

Collapse 16

Chapter 16: The Author is in a Panic Now_1

Of course, Gu Mian was just idly considering robbery.

The Evolution Game had just begun. It wasn't chaotic yet, and order was barely being maintained.

If they tried to rob now, they would probably end up getting shot!

Left with no other options, the three of them continued along the road. Fatty jokingly suggested they look for tree bark to alleviate their hunger.

However, that was clearly a joke; they weren't desperate enough to eat anything they could find yet.

Gu Mian looked ahead and said, "I remember there were a lot of breakfast stalls near our hospital, but I doubt anyone is selling now. There are quite a few supermarkets over there, though. Shall we go take a look?"

Since they had nothing better to do, Chu Changge and Fatty both thought it was feasible.

It wasn't long before the trio arrived near Lianhua Hospital.

The place was as desolate as it had been yesterday. However, yesterday there had still been some signs of life, with players flitting about like headless flies.

Now, they couldn't see a single player, let alone a fly's leg.

The two ticket offices next to the hospital were also deserted; absolutely no one was voluntarily heading inside.

The north wind blew, giving the area the desolate feeling of a home whose clan had been wiped out and their assets seized.

Gu Mian's gaze swept past the vehicles scattered haphazardly across the road, eventually settling on an electric tricycle.

This wasn't an ordinary tricycle; it had a cargo compartment, and a very sturdy one at that. It was painted white with blue lettering:

"Shunfeng Express"

The delivery driver was long gone, leaving behind the vehicle with its cargo door slightly ajar, revealing a narrow gap, and a full load of goods.

"Would it be unethical to go through this delivery vehicle now?" Gu Mian rubbed his hands together.

Chu Changge, shameless as ever, said, "Even if you don't, these packages aren't going to reach their buyers."

Hearing this, Gu Mian felt perfectly justified in pulling open the cargo compartment door.

The lock on this door hadn't been sturdy to begin with, and the compartment had also been hit hard by a vehicle from behind. The hasp for the padlock had fallen off, so it could naturally be pulled open easily.

Gu Mian looked at the boxes crammed full inside. "There should be plenty of snacks in here."

Many businesses ran special promotions during the New Year period, so the volume of deliveries around this time was genuinely high.

The shipping labels generally indicated the contents, so they didn't need to open them specifically to check.

He pulled out the large box closest to him and looked down. At a glance, he recognized the very familiar delivery address.

"Lianhua Hospital, basement morgue. Enter, turn left, seventh tier, ninth refrigerated body drawer from the left."

That's truly an absurd delivery address.

The item inside appeared to be a cotton quilt.

Gu Mian wasn't interested in quilts, so he tossed the large box aside and reached for the next package.

The subsequent packages were much more normal.

The trio found many edible items in the delivery vehicle, including a large gift pack of nuts, cream-filled mochi, hand-shredded beef jerky, and even a large box of instant noodles.

Before leaving, Fatty had specifically brought three of the largest plastic bags he could find at a supermarket.

Grinning, he used a rusty fruit knife to open the packages and then dumped all the snacks into the bags, claiming it saved space.

After they had thoroughly looted the vehicle, all three bags were practically stuffed full. Each of them carried one bag as they started to head back.

The sun had already risen halfway.

It was now a little warmer than it had been in the early morning, and there were finally a few more people on the streets.

Actually, Gu Mian was quite worried that a mugger might suddenly jump out at them. After all, considering his luck, nothing that happened would be a surprise.

However, his worries were unfounded. No muggers suddenly appeared; instead, something else did.

Just as they were passing a driver's test center, a panel suddenly descended before the three of them.

[Triggered Special Instance: "Spirit Car Driving Test Center"]

"What in the world?!" Fatty exclaimed, his eyes wide.

Special instances, as explained before, could be encountered anytime and anywhere, and they were extremely dangerous.

Gu Mian opened his mouth, but before he could utter a sound, a brilliant white light flashed before his eyes. When he came to his senses, the surrounding scene had completely changed.

The panel was still displaying the instance description:

[Instance Participants: 5 to 10 people]

[Insufficient participants detected. Randomly supplementing teammates... Loading...]

[Teammates successfully matched. Current participant count: 7]

Instantly, four dazed-looking people, who seemed to have no idea what was happening, appeared beside Gu Mian and his companions.

[Instance Mission: Obtain your driver's license. Failing any part means immediate elimination.]

[Instance Reward: Spirit Car Driving License]

[Instance Difficulty: ★★★★★☆]

Gu Mian stared at the string of stars, resembling candied fruit on a skewer, and fell into deep thought.

Fatty's expression was grim; to be precise, it was downright awful.

Gu Mian heard him muttering something under his breath. Moving closer, he could make out: "One, two, three... six... Six-and-a-half-star difficulty?"

Instance difficulty ranged from one to ten stars, with higher meaning harder.

To be matched with a six-and-a-half-star difficulty right off the bat... I've really dragged Fatty into trouble this time.

Just then, an excited voice suddenly came from nearby—

"Qiao Chu?"

The speaker was a gaunt young man, now looking at another player with considerable excitement.

Gu Mian had heard the name Qiao Chu before. She was a popular idol, known for being rather airheaded but cute. She debuted in a girl group and later ventured into film and television, earning the nickname 'Xiao Qiao' within the industry.

Unfortunately, she was also someone with absolutely no acting talent. Her only asset was her pretty face; even if she just stood motionless on screen, one could be momentarily captivated at first glance.

Who knew how strong her backing was? Despite netizens overwhelming her with enough criticism to metaphorically bury her hundreds of times over, she never changed her ways. Her acting showed no

improvement, yet she never lacked for opportunities, infuriating her anti-fans to the point of coughing up blood.

In short, she was a peculiar bloom rising in China's entertainment industry.

Gu Mian followed the gaunt young man's gaze and indeed saw that very familiar face.

The performer, usually known for her dazed demeanor, looked just as dazed today. It didn't seem like she was being aloof; rather, she appeared to be still processing what was happening.

Taking this opportunity, Gu Mian quickly scanned the profiles of the other players.

The gaunt young man gazing ardently at Xiao Qiao was named "Fireworks Can Be Cold."

Beside him, a kind-looking, middle-aged man with a square, honest face was named "Hao Laoshi."

Apart from them, there was a timid, short girl with a face full of freckles, named "Meteor Princess."

As for Xiao Qiao, she had simply named herself "Xiao Qiao." It was a mystery how she'd managed to secure that name.

Soon, a new figure appeared before them.

It wasn't a player, but an NPC, because "NPC" was displayed above his head.

He was male, quite tall—around 1.8 meters—and looked to be in his forties or fifties. He wore a crisp suit, and his solemn face was etched with fine lines.

"I am your instructor," the older man said.

Of course, learning to drive involved instructors. However, all the instructors Gu Mian had ever seen wore slippers and shorts, or at best, loose sportswear if they were trying to look presentable. This was the first time he'd seen an instructor dressed so impeccably, looking like a proper gentleman.

But this was an instance, after all, so nothing was too out of the ordinary.

Fatty, beside him, opened his mouth as if to say something, but the instructor didn't give him a chance and immediately continued,

"You've all taken driving tests before, haven't you? But unfortunately, this isn't like a typical driving test.

"Although I'm an instructor, I won't be teaching you anything. I will only act as your grader. You need to answer the test questions and complete the exam on your own.

"But you must remember, there are evil spirits present in this test. Your exam will undoubtedly be obstructed, and your lives may even be threatened."

Gu Mian looked around.

Beside them stood a large building, covering a significant area, its overall shape resembling a flattened cylinder. A sign on the revolving door at its base read "Written Test Center."

The instructor continued, "Your test is divided into two sections."

Two? Gu Mian remembered there being four sections when he learned to drive.

The others exchanged glances, apparently all wondering how this instance's driving test differed from a regular one.

"The sections are a written test and a road test.

"The written test, as the name implies, involves answering questions. Later, I will distribute a set of test papers to each of you. But remember, the designated time for filling in your answers is from 10:00 PM to 12:00 AM. You cannot submit answers at other times, though you are free to think about the questions.

"A score above 80 on the written test is required to pass. Anything less is a fail. Only those who pass can proceed to the next section.

"The road test can only be attempted after passing the written test. Each of you will choose one of those three vehicles. Completing three full laps on this road will count as passing the exam."

As the instructor spoke, he directed his gaze in a certain direction.

The group followed his line of sight.

Over there, three vehicles had appeared at some unknown point.

Seeing these vehicles, Gu Mian finally understood how this exam differed from an ordinary driving test.

He saw—

"A hearse, colloquially known as a Spirit Car, specifically used to transport ashes or bodies. The large words 'Funeral Services' were written on its front, and it also had a loudspeaker, presumably for playing dirges.

"A blood-stained ambulance. Patients frequently died in such vehicles. Its windows were almost completely shattered, and its chassis was spattered with fresh blood.

"A prison transport vehicle. Its iron bars had been twisted out of shape by something. A tattered piece of a prison uniform was snagged on them, but the prisoner was long gone."