

Collapse 33

Chapter 33: Talent Gathering! _1

Fatty quickly climbed up and watched as Chu Changge stood on the balcony, deeply inhaling the first breath of morning haze.

"Brother Chu, do you know," Fatty looked at Chu Changge's silhouette, "there used to be an old man living next to my house who would go up to the roof every morning to absorb nature's spiritual energy. Eventually, he got poisoned by the haze."

Chu Changge silently retreated two steps, moving away from the balcony.

Gu Mian's balcony was open-air; you could see the sky just by looking up.

The weather today was not good. It was somewhat bleak, as if it was going to snow.

Fatty's gaze moved past Chu Changge, looking beyond the balcony. "Where did Dr. Gu go?"

Chu Changge simply replied, "He went to earn money."

Fatty was slightly stunned. "Did Dr. Gu go by himself?"

"Uh-huh. He told us to air-dry the meat we bought last night at home, so it would be easier to carry when we hit the road."

「At this moment」

Gu Mian had already obtained his ticket and started matching for an instance.

It was probably because the game had just begun and not many players were participating in instances yet, so the matching process took him a bit longer this time.

After waiting in the darkness for some time, the familiar sensation of weightlessness finally came again.

Gu Mian descended in the darkness for a while before his body touched something solid. He seemed to have landed on a bed.

Simultaneously, the darkness quickly receded, revealing the scene before him.

He was in a room.

Information about this instance was rapidly popping up on his panel.

[Instance: Life-threatening Curse]

[Content: Have you ever felt an eerie gaze, constantly heard faint noises from under your bed, or always sensed someone behind you? You are all cursed by a vengeful spirit. Please, do your utmost to survive this curse! Remember, 'it' will draw closer and closer to you!]

[Number of Players: 5]

[Main Task: Survive for 10 days in the instance]

[Difficulty: ★★★★★☆]

[Instance Reward: 100 Game Coins, 1 Lottery Spin, 2 Free Attribute Points]

This instance's reward has increased by more than one level, Gu Mian muttered to himself while looking around.

The room wasn't very big. It looked somewhat old but was still relatively clean.

A bed, covered with a gray-blue sheet and a quilt of the same hue, took up half the room's space. There was a desk next to the door.

The bed was right next to the window. Gu Mian looked outside to see that he was on the ground floor.

Outside were some worn-looking buildings. Not too far away, an open area featured a massive statue of a figure.

The sun was slowly setting, its lingering twilight seeped through the window, blanketing Gu Mian in warmth.

His chainsaw, disguised in a guitar case, had also landed safely without any damage.

Gu Mian looked back towards the door. Opposite the room was a small living room, which he could take in at a glance.

A large wooden cabinet held a desktop TV. Not far across from it were a glass coffee table and a set of small, dark-red sofas. The sofa showed signs of age, its leather cracked and peeling.

Next to the sofa was a cabinet resembling a nightstand, holding a landline telephone. Beside the phone, there appeared to be a phonebook.

It was a one-bedroom, one-living room apartment for a single person, and it appeared to be of an older design.

Sure enough, Gu Mian discovered from a calendar hanging in the living room that the current date was October 2002.

Who knew how the instance set the time? He didn't have time to dwell on it and instead quickly began searching for clues.

This is a five-person instance, but apart from my chainsaw and me, where are the others? Gu Mian began to ponder earnestly.

This instance was different from the previous two.

In the previous instances, his teammates had been placed right in front of him, but this time, he seemed to have to find them himself.

Actually, it's not a big deal even if I don't find my teammates, Gu Mian mumbled to himself. This instance seems to be similar to 'The Ring'.

In 'The Ring,' the curse leads to certain death seven days after watching the videotape.

In this instance, however, the players were cursed from the very beginning, and 'it' would get progressively closer to them.

When 'it' finally reached a player, that player was doomed to die.

We have five players, so there should be at least five ghosts in this instance. Otherwise, wouldn't a single ghost be exhausted trying to kill all five of us?

Gu Mian thought seriously.

However, while he was still deep in thought, the telephone on the cabinet next to the sofa suddenly rang.

RING RING—

RING RING—

It was still dusk, so Gu Mian wasn't worried about anything like the curse from 'The Ring' happening yet and picked up the phone.

Immediately, a young man's voice came from the other end, "Hello, is this... Gu Mian?"

Gu Mian paused slightly. "You are...?"

The person on the other end seemed to hesitate for a moment before speaking, "You're a player too, right?"

Even though I didn't find my teammates, one of them found me. But how did he find me?

While Gu Mian was thinking, he idly flipped through the phonebook next to the telephone. Sure enough, the phonebook only listed four numbers, presumably belonging to his four teammates.

This person must have found my number from the phonebook.

Gu Mian straightforwardly admitted, "Yes."

As he spoke, he glanced at the landline's display screen, which showed the caller's number. He then compared it to the names in the phonebook.

"You're Yuwen Hao?"

Yuwen Hao? Sounds like 'Good at Language Arts.' What a ridiculous name.

The person on the other end sounded somewhat excited. "Yes, it's me! You're honestly the easiest teammate to talk to that I've met here."

Gu Mian was good at reading between the lines; he could infer many things without them being explicitly stated.

Yuwen Hao could make such a comparison probably because he had already called the other teammates.

"I also called the others just now," Yuwen Hao continued, "but they were either incoherent or bombarding me with questions like 'How did you get my number?' and 'Who are you?' You're really the most straightforward teammate I've dealt with."

Gu Mian didn't waste time on pleasantries with Yuwen Hao.

He glanced at the other names in the phonebook. "Are you calling to suggest we meet up?"

The person on the other end was momentarily stumped. "Uh... yes, that's right. From what I can tell, the five of us have been separated, each in our own room. So, I thought it would be best to gather everyone first."

"Where should we meet?"

"...Actually, I'm not entirely sure where everyone is. Can you look out your window and see if there are any distinctive buildings?"

Gu Mian looked out the window. "There's a very large, full-body statue... Actually, I'm quite distinctive. You should be able to recognize me instantly."

"What?" a puzzled voice came from the other end.

Gu Mian shouldered his chainsaw. "A doctor carrying a large guitar. I'm the doctor with the large guitar."

Fortunately, the instance was humane enough not to scatter the five players too far apart.

When Yuwen Hao led the other three to the statue Gu Mian had mentioned, they immediately spotted a figure even more conspicuous than the statue itself.

A doctor was standing there, wearing a white coat.

His white coat was somewhat worn, its edges stained with a reddish-brown substance of unknown origin, and it billowed in the wind.

He carried a large guitar on his back, an instrument utterly incongruous with his profession. The guitar was oversized and strapped tightly to him.

This jarring ensemble gave him an outlandish aura, but the Doctor himself seemed unfazed.

Oh my god, Yuwen Hao sighed inwardly. What kind of bizarre teammate have I been paired with?