

Collapse 39

Chapter 39: Midnight Update is the Most Lethal_1

"I can..." Gu Mian began, thinking he could form a team by himself.

But before Gu Mian could finish, Qing Huan interrupted him. "Then I'll team up with Dr. Gu."

Gu Mian silently swallowed his words.

Yuwen Hao looked at them, then at the remaining Lin Yue'er and Huang Yu. "I don't think anyone wants to be on their own, so the three of us will form a team."

Lin Yue'er and Huang Yu tacitly agreed.

Yuwen Hao pulled a cell phone from his pocket and handed it to Gu Mian. "I bought this phone on the way here. I have one too. It doesn't have many features, but it already has a SIM card. Your phone has my number stored, so it'll be easier for our two teams to communicate."

It was 2002, a time when you could get a SIM card without an ID.

Gu Mian took the phone and pocketed it in his white coat.

Yuwen Hao continued, "We'll meet back here at five in the afternoon... no, four. We need to leave time to discuss where to live."

Gu Mian didn't think changing houses would stop the ghost from following them, but since his teammates wanted to do it, he wouldn't object.

After the discussion, the frail-looking teammates finally dispersed to get started.

The four of them hadn't slept much the previous night. The consequences of staying up all night in the instance were the same as in real life: severe sleep deprivation and extremely low efficiency.

Qing Huan was yawning profusely as he followed Gu Mian out the door.

Gu Mian glanced at him. "It's not good for young men to stay up late often. It can lead to kidney deficiency and, in severe cases, even infertility."

Hearing this, Qing Huan paused for a moment. "Doctor, you seem to know a lot about this."

Gu Mian walked quickly on the asphalt road. "I'm a doctor; of course, I know about these things."

Qing Huan jogged to catch up. "But Dr. Gu, are you an internist?"

The sun was slowly climbing higher; it seemed like a nice day.

Gu Mian looked up at the sun. "No, I'm the kind of surgeon who can skillfully use a hammer, tweezers, a small knife, an electric drill, and a chainsaw."

"A surgeon..." Qing Huan paused. "Surgeons also know so much about the dangers of staying up late?"

In his mind, surgeons were extremely skilled with their hands and equally adept with their words, often loving to tell crude jokes. However, no surgeon had ever educated him on the dangers of pulling all-nighters.

"When I was in school, I memorized the textbooks—the entire book. Of course, I remember it all clearly."

"Didn't your teachers highlight the important points for you?"

"Patients don't get sick according to the 'important points'."

"..."

Amidst their idle chat, the two finally arrived at Gu Mian's residence, which was a rented house.

It was a rather shabby apartment building with a gabled roof, from which hung a sign reading 'Hongsheng Apartment'. The building itself had been painted yellow, but it seemed the paint had run out near the top, so a similar light pink color had been used as a substitute in an attempt to pass it off.

However, this attempt at camouflage was poor; the band of light pink at the top was very conspicuous. Anyone with even moderate nearsightedness could clearly see the different colors on the building.

This building had three sections and five floors, with ten apartments per section. However, only five households remained in the entire building.

Gu Mian knew which unit the landlord occupied because a large sheet of paper was posted at the building's entrance, bearing a handwritten line:

"Tenants, please pay your utilities on time each month at the west unit, fifth floor, Section 3."

Gu Mian lived in the east unit on the first floor of Section 1, the farthest from the landlord.

Without dwelling on whether his unit was far from or close to the landlord's, Gu Mian headed towards Section 3, with Qing Huan hurrying to keep up.

Perhaps due to his poor sleep the previous night, Qing Huan was panting heavily by the time they reached the fourth floor, repeatedly drawing Gu Mian's attention.

"Bro," he patted Qing Huan's shoulder, "why are you so out of shape?"

Qing Huan looked up at him in surprise. "Doctor, you're in great shape! Carrying such a big guitar on your back and you're not even winded after four flights of stairs?"

Of course, I am. I'm carrying a chainsaw. If I weren't in good shape, my corpse would probably be rotting somewhere unknown by now.

Qing Huan straightened up and continued climbing. "I haven't exercised much since starting college. Classrooms are mostly on the first or second floor, and even walking from the dorm to the school gate to pick up a package tires me out. Besides, there are elevators everywhere now; I haven't really exercised in ages."

The physical fitness of Earthlings is truly precarious, Gu Mian thought.

After considerable effort, Gu Mian got Qing Huan to the fifth floor. Gu Mian was about to knock on the east-side door, but before he could raise his hand, the door of the apartment opposite the landlord's was pulled open from the inside with a SQUEAK.

They both turned to look.

At that moment, the door behind them opened a crack. Half a woman's face appeared in the gap; the light was dim, making it hard to see her clearly.

The woman behind that door stared at them and asked, her tone somewhat unnatural, "Who are you...?"

Gu Mian looked at her. "I've also rented an apartment here. I have a few questions for the landlord. And you are?"

But the woman showed no interest in conversing. She just uttered a cold "Oh," and then SLAM! The door was shut.

Qing Huan leaned in mysteriously. "Based on my years of reading supernatural novels, there's definitely something wrong with that woman!"

So this is what Chinese literature students do in their spare time? Gu Mian mused.

Without further delay, Gu Mian knocked on the landlord's door.

After a few seconds, a sound came from within. They heard someone slowly approach the door and then pull it open a crack.

A wrinkled face appeared from behind the door. The landlord was an elderly woman, a granny with snow-white hair—not a muddled, grayish-white, but a pure, translucent white without a hint of impurity.

She was neatly dressed, wore glasses, and held a yellowed newspaper in her hand.

"Xiao Gu!" Seeing Gu Mian, she warmly pulled the door fully open and ushered him in. "What brings you here?"

The instance had assigned identities to everyone, though it hadn't provided them with the specific details.

Clearly, the landlord recognized Gu Mian, but Gu Mian didn't recognize her, so he had to play along.

He sat on the sofa, offering a strained smile. "Well, it's like this. For the past couple of days, I've felt that something isn't quite right with my apartment, so I came to ask you about it."

"Not right?" The landlord pushed up the glasses that had slipped down her nose, looking surprised. "What's not right about it?"

Gu Mian looked at her. "There are strange knocking sounds at night."

"Strange knocking sounds?" The landlord slowly repeated the words, her expression initially tinged with doubt. Then, as if suddenly recalling something, her face changed dramatically.