

Collapse 34

Chapter 34: Tomorrow is February_1

In a restaurant, five people sat around a table.

Yuwen Hao's attention was almost entirely focused on Gu Mian because this doctor was the most unique among all the players.

Not only was his appearance distinctive, but his attitude towards this instance was also quite strange.

"Are you... a doctor?" After hesitating for a moment, Yuwen Hao asked.

Gu Mian shifted his gaze from the menu to Yuwen Hao's face. "I suppose so, at least I was before this game started."

Yuwen Hao was very young, looking no more than twenty-five or twenty-six. He had average looks, resembling a young man who had only recently entered society.

However, compared to his peers, he seemed more composed and calm. Although his facial expression was a bit odd, he managed to introduce the others to Gu Mian in an organized manner.

"Then let me introduce everyone to you, Doctor..."

It was truly strange. As Yuwen Hao spoke, his heart pounded nervously. This doctor is clearly younger than me, but why do I get the distinct impression I'm meeting an elder?

"This is Lin Yue'er, a college student," Yuwen Hao said, looking at the only female player among the five.

True to her name, Lin Yue'er was a very petite girl. She wore glasses and was shy and timid, seeming unaccustomed to interacting with people. Currently, she was avoiding the others' gazes.

"Over there, the slightly overweight man sitting next to Lin Yue'er is Golden Wings."

Gu Mian followed Yuwen Hao's gaze.

Indeed, sitting next to Lin Yue'er was a somewhat portly man who looked a bit older than Yuwen Hao. He wore a deep brown sweater, and his hair was unkempt, as if he hadn't been out in ages.

Golden Wings smiled, a little embarrassed. "I... I'm a bit of a homebody."

Quite apparent.

Yuwen Hao then began to introduce the next person.

"The slim, pale student sitting next to Mr. Huang, who recently graduated from the Chinese Literature program, is Qing Huan."

Gu Mian slightly tilted his head.

It was clear that Qing Huan was a literary type; a scholarly and refined aura emanated from him, noticeable at a single glance.

Qing Huan lifted his head and gave Gu Mian a polite smile. His face was a bit pale, apparently due to fear.

By now, Gu Mian had a basic understanding of the other four.

Since he had gotten a grasp on the others, it was time for him to introduce himself.

"Hello, everyone," Gu Mian began. "My name is Gu Mian, and I'm barely a doctor. You can call me Dr. Gu."

As he spoke, he dragged a large parcel that was leaning against his chair over to himself. "I'm also a doctor who enjoys music. Inside is my guitar."

The others looked at him as if they had seen a ghost.

Yuwen Hao was the first to speak up hesitantly. "Dr. Gu, carrying such a large guitar in the instance... isn't that a bit impractical?"

Gu Mian had an expression of stubborn refusal. "No problem. I think it's quite good."

Seeing that there was no way to communicate rationally with this doctor, Yuwen Hao had no choice but to steer the conversation in another direction.

"Alright, since we've all met, let's discuss this instance. My mission is to survive for ten days. What about yours?"

The others all nodded. It seemed everyone had the same mission.

"The main theme of this instance seems to be related to a curse. I think it has some similarities with the movie 'Ring.' Have you all seen 'Ring'?" Yuwen Hao looked at the others.

It turned out that the horror movie 'Ring' had a wide audience.

Among those present, only Lin Yue'er, the female player, hadn't seen it. However, she had heard of the movie's infamy and knew that Sadako would crawl out of the TV to kill those she had cursed.

The slightly overweight homebody, Golden Wings, spoke. "So, you're saying our current situation is similar to those cursed by Sadako?"

"Yes," Yuwen Hao nodded. "In the horror film, Sadako crawls out of the TV on the seventh day to kill people, but our instance doesn't specify when the ghost will kill."

"This instance only says... 'it' will get closer and closer to us. It's certain the ghost will steadily approach us over these ten days. The closer 'it' gets, the more danger we'll be in."

When Yuwen Hao reached this point, he suddenly paused and looked around as if searching for something.

Gu Mian looked at him. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," Yuwen Hao furrowed his brow. "I just felt like something was watching me..."

After a pause of a few seconds, he continued, "Everyone here has experienced at least one instance, so you should all know that the ghosts in these instances are beyond our ability to handle."

"Whether it's a Peach Wood Sword, Buddhist scriptures, or Black Dog Blood, none of them can deal with those ghosts. They are almost unsolvable!"

As Yuwen Hao said this, he suddenly shivered, as if recalling something horrifying.

Gu Mian, however, found himself rather missing the ghost he had dragged out from under the bed by its neck.

"Even though the ghosts are unsolvable, the instances aren't. There must be a way to survive, clues that lead to it. So, to survive this instance, we must find those clues!"

His words were sensible, and the others seemed visibly moved.

Even Lin Yue'er, who was typically quiet, asked, "Then how do you think we can survive these ten days in this instance?"

Without much hesitation, Yuwen Hao replied, "I suspect we need to find the origin of the curse."

As he spoke, he looked at everyone present. "From what I've observed, all five of us live in different apartment buildings, and we all live alone. I suspect this is to make it easier for the ghost to target us."

"If we want to find the origin, we need to understand this curse first. So, I suggest that for now, no one take any special actions. Tonight, let's all go back to our respective places and see what happens..."

Lin Yue'er started to say something, "But..."

"Don't worry," Yuwen Hao interrupted her. "This instance lasts for ten days, and it's made clear that 'it' is constantly approaching. So, it probably won't be dangerous at the very beginning. 'It' is still far from us."

"During these initial, relatively safe days, we can look for clues about the curse in the instance. We should try to find the path to survival within this safe period."

As he spoke, he looked at the others. Everyone was listening attentively, except for the doctor.

He seemed to be lost in thought.

"Dr. Gu," Yuwen Hao frowned and tapped the table in front of Gu Mian. "Are you listening to me, Dr. Gu?"

Only then did Gu Mian turn his gaze toward him. "I am listening. But it seems to be getting dark."

Yuwen Hao was taken aback for a moment, then turned to look out the window behind him. Indeed, the sky was already dimming. Before long, night would completely envelop the area.

He didn't want to walk home in the dark, so he cut to the chase. "In short, tonight, we all return to our own places."

"Phones... none of us have them, right? The Friend System can't be used in this instance, so we can only use landline telephones to contact each other. Tonight, everyone try your best not to sleep. If you discover anything, share it immediately over the phone."

The realism of this instance was extremely high. Inside, one would feel fatigue, hunger, and thirst. Hunger wouldn't kill you, but it would definitely affect your overall condition.

When the five of them left, the sun had just completely set. The others quickly dispersed, hurrying back to their residences.

Gu Mian lagged behind, planning to find a supermarket to browse. Earlier, he had found a stack of yuan in his room.

After finally finding a supermarket, he bought two large bags of popcorn and then went into the video rental store next door.

Behind the counter, the owner, who had slightly yellow teeth, gave him a sleazy smile. "What can I get for you, young man? I've got everything you could want right here~"

His intonation rose and fell rhythmically, much like an old, half-dressed madam at the entrance of a brothel, soliciting customers.

Gu Mian took out some money. "Two copies of 'Ring,' please."