

Collapse 15

Chapter 15: I am a Good Person, I Never Rob_1

To be honest, Gu Mian was genuinely afraid that a forty-kilogram hammer would suddenly swing out from inside and smash his head to pulp.

But apparently, this game was reasonable and not as violent as he had imagined.

As he opened it, the first thing that caught his eye was a letter.

"An apology letter?"

"Dear player, we apologize for the inconvenience caused during your experience in the Ghost High School instance."

"At the same time, we hope that players will not continue to act rashly in future instances; otherwise, they will bear the consequences."

Naturally, this apology letter was not sent to everyone.

When the instance crashed, the other players had already left, so this apology letter was addressed to Gu Mian alone.

So, it went without saying who the "certain player" mentioned in the letter was.

At this moment, Chu Changge also came over to look at the apology letter on Gu Mian's panel.

"I saw that announcement long ago. I had guessed it had something to do with you, but I didn't expect the game to actually send you an apology letter when you crashed the instance. If it were up to me, I would have already blown your brains out."

Gu Mian gave him a glance. "Have you ever seen a game where the server crashes and blames it on the player's actions?"

Moreover, although the title read "Apology Letter," its underlying tone was clearly a threat!

Threat or not, Gu Mian continued reading. The real compensation was listed below.

A yellowed piece of paper, like a movie ticket, appeared before him.

"Instance Exchange Ticket (One-time use)"

"Select and enter a specified instance, which you can enter as a team with teammates. Fill in the instance and players' names to use."

Currently, all instances were matched randomly, and you never knew which instance you would enter next.

But with this item, you could enter any instance you fancied at any time.

However, Gu Mian didn't have any instances he was particularly interested in at the moment, so he put the ticket aside.

There was also Game Coin compensation below.

"Game Coins * 100"

A whole day had passed, and all global players combined still hadn't managed to pool together one million Game Coins. If they couldn't reach one million, the Mall System wouldn't open, so Game Coins were currently useless.

After scanning the panel again in bed, Gu Mian got up to turn off the lights.

I need to sleep early; I have to go grocery shopping with Fatty in the morning, he thought as he closed his eyes.

「The next day, at the crack of dawn, the alarm clock by the bed began to ring.」

Gu Mian was a hard-pressed intern who lived far from the hospital, so he had to get up very early.

Luckily, there was a supermarket nearby that sold freshly made pancakes, which he could eat while waiting for the bus at the station.

However, he had been eating these pancakes for several years, and the supermarket showed no intention of changing its breakfast menu, causing him to feel a bit nauseous at the mere sight of pancakes now.

But with Fatty around, things were different.

Looking at the steaming hot congee on the dining table, Gu Mian was suddenly overcome with the desire to keep Fatty with him.

Fatty was an excellent cook when it came to making congee.

The congee was smooth and thick without being stodgy, and it even contained red dates and rock sugar. Gu Mian consumed half the pot in one go, leaving the other two still feeling a bit hungry.

"No problem," he said, wiping his mouth with a napkin. "We're going to the supermarket later anyway." Although the supermarket might not even be open.

As he left the apartment, Gu Mian took a special glance at the reception desk by the building's entrance.

The antique-style reception desk was still there, and the rattan chair was also positioned sideways, just as before, as if no one had returned.

He let out a sigh of relief.

Chu Changge also glanced at the rattan chair. "Hasn't your landlord returned yet?"

Gu Mian shrugged. "Who knows."

The sun still rose from the east. Despite the global changes, Earth's rotation remained quite stable. The hazy sun ascended, its warm light spreading over the ground, bathing the streets and alleys in a soft golden glow. Looking up, one would see a clear, cloudless sky stretching for miles, and the air felt refreshingly crisp.

"The weather is nice today," Gu Mian remarked, looking up at the sky.

Road conditions were still poor, so if they wanted to use a vehicle, cycling was the only option.

However, Gu Mian didn't even own a bicycle, so the three of them had to proceed on foot.

Not far from the apartment building was a ticket booth, very similar to the two near Lianhua Hospital.

For the time being, none of the three wanted to enter another instance, and it seemed other players felt the same way, so the ticket booth was deserted.

Peering inside, they could only see a female NPC sitting behind the window, looking so bored she seemed about to bang her head against the glass.

A short walk further, and they came upon a large supermarket.

Just as Gu Mian had speculated, the supermarket was closed.

Huge metal shutters were drawn, firmly protecting the supermarket. The trio saw quite a few people standing at the entrance, looking stunned.

"What do we do now?" Fatty asked, his face crestfallen.

Gu Mian turned to him. "There are quite a few other supermarkets around here. Let's check somewhere else."

Surprisingly, all the other large supermarkets, which were usually fierce competitors, seemed to have coordinated their actions today.

Not a single one was open. Could a unified policy have been issued? Gu Mian wondered.

Gu Mian pulled his white coat tighter around him. "This is ridiculous."

While the large supermarkets were all closed, a few small convenience stores remained open, though they were scarce.

Long queues could be seen in front of these stores, visible even from a distance.

As they passed one such convenience store, Gu Mian glanced inside.

Only one customer was allowed in at a time. Once that person paid and left, the next could enter.

A man who appeared to be the owner stood by the door, an iron rod in his hand, apparently wary of robbers, while the proprietress was behind the counter, handling transactions.

Inside, a customer was haggling with the owner.

"This is too expensive!" a slightly stooped middle-aged man exclaimed, holding a few packs of instant noodles.

Gu Mian recognized them as Kang Shifu's braised beef noodles.

The plump proprietress stood behind the counter with her arms folded, her face flushed. "Expensive? Take a look around! How many stores are still open on the streets? If you can't afford one hundred a pack, then don't buy it."

Oho!

Look at that arrogant attitude, Gu Mian thought.

The few convenience stores that were open had increased their prices several tens of times, clearly intending to profit from the situation.

Gu Mian recalled how some salt merchants had behaved similarly during the nuclear leak incident in Japan years ago.

The stooped man lowered his head in silence for a moment. He caressed the items in his hands and finally reached out to pay.

He pulled out several crumpled bills, all tens and twenties.

He counted them one by one, smoothing out the money before handing it to the proprietress.

The proprietress took the money with a disdainful look, counted it, then raised her voice and shouted to those outside, "Next!"

Fatty, standing beside Gu Mian, shook his head. "Society is going downhill! People's hearts are not what they used to be! Are we really going to reach a point where we can't even afford food?"

"We'll see once the Mall System opens," Gu Mian replied.

But for now, they still needed to eat. Who knew when the Mall System would actually open?

Fatty looked at the long queue and asked, "So, are we going to buy food from these small shops first?"

Gu Mian didn't have a habit of hoarding food, so he had nothing to eat at home.

Chu Changge, who was hardly ever home, had run out of food long ago—even several litters of rats in his house had starved to death.

"But I don't think I have enough money..."

Gu Mian said as he pulled out a fifty-yuan note and several coins, "This is all the cash I have on me. What about you guys?"

The other two exchanged glances.

Chu Changge produced a five-yuan note and a ten-yuan note.

Fatty pulled out two fifty-cent coins.

Gu Mian: "..."

It seems we'll have to resort to robbery.