

Collapse 126

Chapter 126 Increasingly Proficient Announcement_1

[Announcement (February 4, 21:45)]

[The vehicle for the special instance '444 Final Bus' is damaged and is now being repaired at the repair factory. The instance is temporarily suspended with no scheduled reopening time.]

[Since no players were in the instance at the time of its damage, there is no compensation list for this instance.]

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[Announcement (February 4, 23:51)]

[The world of the normal instance 'Terror Manor' has collapsed. This instance will no longer be operational. Our apologies to the players for the inconvenience caused.]

[Compensation Player List: Gu Mian, Chu Changge, Fat Kid Surnamed Wang]

Fatty stared at the game panel in front of him, bursting out with a string of "Awesome!"s. "Look, this is what they call 'practice makes perfect'! The announcement interface looks much better than before, and they even added the time. It looks quite official now."

Chu Changge didn't speak but looked outside the ticket booth.

It was 23:52. An LED display in the ticket booth showed the world time.

It was still the middle of the night. Gu Mian remembered a large group of people following him when he entered the instance. He'd initially thought that group would be waiting here, but it seemed he was wrong.

Both inside and outside the ticket booth, it was completely silent.

Gu Mian purposely craned his neck to look out the door, trying to see if there was an ambush, but there wasn't the slightest movement outside.

Did everyone outside die while we were in the instance?

The ticket seller, who seemed to need no rest, met their gaze as they came out. His eyes, as big as bronze bells, looked as if they were about to pop out.

"You're out?" the ticket seller was the first to speak, his tone surprisingly amicable.

Although Gu Mian didn't know why the man was so affable, he replied in kind, "We're out."

"Now that you're out, scram!" His tone suddenly changed, like that of a diligent employee whose pay had been inexplicably docked.

Gu Mian coughed awkwardly. "Little brother, did anyone chase into the instance after us?"

The ticket seller didn't seem eager to reply. But after catching a glimpse of the terrifying chainsaw in Gu Mian's hand, a wronged look appeared on his face, and he pouted.

"A group came in."

"Then another group came in."

"The two groups fought. The first group ran, and the second group chased after them."

No wonder, Gu Mian realized. No wonder there was no one outside; they must have been scared off by these new 'evil forces.'

Fatty hurriedly spoke, "Doctor, let's get out of here! I've been around and seen a lot. I reckon it's two gangs fighting for turf. If they come back, we won't be able to leave. Even though I'm dying to know how you got out of that mirror, you can tell me that as a bedtime story later."

Gu Mian nodded profusely in agreement. "But isn't our car broken?"

At that moment, however, they couldn't worry about such things. If the car was gone, they could walk out of town. But if they lost their lives, they'd be completely done for.

The group headed towards the exit. The ticket seller let out a sigh of relief, then muttered, "If I'd known, I would've bought that popular item from the supermarket too..."

Gu Mian vaguely heard him and was about to turn around to ask what popular item he meant. But before he could, they saw the "second wave of evil forces" the ticket seller had mentioned.

"The military?" Fatty reacted with surprising agility, ducking behind the doorframe with only half his large face showing.

A large military contingent was advancing on the road, heading towards Hengdian.

A peculiar vehicle led the way, with several other vehicles filled with soldiers following behind.

It seemed this army unit had come from the direction of Hengdian and was now merely returning.

"Why are you reacting like that to the army?" Gu Mian asked, even as his body honestly moved to hide behind Fatty.

Meanwhile, Chu Changge had also ducked to the other side of the door.

The three of them, each peeking with half a face, watched the army pass by on the nearby road.

Chu Changge adjusted his glasses. "We're not far from the first event location now, and the higher-ups must be paying close attention. A large number of troops have been deployed here since the event was announced, and they began sweeping the surrounding areas, with Hengdian as the center."

"Sweeping?" Fatty asked, puzzled. "The way you say it sounds like Japanese devils invading a village, but they're clearly rooting out threats for the people."

Anyone who has played online games knows that "events" offer abundant resources, allowing players to gain significant benefits.

The event location was now essentially a resource zone. Naturally, securing this zone was a top priority; it absolutely couldn't be allowed to fall into chaos.

Furthermore, concentrating a large number of troops here would also help improve their overall quality.

"The event area is undoubtedly heavily fortified by now, perhaps even with restricted entry for players." A glint of light flashed off the half of Chu Changge's glasses that was visible.

Fatty looked troubled. "Then what do we do? Does that mean we can't get in? We came all this way."

Chu Changge lowered his head slightly, the light no longer glinting off his glasses. "The restrictions won't apply to people like us, of course. Everyone around the world is evolving, and the country would naturally want its citizens to become stronger."

"Then who are they restricting?" Fatty asked innocently.

Chu Changge glanced sideways at him. "Naturally, they're restricting dangerous individuals—the kind who would wreak havoc after gaining power, like those bandits who were chasing us. Besides, the global game has been going on for some time now. How many foreign faces have you actually seen around here?"

Fatty thought for a moment and realized it was true. He'd only seen a few distinctly foreign-looking faces in that Slaughter game instance; he'd hardly seen any in the real world.

"You mean..." Fatty paused. "The good stuff doesn't flow into outsiders' fields?"

Gu Mian nodded from the side. "I imagine that as soon as the game started, large numbers of troops were dispatched to guard the borders, strictly prohibiting foreigners from entering. Who knows if some country might get a crazy idea and try to achieve some dream of a unified Earth? Besides, nobody would feel good about other countries coming here to leech off our resources, right?"

"So..." Fatty looked bewildered. "All that stuff I saw on TV about national alliances, resource sharing, and friendly cooperation... was all of it fake?"

"Of course it's fake," Gu Mian said bluntly. "What kind of times are these to be 'friendly'? If you let people in, there's no guarantee they won't screw you over once they've gotten what they want, then turn around and destroy you. After wiping you out, they'd laugh at you for being an idiot, for letting them freeload off you."

Chu Changge nodded in agreement. "Never mind that the first event is here; even if it were in another country, they would definitely restrict foreigners from entering. Of course, that's a different story if the event takes place in countries incapable of defending their own borders."

Fatty looked worried. "Then, do you think our border defenses can hold?"

"Isn't that obvious?" Gu Mian shot him a sidelong glance.

The troops had now passed through the area.

A few soldiers glanced at the three of them peeking out as they passed but paid them no mind.

The 'evil forces' in this small town have probably been eliminated already.

Fatty only dared to step out fully when the troops were just receding figures in the distance. "That's the first time I've seen so many soldiers. They have a much stronger presence than the ones on TV."

"Relax," Gu Mian patted his shoulder. "Even if you put on one of those uniforms, you wouldn't have their presence."

Fatty pouted but was quickly distracted by something else.

Something red was peeking out of Gu Mian's white coat. Curious, Fatty reached out and pulled out a red envelope.

"What's this?" Fatty looked surprised. "Is this some special item you got in the instance? A letter to you from an Evil Ghost?"

Gu Mian raised an eyebrow. "What nonsense are you talking about? This is clearly a New Year's red packet for you."

Fatty was surprised. He opened the envelope and, sure enough, inside lay a red banknote—fifty cents.

He glanced at the LED display in the ticket hall. It was 11:59 PM; the New Year was about to arrive.

Holding the red packet, Fatty said, "I never thought I'd receive a New Year's red packet again at my age. Ever since my dad passed away..."

"You can consider me your dad," Gu Mian interjected.

Fatty cursed, "Go to..."

But his words were cut short as he saw Chu Changge pull a five-yuan note from *his* red packet.

Fatty looked at his fifty cents. "Why did he get more than me?"

"Well," Gu Mian said, "You're the one who freaking picked it."

Fatty: "..."