao Guanhai's disappearance soon and then find a way to exit the World in the Mirror. However, I suspect that the closer we get to the ending, the greater the resistance we'll face... I mean, ghosts should start appearing frequently from now on."

Fatty spoke in a hushed voice, "But, Doctor, we still haven't figured out who the ghost here actually is.

"Is it the mysteriously disappeared Zhao Guanhai? Or the strangely-acting Zhao Lei? It could also be other lingering spirits, though that's less likely."

Gu Mian, holding his phone, started down the stairs. The overhead lights had been out for a long time. In the pitch-black house, they could only rely on flashlights for illumination.

Gu Mian said, "Zhao Lei exhibits memory discrepancies, suggesting he's likely lost memories. But how much... it's hard to say. I think he might have suffered memory loss more than once."

By now, his phone had fully booted up.

This wasn't a smartphone. Gu Mian hadn't used this type of phone in a long time, so he was a bit slow operating it.

The phone's interface was sparse, showing only one application, which looked like either a call log or a dial pad.

Gu Mian pressed the phone's buttons to open the application.

The phone was probably old and in disrepair; it lagged terribly. Opening an app would cause the screen to go white for a moment.

Seizing the chance, Fatty asked, "Doctor, why do you think Zhao Lei has lost his memory multiple times?"

Gu Mian paused for a moment. "Do you remember what Zhao Lei said when we first entered this house?"

"He said he remembered people like us who were stranded by heavy snow before... but he also claimed it was the first time in his memory that a blizzard had trapped them.

"Back then, I suspected that this group of trapped people might be like us—players who had entered the instance.

"This instance has been active for a while. I guess many groups of players have entered it. And each time a group leaves completely, Zhao Lei experiences memory loss, forgetting specific details, before welcoming the next group.

"That's why Zhao Lei felt we weren't the first group to be trapped in the mountains."

By this time, they had reached the ground floor, which was shrouded in darkness.

The front door was still open, wind buffeting it and creating an eerie sound.

Fatty felt a chill and hugged his arms. "Speaking of which, this NPC memory reset in the instance... isn't it a bit too sloppy? It even allowed Zhao Lei to remember something."

"No," Gu Mian shook his head. "I'm afraid it's not a reset by the instance. Actually, I've noticed this before..."

"This game doesn't seem to have a reset function for its instances. Neither NPC memories nor story development can be interfered with by the game."

"At most, the game issues a task to the players, and then it can't intervene anymore. It's as if the players are thrown into an alien world, and this world isn't governed by the game."

Fatty was taken aback. "No way... With so many groups of players entering an instance, if there's no reset, what if the previous group subdued the ghost? How will the next group play?"

In the darkness, Gu Mian glanced at him. "Have you ever seen a player subdue a ghost?"

Fatty cringed. "I bloody well see one every day!"

Gu Mian continued, "Theoretically, the ghosts in an instance shouldn't be able to be subdued. Consider the special items we've acquired so far. Do any of them allow us to attack a possessing ghost?"

Fatty nodded in agreement. "True. Those items are mostly for survival. At best, they can be used against other players, but I haven't seen any that can fight ghosts..."

Gu Mian said, "In this game, the fundamental design prevents players from harming ghosts within instances. As long as the ghosts in an instance survive, the instance can operate normally for a long time. But if a key ghost in the instance dies, its core will be lost. Since the instance can't be reset, it can no longer be maintained.

"Returning to the original topic," Gu Mian said, looking at his phone. "If the game can't interfere with an instance's plot development, then how does Zhao Lei keep losing his memory repeatedly?"