

Collapse 31

Chapter 31: Digging a Hole and Burying _1

In the dark of night, Gu Mian held the chainsaw, its engine off, against the man's neck.

"Sorry, pal. Your crew ran off too fast for me to catch, so you'll have to do."

As he spoke, he pressed the chainsaw deeper into the man's neck.

The saw's teeth were sharp, piercing his skin with ease. The man shivered in fear, not daring to move.

His watermelon knife had been sawed in two by Gu Mian's chainsaw, leaving only the handle in his hand.

"What... what do you want?" he managed in a weak voice.

Gu Mian's demonic voice echoed from above, "Add me as a friend so I can see how many Game Coins you have."

His intentions were clear.

"You!" The man struggled slightly upon realizing his intention.

Gu Mian merely stroked the chainsaw's start button, silencing him immediately.

"I've told you before: those who know what's what leave all their valuables—whether they're worth anything or not—behind for me. Those who don't, better run fast. What were you thinking, staying so close and running so slow?"

Brother Zhang, held at chainsaw-point, broke out in a cold sweat.

He'd thought tonight would be a bountiful harvest. Instead, the hunter had become the hunted. He now cursed his own terrible judgment, failing to see what a terrifying figure this doctor truly was.

The Fatty standing nearby was also dumbfounded. He whispered to Chu Changge, "Was Dr. Gu always this assertive?"

Fatty had originally thought that scaring the robbers away with the chainsaw would be the end of it. He never expected things to take such an astonishing turn.

Chu Changge replied softly, "He's always been like this. If someone tries to scam him, he can come up with a hundred different ways to scam them back, and each method is guaranteed to make the other person utterly miserable."

"Don't try to guess what he's thinking. After all, he's the kind of guy who can watch a horror movie and be moved to tears."

As Chu Changge spoke, he glanced again in Gu Mian's direction.

Brother Zhang had succumbed to the terror of the chainsaw and was adding Gu Mian as a friend.

"My game ID is 1. Hurry up."

Brother Zhang faltered but, still shaky, typed "1" into the friend search bar and sent a friend request to Gu Mian.

Gu Mian quickly accepted it.

Friends could see each other's instance completion count, Game Coins, and other attributes.

Gu Mian looked at his Game Coins.

Thirty-eight Game Coins? That's not even enough to buy a supermarket pass. For a gang leader, he's a bit too poor, isn't he?

Still, in the spirit of 'every little bit counts', Gu Mian plundered everything of value from the man, deleted him as a friend, and then kicked him aside.

The kicked man didn't dare to get angry. As soon as he was released, he sprinted off into the darkness without a backward glance. It seemed that the doctor with the chainsaw was even more terrifying than the dark night itself.

Fatty watched the man flee and asked, "Doctor, you're just letting him go like that? Aren't you afraid he'll come back for revenge?"

Gu Mian patted him. "Have you heard of harvesting leeks? When you harvest leeks, you have to leave the roots so they can grow back for another harvest."

Even if a leek comes back for revenge, it's still just a leek, destined to be cut again.

Fatty had heard of harvesting leeks, but he never dreamed that one day, even a ferocious robber could be treated like a leek to be harvested.

Now that all the 'leeks' had fled, the three of them walked on unimpeded.

The January nights were chilly; you could see your breath clouding in the air.

It wasn't the coldest time yet, but the temperature was still dropping.

Everything they'd bought from the supermarket was stored in their item bars. The only exception was the chainsaw, which Gu Mian had bagged and slung onto his back, apparently unbothered by its weight.

With his hands tucked in his sleeves, Fatty blew out a warm breath. "This blasted weather is getting colder and colder! I don't remember it being this cold around this time in previous years."

Gu Mian felt it too.

"Indeed, this January is particularly cold," he said, looking up at the pitch-black, utterly starless night sky. "It's probably related to this game."

Fatty, his hands still tucked into his sleeves, said, "Chinese New Year is just over a month away. If it goes on like this, won't it be freezing by then? We might not even be able to leave our homes."

As he spoke, he sighed. "We used to have plenty of food and warm clothes for the New Year. I'm afraid that won't be the case this year."

Residential buildings were visible all around them.

Some apartment windows were dark. In those with lights on, the curtains were drawn tight, only allowing faint slivers of light to escape.

Everyone was cooped up indoors, but that couldn't last forever.

As they walked, Fatty muttered to himself, "What the hell is Earth playing at, with this whole 'evolutionary game'? Now everyone's too scared to even go outside... Who knows if things will get any better by New Year's..."

Before long, they arrived at the foot of Gu Mian's apartment building.

The lobby was lit, revealing a long-unseen figure sitting behind the counter.

Fatty had never met the landlady of this apartment before. At first glance, his eyes nearly popped out of their sockets.

Even from a distance, an alluring, almost intoxicating charm emanated from her.

A single glance was enough to make one feel as if they had traveled through time, back to the riverside courtesan houses of the 1930s. The air seemed thick with the nostalgic scent of old-fashioned rouge, and the very dust of the mortal world swirled around them.

Seemingly noticing Gu Mian, she lifted her head slightly, glanced at the three of them, and then offered a faint smile without saying a word.

That smile was truly beautiful. It left Fatty completely dazed, and he found himself grinning back like a fool.

Alarm bells screamed in Gu Mian's mind. He grabbed the stupefied Fatty and pulled him towards the staircase.

This landlady of theirs was, indeed, a very dangerous woman.

Her name was Liu Ruyan—a name as full of charm and poetry as the woman herself.

She was incredibly worldly-wise, never showing a single flaw on the surface. Her face constantly wore a smile captivating enough to charm the soul, and with a mere blink, she could leave a man utterly befuddled.

Her only flaw was—she had too many suitors.

The open area in front of the apartment building was often crammed with all sorts of cars whose names Gu Mian didn't even know. It left no room for his bicycle, which was eventually stolen because he had to leave it by the roadside.

But Gu Mian considered himself an upright person and didn't hold this against the landlady.

Until one day, he returned home early to find Liu Ruyan attempting to turn the valve on his kitchen's natural gas line.

For a fleeting moment, he suspected the landlady was an assassin sent by Life itself to eliminate him.

Fortunately, he had experienced his fair share of bizarre occurrences and didn't panic and move out. After all, even if he moved, Life's attempts on his, well, life, wouldn't cease.

So, right in front of the landlady, he dismantled his apartment door, installed a new high-security one, and even went to the trouble of changing the lock cylinder.

That way, Liu Ruyan could no longer use her spare key to slip into his kitchen and tamper with the gas valve.

Liu Ruyan said nothing about this, silently accepting the change.

From that day on, the gas valve in Gu Mian's apartment was never again found mysteriously turned on.

The Fatty, still dazed and being dragged upstairs by Gu Mian, was lost in thought. Suddenly, he leaned in close to Gu Mian and whispered conspiratorially, "Doctor, I've just realized something about you."

What? Gu Mian glanced at him, puzzled.

Fatty began:

"Lu Xun once said,

If you have a Fat Kid Surnamed Wang by your side;

A stoic-faced man in glasses;

A beautiful female celebrity encountered by chance;

A sexy landlady;

And parents whose deaths are shrouded in mystery,

Then—

You must be the legendary protagonist!"