

Collapse 521

Chapter 521 The Horse Hunter in the Old World_1

Xiao Qiao was taken aback.

This surprise was even visible on Yao Zhai's face, a man usually so stingy with his expressions.

All first-place winners were unable to leave the instance—

Xiao Qiao acted quickly, and soon the other members of the cheating group learned this news.

Fatty saw the message first. Like Xiao Qiao, he was stunned.

If the mechanism of the 'Metamorphosis' instance has always been like this... then this instance must have devoured a good number of players... he thought to himself. Where have all the players who were left behind in this instance gone?

The realization that this game had been quietly devouring Earth's players from the very beginning sent shivers down Fatty's spine and made his scalp tingle.

Though it claimed to be for human evolution, it clearly wasn't. So, what was the purpose of this game? Was it related to Gu Mian's identity? Could it be a conspiracy orchestrated by other worlds...?

Regardless, he was most worried about Gu Mian.

The instance would retain the top-ranked player.

But it was impossible for Gu Mian to stay here forever.

The collision of these two contradictory facts would ultimately lead to an outcome that everyone would love to see.

Fatty had experienced this outcome countless times... He could almost imagine what would happen soon.

Hmm... thinking about it carefully, it is indeed something delightful.

As he thought about it, he grew worried.

They now knew that different instances might come from the same world. This particular instance was situated in the Old World. Furthermore, these 'Metamorphosis' instances drew significant attention from the Old World. It could be said that Gu Mian had now become a celebrity there, and no one would pass up a chance to cause him trouble.

If anything happened to this 'Metamorphosis' instance, the entire Old World would know Gu Mian was responsible...

If they tried to enter other instances in the Old World afterward, they would instantly be recognized, like rats crossing the street, with everyone pointing and shouting at them.

He didn't know if the instance would help them erase the NPCs' memories... But no matter how I think about it, the instance wouldn't be that kind.

So Fatty fell into deep worry. At this point, even the woman under his bed didn't seem so scary. He was seriously contemplating what to do if they ever had to enter the Old World again.

The most convenient solution for now was for this instance, along with the Old World, to effectively cease to exist for them, so they would never interact again. But Fatty dared not let himself think that way.

The Old World was, after all, a major world within the game. If anything truly disastrous happened to it, the global game would inevitably suffer significant turbulence, and turbulence in the game could clearly affect the real world.

During the Lantern Festival event, Gu Mian had wrecked dozens of instances. After that, extreme cold and rampant plagues had followed, and some game instances had also undergone changes. If the Old World suffered a similar fate this time, Earth's environment could become even more dangerously bizarre.

Gu Mian, being a member of the college entrance exam cheating group, was, of course, also aware of the special condition affecting first-place winners.

At that moment, Gu Mian also understood why the cameraman had worn that smug, anticipatory expression.

He was waiting—waiting to reveal the cruel truth only after the guests had fully experienced this world's malice.

You think you can leave this world once the mission is over. Even if you don't want to stay another second, you still carefully endure the malice and nausea here because you cling to a thought: as long as I endure, I can leave. As long as I endure, everything here will have nothing to do with me in the future.

And when you learn that you can't leave, you'll break down and question everything. That painful expression is precisely what the audience loves to see.

Especially when you find out that only you will be left behind. All the other players will leave after completing the mission. Even those who fail the mission can escape this world by suicide.

At that point, this disgusting world will contain only you. Everyone else will have moved on, leaving you alone to endure everything in this malicious world, to bear decades of manipulation and humiliation.

You'll feel loneliness, anger, even a strong sense of betrayal... — of course, none of this had anything to do with Gu Mian.

Upon learning this, he feigned surprise for a moment, his expression as placid as if he'd merely seen a ghost crawl out from under his bed.

But there was something worth thinking about.

"But if that's the case..." The cameraman in front suddenly heard the guest behind him muttering to himself. He perked up his ears to listen carefully.

Gu Mian stroked his chin in thought. So, they use the inability to ever return to the real world to provoke the first-place winner's emotions. This implies the production team knows a real world exists beyond the Old World. They also know their own world is utterly disgusting, which is why the first-place winner would break down upon learning they have to stay.

And judging by the cameraman's expression, he seems absolutely certain the first-place winner will have a hysterical breakdown upon learning they have to stay. It's as if... he knows just how vast the difference is between this place and the real world, as if he too has experienced a beautiful world.

"I say..."

The cameraman, ears pricked, suddenly felt a hand on his shoulder. Then he heard Gu Mian's voice near his ear, as if he wanted to say something.

Warily, he tried to shrug his shoulder to create some distance. But before he could move much, the eerie voice sounded again: "Which season's first-place winner were you?"

Hearing this, the cameraman staggered, his scalp prickling!

A wave of fear washed over him, making his hair stand on end.

The camera slipped from his grasp with a THUD, hitting the ground. The cameraman couldn't feel his legs; they seemed to have turned into noodles. After a few dazed seconds, he collapsed to the ground and rigidly lifted his head to look at the person before him.

"Who... who are you?"

The audience had been eagerly awaiting the sight of the first-place winner hysterically shouting, "I don't believe it!" Instead, before the first-place winner even reacted, their cameraman collapsed to the floor as if he'd wet his pants. The fallen camera offered a view of the guest's tall lower body and half of the cameraman's back as he sat on the ground.

"What's wrong with him?" The director's team, constantly monitoring each guest's feed, had also noticed the anomaly on Gu Mian's side. They were now furiously making a call, apparently to the cameraman responsible for filming Gu Mian.

Gu Mian heard a phone ringing in his pocket.

Ah, yes. While the cameraman had been showing him the picture of the covered rice, Gu Mian had deftly pocketed the man's phone.

Perhaps they'd forgotten to switch the feed, as the program's broadcast remained fixed on Gu Mian. Due to the camera angle, Fatty could only see Gu Mian's lower half.

He watched as a hand reached into a pocket and pulled out a phone sturdy enough to crack walnuts.

Then, a cheerful "Hello?" drifted from the screen.

And so, the production team, who had been intent on provoking the guest into displaying a pained expression, finally came face-to-face—or rather, voice-to-voice—with Gu Mian, who was utterly ignoring their script and stubbornly refusing to yield.

Chapter 522 Rising From Severe Illness_1

Hearing the cheerful voice coming from the other end of the mobile phone, the directorial team was taken aback for a moment before quickly realizing. "Did you steal his phone?"

"I wouldn't exactly call it stealing," Gu Mian replied as he glanced at the cameraman who had sprawled to one side, then continued candidly, "I just took it. If you want to call it theft, then go ahead."

The directorial team hadn't called to discuss the semantics of 'pilfering' versus 'snatching' with Gu Mian. They wanted to confirm with the cameraman what had happened.

Gu Mian heard the person on the other end of the phone demanding, "Give him back his phone."

The tone of the directive was as though Gu Mian's entire clan for nine generations would be executed if he didn't comply.

However, Gu Mian wasn't one to follow orders blindly, and besides, he didn't have nine generations of kin to be punished. If the production team actually managed to find them, Gu Mian might even thank them.

The television screen was still focused on Gu Mian. Fatty, who had been watching Gu Mian's every move, saw him pause on screen before a theatrically enunciated "No!" was heard.

Fatty couldn't hear what was said from the other end of the phone. He just stared curiously at Gu Mian's legs on the screen. "It's rare to hear the Doctor speak in such a repulsive tone."

The directorial team was clearly stunned by Gu Mian's theatrically enunciated "No!"

After a brief pause, a few seconds later, a voice came through again. "You should know that your current actions violate the program's rules. According to the rules, we can now..."

"Throw me into a manure pit?" Gu Mian recalled Su Xiaocha's ordeal. "I suggest you save such plans for when you've actually caught me."

So, you think you'll catch me? The directorial team processed this implication for a moment, then asked in astonishment, "What are you trying to do? Are you planning to run?"

The program had filmed many episodes, and while there had been uncooperative guests, no one had ever actually tried to run away.

And this was practically announcing his escape to the production team and the audience, almost shouting the words, "I'm going to run away!"

Previous guests were all game players whose task was to cooperate with the production team to complete the filming; otherwise, they couldn't leave this place.

That's why no matter how oppressed and frustrated they felt in this instance, they never thought of running away.

If I don't cooperate, I'll be stuck in this damn place forever. This was the thought process of most players. Hence, they would grit their teeth and cooperate with the production team, always behaving and never harboring any rebellious intentions.

"Whether I violate the rules or not, I'll end up stuck in this damn place anyway," Gu Mian said, clutching the phone. "I already know this. I was cooperative before because I thought I could complete the mission by going with the flow. Now that you're telling me I can't leave no matter what, there's no need for me to pretend to be a docile sheep anymore."

"Ha, I didn't expect you to know. Since you already know, don't you think you're being a bit too arrogant right now?"

Veins bulged on the director's forehead, and his knuckles turned white as he gripped his phone. "Acting so arrogantly now, you'll probably suffer quite a bit in the days to come," he finished with a dry chuckle.

But this guest clearly wasn't buying it.

All they could see on their screen was Gu Mian, with a sneer, kicking over the camera. The lens tumbled a few times before the screen went completely black. Evidently, the camera had gloriously sacrificed itself due to that kick.

Then, the director heard the voice from the still-connected call. "I don't know if I have a future, but you definitely don't."

The director frowned. "What does that mean?"

But the other party didn't answer; the call was abruptly disconnected.

In the studio, everyone stared awkwardly at the blackened screen, their expressions strange.

The man had run.

But they were certain he wouldn't get far. He was just an isolated stranger in a foreign land; he'd soon be discovered, reported, and then dejectedly dragged back here. Then, he would be publicly punished in front of all the viewers.

However, the current situation was already quite embarrassing. The most popular guest's blatant escape had infuriated many viewers, so they had to get him back as soon as possible.

The director, holding the disconnected phone, remained silent for a moment. Then, he stared intently at the screen and ordered in a low voice, "Find him! I want him found within the day!"

"And keep a close watch on the remaining few! Don't let them run away too!"

Gu Mian's actions were truly going to bring trouble upon others.

The last image Fatty saw of Gu Mian was the sole of his shoe, as the mud-stained shoe kicked towards the camera, forcefully turning the television screen black.

Fatty burst out laughing; this was a rather serious broadcasting accident!

The production team evidently realized this too. Within a few seconds, the feed switched to another guest, Accompany me next year.

At this point, Accompany me next year had already circled the stinky ditch several times, picking up the schoolbags and wastepaper the children had thrown down.

Of course, those books weren't wastepaper before being thrown in, but after a bath in the foul-smelling ditch and being fished out, they were no different from trash.

Perhaps finding Accompany me next year too submissive, a few of the older children decided she wasn't interesting and turned to find new targets.

Next Year struggled to climb out of the filthy ditch, the pungent stench constantly making her want to vomit.

With Gu Mian's precedent, the production team feared the remaining guests might also cause trouble. The number of staff surrounding Next Year had now increased by half.

As soon as Next Year climbed out, she saw everyone around looking at her vigilantly, as if she might pull out a bomb at any moment and take them all down with her.

She no longer had the energy to think about what was happening. She collapsed to one side, gasping for fresh air, trying to suppress the nausea rising from her stomach.

It had not even been half a day, yet Next Year was already deeply terrified of this instance.

This was different from the other horror instances she had experienced. Although previous instances were terrifying, there was always a thrill of having escaped death after getting out. When she recalled them, she would marvel at her own resourcefulness or how horrifying the ghosts in those instances were.

But this instance was different. It seemed safe, but there wasn't a moment to breathe here. Every second, she worried if something more disgusting would happen next; every second, she worried about what new tricks the people here might devise.

It was a fear that burrowed deep into one's soul, so much so that even after leaving, just thinking about this place in the future would cause infinite disgust and humiliation to well up.

Next Year suppressed her nausea; her psychological endurance was quite strong. She feared other players might already be contemplating suicide.

I wonder how the others are doing... she thought, looking up at two staff members whispering to each other in the distance. Next Year suspected they were discussing how to deal with her next. A great sense of helplessness welled up in her heart.

She couldn't help but find her earlier concern for the other players laughable. She herself was barely hanging on, yet she still had the mind to worry about others...

Just then, a few words drifted into her ears from their direction.

"...escape...catch him..."

Escape? Upon hearing this word, Next Year frowned. She tried to make some connections but immediately shook her head. Impossible. Who would escape? If they escaped, they wouldn't be able to leave here...

If one wanted to leave this place, suicide was the most efficient method.

Just then, Next Year saw a familiar face. It was Meiren Chu, walking towards her.

There were also many more staff members around Meiren Chu. Now that the two groups had gathered, the place seemed even more crowded.

As soon as Meiren Chu arrived, he dropped a bombshell. "Someone escaped."

Someone really escaped? Next Year was dumbfounded for a moment. It took her a long while to find her voice. "Who?"

"The First," Chu Changge replied concisely.

Next Year quickly processed this. If someone ran, they definitely couldn't complete the mission. He must have suffered great humiliation and oppression. He might even be looking for a place to commit suicide to escape this miserable world.

Seemingly seeing her thoughts, Chu Changge spoke. "He ran before he had a chance to suffer any grievances. Before leaving, he snatched the cameraman's phone and kicked over the camera."

Next Year felt her face wrinkle up like a steamed bun. "This..."

Her eyebrows furrowed as she looked at the bespectacled man beside her. She knew this man never wasted words. For him to come speak to her specifically, he must have a purpose.

Next Year hesitated before inquiring, "Why are you telling me this?"

"My point is," Chu Changge adjusted his glasses, "you can run too."

A chill ran down Next Year's spine. She stiffly turned to look at the camera that was always in front of her. "You really didn't need to tell me this right in front of the camera."

Chapter 523 Suddenly Remembered that Someone Asked me for a Stamp _1 Three Months Ago

She was already struggling in this instance. And now, to top it off, this man had come to instigate her escape. And this was happening right in front of the camera.

Accompany Me Next Year tried hard to move away from this man, who was clearly up to no good.

But he took the initiative to walk away first, leaving Next Year with just the sight of his back.

He came and left so mysteriously. What's wrong with him? Next Year was utterly confused as she looked at Chu Changge's receding figure. At that moment, she noticed even more staff surrounding her, seemingly to prevent her from escaping...

As long as Fatty didn't cause trouble, he wouldn't die. Despite being safe, he was worried about Gu Mian's situation.

Fortunately, they could still communicate through the "College Entrance Exam Cheating Group."

Just now, Fatty had already spammed Gu Mian with a dozen calls, but to no avail; it seemed he was really busy.

Having no other option, Fatty decided to chat with Chu Changge.

"Brother Chu, do you think the Doctor is acting this way because he's certain this instance is doomed?"

Although Gu Mian was like a walking earthquake to an instance, causing tremors wherever he went.

But what if the earthquake malfunctioned and didn't cause any tremors in this instance? Then things would get interesting.

Fatty was quite worried that Gu Mian would be left behind. He then self-comfortingly added, "The Doctor is doing this because he's absolutely confident he can make this instance collapse."

He hadn't expected Chu Changge to see his messages instantly. But surprisingly, not long after he sent them, he received Chu Changge's reply—

"No, he just doesn't care."

Doesn't care? Doesn't care about what? Fatty started to feel puzzled.

Then he saw Chu Changge's next message arrive.

"He doesn't care where he lives. Even if he stays here, it doesn't matter."

Fatty's head started to buzz. "That won't work! Staying in the Old World is disgusting. Look how terrified the other players are..."

Know My Thoughts, who was with him, had turned pale long ago after learning about the others' ordeals. Meanwhile, Accompany Me Next Year looked like she was desperate to get out of here right now.

But based on Fatty's understanding of Gu Mian, he knew that what Chu Changge said was probably true.

Gu Mian's temperament could be euphemistically described as 'going with the flow.' He wasn't choosy about where he was.

Put more bluntly, it was "whoever provokes me, I'll make them go with the flow." He claimed not to be picky about his surroundings, but in reality, he had long since eradicated anything he found disagreeable.

As for how he got rid of them, that was a matter for another time...

Thinking of this, Fatty started to panic. He wasn't panicking about the possibility of the production team being unexpectedly eradicated, but about something else—

If the Doctor really decides to stay here... does that mean we've been abandoned by him? I can't believe the Doctor is so heartless, abandoning us just like that...

As he thought, he pursed his lips and began to imagine life without Gu Mian.

The Doctor who mistook toilet cleaner for laundry detergent would be gone.

The Doctor who poured laundry powder into the pot would be gone.

The Doctor who...

Gu Mian quietly watched Fatty expose his shortcomings in the cheat group chat using a series of parallelisms. If this continued, Fatty would probably start using idioms like "abandoning wife and children" or "leaving behind widows and orphans."

He couldn't bear it anymore and finally typed two words into the chat box: "Shut up."

Fatty's beautiful series of parallelisms came to an abrupt end.

The sky had already darkened amid the chaos Gu Mian had stirred up, making it an ideal time for people to clock off work.

However, once the Metamorphosis show began, it was recorded around the clock. Even when night fell, the cameras had to follow the guests, making it the most "realistic" reality show in the Old World.

Now, besides filming, the production team had an additional task: to catch the runaway champion and bring him back.

At the same time, they had to prevent the remaining guests from escaping.

Judging from the conversation between the male and female guests in front of the camera earlier today, it seemed the guests for this season were no pushovers.

They had even discussed escaping right in front of the camera! The director had almost started cursing at that moment.

Accompany Me Next Year, who had been on edge all day, finally got a chance to rest. When she returned to the small thatched cottage where they could rest, none of the others had come back yet.

She knew that the champion had already fled, but the other two were also missing.

It's rest time now. Why haven't they come back yet?

Accompany Me Next Year felt a little uneasy. She had figured out during the day that this program was just to watch them make fools of themselves. Those two were probably still being tormented.

But why did they let me come back?

The cameraman in the corner of the room aimed his camera right at her, not missing a single detail of her expression.

Looking at the several dark lenses in the room, like black holes, Accompany Me Next Year's sense of panic deepened. She even remembered what Meiren Chu had said to her during the day.

Someone escaped. I want to escape too.

I have no idea how long this program will last. If it's for a month, I probably won't make it. This place is truly disgusting.

Someone is always watching you. You never know what nauseating treatment you'll receive next. You have to be cautious all the time, always worried about what's going to happen.

If I live like this for a while, even if I get out of this instance, I might become neurotic!

I want to escape! Accompany Me Next Year was jolted. The thought of escape grew stronger and stronger.

But looking at the omnipresent cameras, she knew she couldn't run, nor should she.

I really envy the person who ran away...

The sky was completely dark outside, and the other two still showed no signs of returning.

Accompany Me Next Year waited in the damp room for a long time, but they didn't turn up. By now, it was pitch black outside the window. An intense sleepiness kept washing over her. She managed to stay alert initially, but the day had taken a heavy toll, and her stomach was empty. Inevitably, she began to doze off.

She drifted in and out of sleep. In this half-dreaming, half-awake state, she suddenly had a strange feeling.

She instantly woke up fully and looked towards the source of the strange feeling. A few people were standing by the window, staring at her.

Accompany Me Next Year's hair stood on end.

It wasn't the kind of despair one felt when being stared at by a ghost.

They were clearly villagers, normal people.

But their gazes...

Accompany Me Next Year looked towards the window, her eyes adjusting to the dim light in the room. They were leaning on the windowsill, craning their necks, their heads almost entirely inside. When they saw she was awake, they made a "HEHE" sound.

"You sleep. We'll just watch, just watch."

With that, several pairs of eyes were glued to her.

Under these disgusting gazes, Accompany Me Next Year took a deep breath. I really want to leave this place! I can't stand to stay here one more minute!

But if I want to leave, I have to endure.

Endure.

Those gazes brazenly scanned her from top to bottom. Accompany Me Next Year clenched her fists but didn't dare make a sound. Here, she could only endure the humiliation. They wanted her to be humiliated, to willingly accept humiliation.

All players were like this. They could only be like this.

Just as she was desperately suppressing her emotions, she suddenly noticed an additional figure by the window.

Has someone new come to watch?

Accompany Me Next Year clenched her teeth and looked towards the window, only to suddenly see a familiar face.

The newcomer was standing behind those people, craning his neck curiously as if trying to see what the people in front were looking at.

Accompany Me Next Year's expression instantly contorted in revulsion. Why is he here?!

The people by the window had obviously noticed the movement behind them. Their gazes shifted from Accompany Me Next Year to the figure behind them, where they saw a white lab coat and a guitar case.

Their faces stiffened.

Gu Mian waved enthusiastically at them, "You guys continue. I'm just passing by to take a look, just looking."

Chapter 524 The Cat-Like Boy, Gu BengBeng_1

The viewers never expected that after Gu Mian kicked over his own camera, he would appear in someone else's frame.

The moment they recognized Gu Mian, they subconsciously assumed he had been brought back by the program crew.

But after witnessing Gu Mian land a punch straight to a man's jaw, dislocating it, the viewers gradually realized that he most likely returned on his own.

Had he returned just to dislocate someone's jaw?

Gu Mian initially hadn't planned to do anything. Unexpectedly, as soon as the men saw him, they reached out towards him. Had they added the line, "Come keep your lord and master company," they would have seemed like a gang of vicious thugs intent on kidnapping innocent women.

Naturally, Gu Mian wouldn't allow himself to be kidnapped. He immediately extended his own fist of justice.

The people in this village could only bully the old, weak, sick, and disabled. They surely couldn't defeat someone like Gu Mian, who had been undergoing extreme sports training since birth. In no time, the few of them were knocked to the ground.

Gu Mian contemptuously kicked at the people on the ground, clearing a space for him to stand. He then leaned over to look inside through the window, only to find Accompany me next year with an expression as though she had seen a ghost.

He rotated his neck to scan the surroundings. Not finding Chu Changge, he instead spotted a few cameramen in a corner of the room.

At that moment, their expressions were not much different from Accompany me next year's—they all looked as if they had seen a ghost.

"Ah," Gu Mian exclaimed in surprise, "I didn't notice you guys just now."

Immediately, he climbed in through the window and, one by one, kicked over their cameras.

Several cameramen tried to gang up on Gu Mian, but when a huge chainsaw was revealed, they all fell silent. The night became quiet, punctuated only by occasional screams.

Having swiftly dealt with the group of cameramen, Gu Mian looked at Accompany me next year, who still had a strange expression on her face. "Where are the other two?"

Accompany me next year quickly replied, glancing at the cameramen lying neatly on the floor, "They didn't come back today."

Gu Mian remembered that Chu Changge was assigned cleaning duties. This run-down village wasn't small; if it needed cleaning, it was certainly enough work to wear someone out.

Thinking back to Su Xiaocha's experience, could Chu Changge now be forced to clean latrines?

"That being said," Gu Mian took a step back, distancing himself from Accompany me next year. "Why do you smell so bad?"

Accompany me next year had spent the day wading around in a stinking ditch and hadn't changed her clothes. The program crew probably didn't let her change into clean clothes just to laugh at them.

A hint of envy was discernible in her glance towards Gu Mian. "Of course you wouldn't understand our hardships since you ran away before you could experience them..."

It wasn't that Gu Mian was unaware of everyone's suffering. He remembered Su Xiaocha's ordeal with the "Curry Rice" quite clearly.

"I'm not wasting any more time talking to you. I need to find the others. See you later." Saying this, Gu Mian turned towards the door. The cameramen had just filmed him, so it wouldn't be long before the program crew arrived with a large group to capture him.

Gu Mian worried that if an entire company of people were to arrive, he might be crushed.

At this moment, Accompany me next year, who was behind him, suddenly spoke up, "Aren't you afraid that once you run away, you won't be able to get out? Or are you prepared to commit suicide?"

Gu Mian's eyebrows twitched. Commit suicide? What a joke! If I died by suicide, I'd really be dead.

Accompany me next year didn't know the rule that the first-place winner of each previous term would be kept in this instance. As Gu Mian headed towards the door, he explained to her, "According to reliable information, this instance keeps the champion of each term in this world. Suicide won't let you leave either."

By now, he had opened the door. The night breeze slowly blew into the room from outside. The thatch on the eaves swayed, making a rustling sound.

In the dim night, Accompany me next year's eyes widened. "How is that possible!"

She had wholeheartedly believed in the game's mechanics; the rules had explicitly stated that death within an instance had no connection to reality! It was never mentioned that an instance could detain players! At the very least, all the instances she had previously experienced strictly adhered to these two rules.

After hearing what Gu Mian had to say, the faint glimmer of hope in her heart dimmed somewhat.

Gu Mian stepped outside. "Whether you believe it or not, we've already experienced an instance that devoured players, and another that disabled the death protection mechanism. We've had a really unlucky streak."

The night wind chilled Accompany me next year, and though his words were hard to believe, she instinctively felt he wasn't lying.

This bizarre global game had been shrouded in mystery from the start. She had a hunch that it wouldn't be long before this secret would be discovered by more players.

If more and more instances were to cancel their protection mechanisms, then these instances...

Would they turn into a feast of death?

And when she thought about the terrifyingly high death rate of the instances, Accompany me next year felt a chill in her heart.

Just as Gu Mian had taken a few steps out the door, Accompany me next year's voice, somewhat hesitant, came from behind him again: "Aren't you afraid of being trapped in this world forever?"

Gu Mian turned around and met her doubtful gaze.

Accompany me next year didn't believe anyone would willingly stay in this world full of malice.

She watched as the man who had already stepped outside paused, seemingly pondering something. A few seconds later, he asked with genuine seriousness, "Why be afraid?"

His tone was genuinely earnest, without a hint of pretense.

Of course, it's fear of what might happen to you in the next second! Fear of what disgusting ideas those malicious people will come up with next!

Accompany me next year's mouth twitched violently. She felt deeply unlucky to have such an obtuse teammate. Do people this dense really exist in the world? Is he sure he didn't escape from a mental hospital?

This guy would probably ask his teammates, "Why are you running?" even if he encountered a ghost in a normal instance.

"Forget it, just run," Accompany me next year said, suddenly standing up. "Damn it, I'm running too. Let's split up."

As she spoke, she picked a longer piece from the remaining scraps of cloth and stuffed it into her pocket. "I need to find a place to hang myself while it's deep in the night and quiet. You're on your own."

In the end, the two of them went their separate ways.

Gu Mian didn't try to stop his makeshift teammate from running off to find a place to die. As he watched Accompany me next year leave, he also checked on Chu Changge's whereabouts. He learned that Chu Changge was currently pinned down by a box of rats.

"Rat torture: you put rats in a box open at one end. Then, you secure the open end against the person's abdomen. Next, you heat the top of the box, raising the temperature inside. To escape the heat, the rats will continuously dig downwards, burrowing holes into the person and entering their body. Most people are still alive when the rats burrow in, able to clearly feel how the rats move through their intestines," Chu Changge narrated, watching the rats in the transparent glass box on his own body.

A short distance away, a few children were starting a fire with dry twigs. "This guy is so stoic. Do you think he'll scream in pain later?"

"If he screams loud enough, we'll let him go. Anyway, they'll only dig for a bit; it won't kill him. Let's see how miserably he screams!"

The scene was filled with cameramen, their lenses mostly focused on the rats in the transparent box.

Reading the messages in the cheat group, Gu Mian sucked in a sharp breath. He typed back, "Sounds pretty terrifying. Don't worry, I'll go eat those rats in a bit."

Chapter 525 Really normal, his mother opened the door normally and got home normally_1

When Gu Mian saw Chu Changge again, Chu Changge was tied to a bench, thoroughly bound, with a glass box pressed on top of him.

Nearby, a teenager was thrusting a torch he had struggled to light towards the box. If it weren't for the conspicuous flames in the dark, Gu Mian would have had a hard time finding this location.

The rats in the box were already restless, their sharp claws scratching at Chu Changge's clothes.

Just as the teenager was gleefully extending the torch, he suddenly felt his hand meet some resistance, preventing him from stretching it out any further.

He turned around, annoyed, to see what was happening. To his surprise, he saw a somewhat dirty white hem.

The teenager looked up, following the hem as it billowed in the breeze, and saw a cheerful, smiling face. He recognized this face.

The previously unhappy teenager immediately perked up upon seeing this face and no longer cared about the torch in his hand. "Haha, you actually ran all the way here!"

Gu Mian's current status within the instance was no different from that of a wanted criminal. Both the audience and the production crew were itching to catch him and bring him to justice on the spot.

Therefore, upon seeing Gu Mian's face, the teenager's face lit up with genuine joy. "He's here! Quick, grab him!"

But he soon saw the cameramen lying all over the ground behind Gu Mian, and his companions huddled together in a corner, trembling, looking too scared to even try to run.

At that moment, a grey-haired youth of unknown origin was gently tying up the hands and feet of the cameramen on the ground with strips torn from some tattered clothing. When tying the knots, he even carefully fashioned them into bows. As for these tattered cloth strips, they were from the rope Gu Mian had casually swiped from Accompany me next year, who had intended to use it for hanging. This had forced Accompany me next year to tearfully pick out a new rope.

Before entering 'Metamorphosis', Gu Mian had flattened his older brother and stuffed him into his pocket. After staying in the pocket for a day, his brother was finally let out by Gu Mian to get some air.

Gu Mian casually took the torch from the teenager's hand, tossed it aside, and gently lifted him by the collar. "Kids shouldn't play with fire, you know."

Chu Changge silently watched the glass box still pressing down on him. The rats were still clawing at his clothes. This doesn't seem to be about playing with fire anymore, he thought.

The teenager glared maliciously at Gu Mian. "Let me go!"

He reached out to scratch Gu Mian's face, but Gu Mian unexpectedly loosened his grip, causing the teenager to fall flat on his face. The teenager lifted his head, his eyes filled with venomous hatred. "Just you wait! When they catch you, you're finished! You'll get what's coming to you!"

He was still waiting for the production crew to come and capture Gu Mian.

Gu Mian squatted down, pushed the teenager's head back into the damp soil, and sighed while forcefully grinding it. "Ah, such nostalgia. About half a year ago, I met a group of kids just like you. Unfortunately, their end wasn't very peaceful."

With his face pressed into the dirt, the teenager couldn't make a sound. He could only listen to Gu Mian sighing above him. "Afterward, I often wished they hadn't gone. But luckily, I've met you all today. This allows me to fulfill a wish I've harbored for a very long time..."

Hearing this, the teenager suddenly felt a prickling numbness on his back. Though the tone was gentle and the words kind, they sent a profound chill through him.

Just then, he felt his hands being tied behind his back.

The man above him was still muttering to himself, "They'll probably struggle a lot later. I need to tie them up really tight..."

Hearing this, the teenager's hair stood on end. What is he planning to do?!

At this point, Gu Mian shifted his gaze to Chu Changge.

Fortunately, these people had tied Chu Changge up very tightly. So, Gu Mian cheerfully pulled some ropes off him to use.

Chu Changge: "..."

With his older brother's help, the group of kids was quickly tied together.

As they watched in terror, Gu Mian approached, carrying the glass box full of rats... What was he going to do?!

Soon, these children would find out.

The dark night filled with waves of piercing screams. The word "no" could be heard most often, screamed so heart-wrenchingly it sounded as if their throats were tearing.

But then, the voices vanished one by one, and before long, the night returned to silence.

After finishing everything, Gu Mian picked up an undamaged camera from the damp earth, its lens aimed directly at the bound people.

Their eyes were bloodshot, eyeballs practically bulging, their terror palpable.

They couldn't scream because Gu Mian had sealed their mouths tightly with medical tape. However, a long, black-furred tail could be seen dangling from each of their mouths.

These tails writhed constantly, clearly indicating their owners were still very much alive.

Gu Mian stroked his chin. "Although I've used tape, if they try hard to burrow deeper, the tape won't hold their tails. So, you all need to bite down firmly. Otherwise, the rats will slip down your throats..."

As he said this, he seemed to recall something else. "But don't bite too hard either. If you bite the tails off, they'll still burrow inside."

The bound people stared with terrified, wide eyes.

A prickly, squirming sensation emanated from their mouths, as if rat whiskers were brushing against every part of their oral cavities.

Some had already started to gag, but they couldn't vomit.

Gu Mian paid no mind to whether they felt nauseous. "You all just experience this for a while. I have to run. If I don't leave now, your production crew will catch me."

As he spoke, he waved at the camera, called out, "Bye-bye!" and then bolted with Chu Changge and his older brother.

Liu Ruyan had never cared much for sleep. At this moment, she was watching the live broadcast of the show. On screen, the captured individuals still had rat tails, twisting and writhing, dangling from their mouths. The bound people looked like they were on the verge of fainting from shock. Staring at those tails, she sighed sincerely from her heart. He's truly not human.

「Meanwhile」

Xiao Qiao was still in the house of the players from the "You Hit Me Because of Yao Zhai!" incident. One of them, Yao Zhai, had been held by the collar by Xiao Qiao for quite some time and started to get a strange feeling. It's like I'm somewhat familiar with this female celebrity, he thought. He asked curiously, "Is your friend the top-ranked player? If so, he definitely won't be able to get out now."

As he spoke, he looked up at Xiao Qiao, only to see her staring blankly into space. Her expression reminded him of how he used to stare at the blackboard during his school days. If Xiao Qiao hadn't been staring at empty air, he would have really thought she was looking at a blackboard.

After a good while, Xiao Qiao finally seemed to register his voice and lowered her gaze to Yao Zhai.

Yao Zhai noticed some inexplicable expressions appearing on her usually stoic face. Then, he heard Xiao Qiao ask, "This instance you mentioned... is stuffing live rats into people's mouths a normal thing in it?"

Yao Zhai was tongue-tied for a moment. It took him a few seconds to find his voice. "N-no... I... The last time I entered that instance, it wasn't this... twisted."

"No," Xiao Qiao shook her head seriously. "I'm asking, is it normal for a *guest* to stuff live rats into an *NPC's* mouth?"

Normal, my ass! Yao Zhai screamed internally.

Chapter 526 Gu Mian, the Nuclear Bomb Maker _1

「Inside the instance.」

Regarding the mouse-stuffing incident.

If the villagers stuffed a mouse into a guest's mouth, the production team would undoubtedly be jubilant, and the entire national audience would be overjoyed.

But if a guest stuffed a mouse into a villager's mouth...

The production team and the audience would feel far worse than if they had eaten shit.

Liu Ruyan saw the live broadcast cut away; apparently, they didn't want the audience to endure any more filth.

Quite right, too. It's like people eagerly watching a dog fight, hoping for blood and gore, only for one of the dogs to unexpectedly leap out, bite the spectators, and then unleash all the other dogs to run amok.

Infuriating indeed.

For some reason, Liu Ruyan suddenly recalled the "No Gu Mian or Dogs Allowed" signs that had once been a bestseller in supermarkets. She still didn't know what genius had come up with that.

Besides, thinking about it, the production team didn't have many scenes left to cut to anyway.

The cameraman filming 'Accompany me next year' had long since collapsed, unable to get up, and that female guest had also vanished.

The cameraman filming Chu Changge had fared even worse; Gu Mian had beaten him half to death and tied him up in the wilderness. However, due to a shortage of mice, several cameramen were spared this particular torment.

The most unfortunate was Gu Mian's cameraman. After collapsing heavily, he had simply vanished and was now listed as a missing person.

Of the four guests in the mountainous region, the only one left to film was the cloaked Xie Bi'an.

This was the most serious broadcasting incident since 'Metamorphosis' began airing.

Three guests were missing without a trace, the director was hopping mad, and the audience was outraged, demanding that those individuals be apprehended.

Gu Mian, accustomed to being a wanted man, was currently walking along a rugged mountain path.

"What are you doing with that rope?" In the darkness, Chu Changge eyed the rope swaying in Gu Mian's hand—a piece Gu Mian had deliberately cut.

Hearing Chu Changge's question, Gu Mian connected the two ends of the rope, looped it over his head, and gestured. "Perfect for a hanging."

Chu Changge's glasses slid slightly down his nose; he immediately pushed them back up with his index finger.

Gu Mian continued, "We have a teammate who wants to hang herself, but I doubt that rope would be enough to kill her."

He swung the hemp rope in his hand as he spoke. "If we run into her again and she's unfortunate enough not to have died, we can lend her this rope. Consider it a good deed."

If you call lending someone a noose for suicide a "good deed," then I have nothing more to say. Chu Changge pushed his glasses up again.

"But I think what's more noteworthy right now is this." Gu Mian's gaze went past Chu Changge to the gray-haired young man beside him. He still wore that gentle smile, as if something delightful had occurred.

However, the mouse he held clutched in his hand probably didn't share the sentiment.

Gu Mian silently watched the rat; its tail was caught in his brother's grip, and it was struggling desperately.

"What are you holding it for?" Gu Mian looked at the plump rat.

The gray-haired young man offered no explanation, of course. To date, Gu Mian had only ever heard him utter two words: "Little Sister."

Chu Changge also glanced at the struggling rat. "Perhaps he thinks that as long as he's holding something, he won't be sent back to the CD."

Hearing this, Gu Mian glanced again at the gray-haired man. He seems to be radiating an 'I'm working hard' aura.

...

In the end, his brother wasn't slapped back into the CD by Gu Mian. Whether this ghost was out or not made little difference, so Gu Mian simply took him along for the "Old World Life and Death Escape."

Of course, the title "Old World Life and Death Escape" was Gu Mian's invention. In reality, the production team hadn't found a trace of anyone, so an "escape" couldn't very well be broadcast.

"What are your plans now?" Gu Mian heard Chu Changge's voice from beside him.

He remembered Chu Changge asking him the same question once before.

"I, of course, can't get out of here," Gu Mian mused, then raised his hand, the noose swinging. "Why don't you retreat first?"

He just needed to slip his neck into the loop, and he could retreat.

Chu Changge glanced at the rope but said nothing.

Seeing this, Gu Mian lowered his hand. "If you don't want to go, then don't."

Stroking the rough rope, he began to lay out his thoughts. "This instance is somewhat different—past instances were usually confined to some corner of a given world, never escalating to global awareness."

This place is somewhat similar to the Slaughter Game, but it's clearly not the same world.

"Actually, I have an idea," Gu Mian said. "I've discovered that the NPCs in these variety show-type instances seem to know they're NPCs and that a real world exists outside the instance."

Host Green was like that, Teacher Sweet too, and Coach Che as well.

Even driving school could arguably be called a variety show; it was quite comical, after all...

As for the Slaughter Game instance, which most closely resembled Metamorphosis, Gu Mian recalled Teacher Slaughter mentioning their awareness of people traveling between worlds. It was possible the NPCs in the Slaughter Game merely believed in parallel worlds, unaware of the real world's existence.

Setting that aside, I remember that after I wrecked the Slaughter Game instance, I never entered another instance in the Slaughter Game world again.

After all, that instance collapsed quite spectacularly. I recall seeing the ground littered with monsters before I left; the scene was like something out of an apocalyptic novel.

Thinking this, Gu Mian grew eager. "If this Metamorphosis instance is gone, does that mean we won't encounter instances from the Old World anymore?"

Chu Changge remained silent for a moment. "My thoughts align with yours. I suspect that globally-known instances like 'Slaughter Game' and 'Metamorphosis' might be core instances for their respective worlds. When such an instance is impacted, the entire world it's connected to suffers."

He continued, looking up, "If something happens to this instance, I think it will be a very long time before we see the Old World again."

But Metamorphosis was different from other instances.

The conflict between players and this instance stemmed from the entire world, unlike other instances where conflicts were between players and ghosts.

In typical instances, as long as all the ghosts are eliminated, the instance is forced into maintenance mode, whether it wants to be or not.

The taxi instance was somewhat unique: the danger stemmed from humans, not ghosts. However, if that human source of danger was itself imperiled, the instance would immediately enter maintenance.

The threats in the Slaughter Game were the audience and the monsters from the restricted zone. Later, due to Gu Mian's wild actions, the monsters broke out, and the audience became the ones in peril.

From this, we can conclude that to make an instance crumble in its final stages, one merely needs to eliminate the threat it poses to players.

But achieving that in Metamorphosis would be difficult.

The threat to players in the Metamorphosis instance originated from the entire world—from the malice of its entire population.

Currently, there seemed to be only two ways to tackle it.

The first is worldwide nuclear annihilation. Highly improbable.

The second is to propagate correct ideology, guiding the people of the Old World onto a path of harmony, friendship, kindness, and beauty.

"Hmm, let's stick to researching how to build a nuclear bomb."

Chapter 527 Today, Gūgū Almost Got Turned Into Salt and Pepper Gūgū_1

"There's no need to go that far," Chu Changge shook his head slightly. "Past experiences have shown that the instance doesn't want you to know too much. Just like the death instance, the ghost didn't get a chance to reveal much to you before the instance shut down autonomously."

He glanced at the hanging rope in Gu Mian's hand. "As long as you can find an NPC in Old World who is closely connected to the core of the instance, and grab him, the instance will most likely kick you out."

While they were exchanging words, they didn't stop walking. The village they had filmed in was situated in the mountains. By now, Gu Mian and Chu Changge had already left the village and were trekking along a muddy mountain road.

The moon was exceptionally large tonight, so they didn't need to use a flashlight to see the path.

While moving forward, Gu Mian began, "Actually, I've been wondering about something. We've previously discussed that this global game has two organizers. It's almost certain that Earth is one, and the Low-Dimensional World that generates the instances is the other. Judging by the ticket seller and the behavior of the instances, the Low-Dimensional World clearly doesn't want me entering them, but it can't stop me.

"Considering the confrontational relationship between the two organizers, Earth should be quite pleased I entered the instances. Earth and the Low-Dimensional World are essentially playing tug-of-war with me."

Gu Mian could vividly imagine the scene—

Earth, extending a hand: "Look, your Gu Mian."

The Low-Dimensional World, pushing back: "No, **this** is **your** Gu Mian."

Thinking about this scenario, Gu Mian's brain stalled for a moment. I get that I have bad luck, but am I really such an anomaly?

It's as if some disaster is bound to happen simply because I exist.

As if guessing Gu Mian's thoughts, Chu Changge adjusted his glasses. "It seems you're not very clear about your own significance. The facts prove that your existence causes significant losses. Let's start with the financial damages. According to incomplete statistics, due to your presence, four supermarkets, three restaurants, two amusement parks, three pesticide shops, one orphanage, and one shroud shop have all gone out of business...

"That's not to mention other financial setbacks, including four buses you've ridden, a glass skywalk you've crossed, fifteen elevators you've used, and thirty-eight stocks you've invested in..."

Listening to Chu Changge recite the list like an obituary, Gu Mian chuckled. "It's thoughtful of you to remember all that."

Chu Changge calmly looked at Gu Mian. "I'm merely stating the facts."

This was just a fraction of the losses Gu Mian had caused on Earth. His misdeeds within the instances were even more numerous.

Countless NPCs and ghosts had suffered immensely, and before he left, he'd always make sure the instance had to undergo a period of (peaceful) recuperation.

He was tirelessly destructive.

Gu Mian began to question his existence.

Chu Changge continued, "Given this, it's quite understandable why the instance would prevent you from accessing its core."

Besides, deciphering the background lore of the instance worlds was never the primary objective of the global game.

All other global players could only focus their energy on outwitting and battling ghosts, while Gu Mian had long since veered off course, intent on unraveling the secrets of the instance worlds.

After that lengthy digression, Gu Mian finally returned to the main topic. "So, to leave this world now, we don't need to build a nuclear bomb. We just need to find a key NPC and have a 'friendly chat' with them."

Most people in this world were unaware they existed in a Low-Dimensional World, but it was clear that someone on the production team knew something.

Chu Changge suddenly spoke up, "Speaking of which, the cameraman who's been following you might know something."

"Oh, him," Gu Mian rubbed his chin. "I didn't expect him to be the top player from previous seasons. He must have entered this instance a very long time ago; he doesn't even recognize the name 'Gu Mian'."

After all, his name had been on the wanted list for a long time.

What surprised Gu Mian was that this cameraman had managed to survive so well in Old World. Gu Mian knew firsthand how malicious the NPCs here were towards players. This cameraman must have endured incredible hardship to secure a place for himself.

No player capable of achieving top popularity would be a pushover.

And this man had been able to cast aside all dignity, desperately clinging to life. His willpower was undeniably formidable.

Gu Mian believed that if this man hadn't perished in Old World, he would surely be living a decent life now.

Chu Changge shook his head slightly. "The moment the next batch of players entered this instance, he could no longer be considered a player."

Gu Mian still remembered one rule of this global game: each instance can only accommodate one batch of players at a time.

"Hmm," Gu Mian nodded. "After I exposed his identity, he dropped the disguise."

"Can I go back?" Gu Mian still remembered the cameraman's voice at that moment—lost, yet tinged with an almost imperceptible hope.

It seemed he knew the hope was slim, yet he clung to that last shred of longing.

It was as if, should Gu Mian simply say "yes," he could truly return to the home he yearned for.

This sliver of longing was the hope that had driven him to survive until now. I must stay alive, he must have thought. What if, one day, there's a chance to leave? What if?

But this wasn't something Gu Mian could decide. Even if the instance collapsed, only active players could leave.

The cameraman was very smart; he had long known he was no longer a "player."

"So, how did you respond?" Chu Changge asked.

"I told him the truth." Gu Mian looked up at the dusky sky, where the bright moon hung, seemingly bestowing all its light upon this world.

"You can't go back."

Gu Mian didn't know how many players ended up trapped like him.

Most likely couldn't endure the brutality of this malevolent world and had perished. Only this one had struggled on, a silent testament to his tragic and arduous existence.

This offered a glimpse into just how many players had died in this wretched world.

"Tell me, why would such a world attach so much importance to me? Enough to send Liu Ruyan to ensure my survival." Of course, Liu Ruyan seemed to have different intentions than this world's will; she was rather fond of the gas canister in Gu Mian's home and had probably genuinely hoped to see Gu Mian explode.

Gu Mian looked up at the sky. "Is it because my survival brings some benefit to this place?"

Benefiting this disgusting world... the thought itself is quite revolting.

Chu Changge fell silent.

"If that's the case..." Gu Mian suddenly produced the noose.

Chu Changge looked up. "What are you doing?"

Gu Mian quickly looped the rope around his neck, tilted his head back, and yelled, "If you don't send me out of here, I'll die right in front of you!"

Chu Changge: "..."

Brother: "..."

Of course, nothing happened.

Gu Mian chuckled. "Just testing, just testing."

Chu Changge walked past him, his expression impassive. "Once you're done with your theatrics, let's go."

Gu Mian decided to find the production team first and give them a thorough beating. If that didn't yield any results, he would try to see the outside world. Of course, Gu Mian suspected the instance wouldn't want him to see the outside world.

Perhaps he'd be teleported out while he was in the middle of torturing the director.

Mulling this over, Gu Mian marched forward with determination. "We'll sneak back in. They'll never expect it."

Meanwhile, the production team was in a frenzy. Their "beloved" top player had not only allowed other guests to escape but had also thoroughly embarrassed the entire show.

The children who had almost eaten the rat had been rescued and now seemed on the verge of shock.

The director furiously declared that he would definitely recapture Gu Mian.

Fatty lay nervously on his bed, hands clasped.

The male host had angrily switched off the TV when the rat-eating scene aired, and Fatty didn't dare go and turn it back on.

He hadn't replied to queries in the cheat group chat asking for Gu Mian's whereabouts.

Fatty could only pray that the Doctor wouldn't be caught.

The lady of the house was hidden under his bed, apparently monitoring him, but Fatty could only pretend to be oblivious.

Chapter 528 Those who are still reading novels at this point definitely do not have a partner_1

The NPCs of the Old World harbored great malice towards the players. Among these players, their malice towards Gu Mian was particularly strong. To put it figuratively, it was as if Gu Mian had murdered their parents. No, according to Liu Ruyan, even if their parents had been killed, their resentment towards Gu Mian wouldn't have reached such an intense level. Therefore, Gu Mian's initial plan to "negotiate amicably" was doomed from the start.

By the time the two humans and one ghost reached the vicinity of the production crew, it was already five in the morning, and the sky was beginning to brighten. Everyone in the crew, except for a few cameramen, was searching for the "lost child" Gu Mian, so there weren't many people around the crew's area. Gu Mian and the others easily sneaked into the director's room. The director lived in the best house in this rundown village, and all the live broadcast equipment was located here. It was a two-story concrete building, painted white on the outside, appearing particularly dazzling in the dawn light.

Few people remained in the two-story building. Gu Mian didn't even need to act; the scattered individuals were quickly dealt with by his elusive brother, who covered their mouths and dragged them aside. The brother had been a formidable fighter when alive and was even more so in death. Watching this, Gu Mian idly wished he could try dying too, just to see if he could then spy on Fatty taking a bath.

Gu Mian easily grabbed the director. Right up until his collar was seized, the director had been angrily cursing the escaped Gu Mian. Only when he felt his collar tighten and turned around did he see the very person he'd been cursing standing behind him.

The rope they had saved for the coming year came in handy. Gu Mian made a noose with the rope, hung it from the ceiling fan, and then put the director's head into it. The brother dutifully held the director's body from below to prevent him from actually hanging himself.

"Put me down!" The director struggled in the noose but couldn't break free.

Gu Mian sat on a nearby chair, his back straight, "Mr. Director, what are your thoughts on our sudden return?"

The director thrashed about violently, naturally unable to answer such irrelevant questions.

The brother's grey hair trembled with the director's struggles. He looked up at the man, slightly loosening his grip. The noose tightened, and the director's eyes rolled back. The brother pushed him up again, and the director, gasping, coughed violently before managing a deep breath.

Gu Mian didn't waste any more words. He stood up, walked under the fan, and poked the director's slightly inflated belly with his finger, "You know we aren't from this world, so you must know something else." As he spoke, he pressed a pit into the soft belly with more force, "When I carried Mr. Green out, a ticket seller mentioned the word 'landing' to him. I guessed then that a large number of NPCs would arrive in reality. Now I'm sure that the instance is in a Low-Dimensional World, which means the Low-Dimensional World is trying to erode the High-Dimensional World... perhaps this is why the global game came to Earth."

"Let's put that aside for now," Gu Mian looked up at the director. "So, do you know how the Low-Dimensional World plans to 'land'? What's the connection between the global game and the Low-Dimensional World's erosion?"

Gu Mian saw a flicker of confusion on the director's face; he clearly didn't understand. It seemed that even the director of Metamorphosis didn't know much about the core information. Gu Mian had been prepared for this.

This was troublesome. Gu Mian and the others were deep in the mountains. If the director didn't know much, they would have to leave the mountains to find NPCs who had the information they needed. They might be ambushed by a crowd before they could even get out. After all, they were outnumbered; two fists couldn't fend off four hands.

Just then, Chu Changge suddenly spoke up, "Actually, if we can't find the key NPC, there's another way to leave. This method might be difficult in other worlds, but it's simple in this one."

What method? Gu Mian looked at Chu Changge.

Chu Changge adjusted his glasses. "The Low-Dimensional World exists through a 'medium,' just as the Second World relies on books to exist. The Old World must also rely on something."

If they destroyed the medium this world relied on, the Old World would be completely obliterated. The medium in other worlds might be hard to find, but for the Old World... The most distinctive feature of this world, wasn't it the Law Code Liu Ruyan had spoken of? The Law Code was the faith of the Old World's people. They viewed it as devout Believers viewed their gods: unchallengeable, indisputable, and inviolable. This was the most likely candidate for the medium.

"However, the medium the Old World relies on is certainly not within this world," Gu Mian stroked his chin. "The Second World is generated from books in the real world. Similarly, the Old World must be generated from something in the real world; its anchor must be in the real world."

Attacking the Law Code within the Old World might not achieve anything. The real 'Law Code' must be found in the real world to truly obliterate the Old World.

Chu Changge glanced at the director hanging in the noose. "Even if the Law Code within the Old World isn't the direct medium, it shares the same origin as its real-world counterpart. Your actions in the Low-Dimensional World can affect the real Law Code. Even if the Old World can't be destroyed instantly, this instance will certainly begin to collapse in self-preservation."

Chu Changge spoke abstractly. The director, still hanging, widened his eyes as he listened to their conversation, only gradually understanding what they were discussing.

Once he understood, the director began to struggle fiercely. "You're going to desecrate the Law Code?!"

In this world, people held the Law Code in higher regard than their own parents. It was worth mentioning that in the Old World, over a million copies of the Law Code had been printed, each one treated with the utmost respect and enshrined on altars.

Gu Mian couldn't locate the original Law Code now; he could only target those reprinted versions. The problem was, even the reprints would be hard to find at this moment.

"I saw a Law Code in the village school. It was enshrined in the centermost room on the second floor," Chu Changge said, adjusting his glasses.

So, they had a copy of the Law Code. But destroying this instance wouldn't be easy. Would the instance collapse every time a random copy of the Law Code was destroyed? That seemed absurd. Accidents always happened. Every year in this world, Law Codes were lost to fires or accidentally stained, yet the Old World persisted. The collapse of the instance would require an additional push.

Gu Mian glanced at Chu Changge. "That pen."

He was referring to the pen they had received during the Dragon Boat activity. Chu Changge understood and pulled out the [Paranormal Editor Simulator]. The pen could alter reality within its capabilities: writing 'disappear' on a bed made it vanish; inscribing 'open' on a locked door made it swing open on its own.

Using the pen to alter the Law Code was the perfect plan.

Gu Mian regarded the pen in Chu Changge's hand. "So, you'll..."

Before he could finish, Chu Changge shook his head and pressed the pen into Gu Mian's hand. "I think this kind of task will only be truly effective if you're the one to do it."

But Gu Mian knew many special items didn't work to their full potential in his hands. Whatever, he'd give it a shot—a desperate gamble. If he failed, they could just let Chu Changge try scribbling on it. Gu Mian pocketed the pen, his gaze drifting to the window as he did so.

That glance made him freeze. He looked out the window and saw that, at some point, they had been surrounded. Most were villagers with glowing green eyes, interspersed with a few staff members who had hurried back. Someone had likely realized the director was a hostage and had gathered a mob to take him down.

"Looks like reaching the school peacefully is out of the question now," Gu Mian said, watching the people slowly converging outside. "Chu Changge, you didn't bring the Spirit Car, did you?"

Chu Changge shook his head. "No."

A pity. If they had a vehicle now, this crowd wouldn't be able to stop him.

Chu Changge's voice came from the side, "But the production team's vehicle is parked downstairs."

Hearing this, Gu Mian turned to the director, still hanging in the noose. He reached into the director's pockets and, after a moment of fumbling, found a set of car keys.

"Well, that makes things easier," Gu Mian said.

Gu Mian glanced at the advancing crowd downstairs, then casually picked up a camera from the table and thrust it into his brother's arms. "Such an exciting escape from the Old World should be seen by more people. It's the only way to stimulate resonance."

The brother, having had a camera thrust into his arms, instinctively clutched it. With the brother no longer supporting him, the director hung taut by his neck, struggling desperately.

Gu Mian had no idea how to operate the live broadcast equipment, but he'd seen pigs run, even if he'd never eaten pork; he had some idea how it worked. He randomly hit a few control buttons until the broadcast switched to the camera his brother was holding.

And so, the Old World viewers who had woken up early and turned on their TVs, hoping to see if Gu Mian had been caught, were instead greeted with the sight of their director hanging from the ceiling fan, his face swollen and flushed a deep, liverish red.

Then, they saw the camera view shift, and a smiling face appeared on the screen.

The person on screen opened his mouth, his voice broadcasting, "Welcome, everyone, to the first Old World Law Code Amendment Vote!"

Chapter 529 Gugu once updated a hundred - s when extremely angry_1

The people downstairs had already shrunk into a tight circle, surging toward the entrance and up the staircase.

Big Brother steadied the shaky camera, aiming it squarely at Gu Mian, so television viewers could see what this guest had inside his guitar case.

It wasn't a guitar, but a gleaming chainsaw, so bright it could practically blind them.

The cameramen Gu Mian had beaten had already informed the production team about the chainsaw, so the staff were mentally prepared. However, when they actually saw the over-meter-long chainsaw, they were still deeply unsettled.

The show had never encountered a guest attempting to flee, let alone assault someone, so there were no weapons on hand to deal with a chainsaw.

Most of those who flooded the second floor wielded brooms and mops; the slightly better-equipped ones carried iron pitchforks or hoes. Of course, these were no match for Gu Mian's chainsaw.

In the first confrontation, the pitchfork in the hands of a man at the forefront snapped in two. Terrified, he dropped the broken weapon and scrambled aside.

Big Brother diligently thrust the camera into their faces, capturing every terrified expression. It seemed he had mastered the essence of an Old World cameraman.

Thus, the audience's screens were filled with face after face, twisted in fear.

Viewers usually relished such expressions. But today was different. Previously, only the guests' faces contorted this way; now, it was the villagers'.

Watching the contorted faces on screen, the audience grew infuriated, feeling a sense of vicarious humiliation.

Chu Changge trailed Gu Mian, holding a rusty fruit knife—a piece of junk he'd acquired during his first foray into an instance.

If this piece of junk landed true, one stab meant tetanus, and two meant meeting one's ancestors.

However, Gu Mian was convinced Chu Changge lacked the strength for that and was likely just brandishing the knife for show.

Clearly, apart from the production team, a significant number of people here were unaware Gu Mian had a chainsaw. After seeing the weapons of those in the front row instantly sawn apart, the entire second floor fell silent for a moment.

But then, they surged forward again like madmen.

The people of the Old World had been brainwashed by the Law Code. Now, fury drove them into an even greater frenzy. They screamed that they had to catch Gu Mian and ensure he died a gruesome death.

Inevitably, blood was shed.

Only when flesh and blood flew from those at the front, and severed limbs splattered onto those behind, did the enraged mob begin to sober up.

Staring blankly at the fresh blood spattered on them, they suddenly understood: this man was different from anyone they had encountered before.

Previously, they could freely insult and assault those who disobeyed the Law Code, venting their full malice upon them without restraint. This was because those individuals couldn't resist—they were incapable of resisting.

They held the power of the masses; all who passed by would join their ranks, spitting on the heads of the bound individuals alongside them.

Because this world was like that; it condoned their actions.

Such was the prevailing current; no one could resist.

One or two transgressors had tried to struggle, but the frenzied mob swiftly subdued them. Those who dared resist were met with an even greater torrent of abuse.

Over time, a conviction had solidified in their minds:

"No one can resist the Law Code. No one can resist us. Their struggles only serve as entertainment for us."

Thus, they madly lunged at Gu Mian. Perhaps they didn't believe he would actually fight back, or perhaps they were overconfident in their own strength.

Perhaps they assumed things would unfold as before—that they could suppress any resister's desperate struggles without much effort.

But reality delivered a harsh slap to their faces.

Gu Mian showed them no mercy. The first to lunge at him died horribly.

As their cherished beliefs shattered, a profound fear surged within them for the first time.

This man... he's different.

Here, none of the established rules apply! All their beliefs are collapsing!

But the man in the white coat hadn't stopped. He was charging towards them, chainsaw in hand!

Immense panic had already permeated every heart. It's unknown who screamed first in terror, followed by the sounds of people stumbling as they fled.

The first was followed by a second, and then another; one by one, people turned and fled in fear, scrambling to get away from this place as fast as possible.

Anyone knocked down in the stampeding crowd would desperately claw their way out.

Before this man, they felt a deep sense of powerlessness.

Outside the two-story building stood some elderly, weak, women, and children, waiting to see Gu Mian's expression when he was dragged out. Unexpectedly, they didn't see Gu Mian's face. Instead, the men who had rushed in to capture him came fleeing out, their faces etched with terror.

"Why are you running out?" a woman holding a child demanded unhappily, watching the men stream out. "Where is he?"

Before she received an answer, she saw a gleaming chainsaw appear in the doorway. She stared blankly, a glimmer of understanding dawning as to why the men had fled.

Her gaze traveled up from the gleaming chainsaw to the face of the top-ranked celebrity. Though spattered with some blood, it didn't mar his recognizability.

Gu Mian quickly leaped into a van parked near the entrance, with Chu Changge and Big Brother close behind.

"Which way was the school again?!" Gu Mian yelled, gunning the engine.

Chu Changge pointed ahead.

Before the surrounding onlookers could react, the van roared to life, charging towards those who had gathered to watch the spectacle.

The women and children, eyes wide with terror, turned and fled.

From the backseat, Big Brother shouldered the camera, filming "The Bang Bang Adventure."

So, when Fatty turned on the TV early in the morning, the first thing he saw was Gu Mian drifting the van out of the crowd.

The moment he switched on the TV, his mind went blank. For an instant, he almost thought Gu Mian had started hosting a variety show about Spirit Car drifting.

While filming the back of Gu Mian's head, Big Brother didn't forget to pan the camera to capture the villagers behind them.

Behind the van, the villagers were in utter disarray—a rare scene of their miserable state.

Just then, the director, who had been rescued by the villagers, suddenly rushed to a second-floor window and yelled, "Stop them! They're going to defile the Law Code!"

"Defile..." Gu Mian muttered, turning the steering wheel. "He makes it sound like we're going to use the Law Code as toilet paper, doesn't he?"

Chu Changge adjusted his glasses. "You could give it a try."

Fatty's mouth twitched as he stared at the screen. "Isn't 'defile' usually associated with beautiful young maidens? Why is the Doctor so fixated on toilet paper?"

Despite the director's outcry, no one dared to pursue them.

These people revered the Law Code far more than their own parents.

They feared the Law Code, terrified that one day they too might become transgressors.

But today, they had encountered someone far more terrifying than the Law Code they dreaded.

If he wants to defile the Law Code, let him!

Chapter 530 Bēng Bēng once angrily tore up a hundred code books in extreme anger_1

The viewers sitting before their televisions were horrified by the gory scenes displayed on their screens.

They saw Gu Mian emerge unscathed, quickly climbing into a vehicle. The camera then switched to the villagers left flailing in the chaos. The sharp contrast filled the viewers with immense anger.

Only those present at the scene could truly grasp the terror unleashed by Gu Mian. The horrific spectacle seemed somewhat diluted on the screen.

The viewers cursed the fleeing villagers as useless, their eyes glued to the back of Gu Mian's head.

At this point, the director had already darted down from the second floor, chasing madly after Gu Mian's van.

Villagers who had been too late to take refuge upstairs joined the director, armed with whatever they could find.

Word went around, somehow, that the fleeing celebrities had returned. Gu Mian, on his way, saw numerous villagers armed with weapons, rushing out from the roadside to stop him.

Of course, no one could keep up with a driver who knew how to drift.

Gu Mian easily left them behind. They gathered with the larger force already in pursuit of the van.

Through the rear-view mirror, Gu Mian observed the director following him on an old, dilapidated bicycle, pedaling like a man possessed.

Poor Big Brother, who had spent his life hidden away in some remote place and was buried in a dark well for years, had only recently been brought out by Gu Mian.

So he didn't quite understand how to operate a camera.

Big Brother accidentally zoomed in on the director's face until it filled the entire frame.

It seemed as though he didn't particularly like the director's face, so he swiveled the camera, refocusing it on someone else.

The village was small; it wouldn't take long to get from the two-story building to the school.

In a few minutes, Gu Mian could see a cluster of mud-brick houses ahead—the village school.

The teachers and students had been alerted earlier. They were now blocking the school gate, their eyes fixed on the approaching van, seemingly prepared to stop Gu Mian with their bodies.

Any ordinary individual, confronted with such determination, might have wrestled with their conscience before deciding to plow through.

But Gu Mian wasn't like everybody else.

Stepping harder on the accelerator, he laughed at the sight of the human blockade. "You think this little crowd can stop me?"

Clearly, Gu Mian's conscience had long been eaten by Fatty.

The feeble human barrier was quickly shattered by Gu Mian. The school gate, already closed, was sent flying by the vehicle's impact. It was an impoverished village, after all, and the school gate had been in disrepair for years.

Gu Mian drove directly towards the only small mud-brick building in the area.

Chu Changge, sitting in the passenger seat, unbuckled his seatbelt, "It's the room in the middle on the second floor."

Gu Mian couldn't fathom why Chu Changge, a janitor, had access to a room containing the Law Code, but now wasn't the time for probing questions.

He drove right to the base of the small mud-brick building. Due to the sudden stop, the front of the vehicle hit the mud wall, causing it to shake. Specks of dirt and dust drifted in the air.

Gu Mian quickly got out of the van and sprinted towards the building entrance.

A clamor arose behind him. Turning to look, he saw several teachers who hadn't been sent flying had already rushed in, apparently still intending to grab him.

Close behind them was the director, frantically pedaling his dilapidated bicycle; its pedals looked as if they would fall apart at any second. He was clearly desperate.

Trailing the director was the mob of villagers.

Gu Mian had no time to fight them. He quickly turned, dashed through the main entrance, and ran up the stairs.

Chu Changge and Big Brother, lugging the camera, followed closely behind.

"The Law Code here is just a reproduction. If we're unlucky, it might not even have a big impact on this world," Chu Changge said from behind Gu Mian. "Even with your Supernatural Editor Simulator and your body's inherent non-resistance to instances, if we're unlucky, we might not be able to directly destroy this instance."

Gu Mian knew that countless copies of the Law Code were available in the Old World. Destroying one reproduction probably wouldn't make a difference.

To destroy the Old World, they had to target the original.

But they lacked the time to search for the original now.

The mob had entered the building, and the director, having jumped off his bicycle, dashed in after them. He was hell-bent on preventing Gu Mian from defiling the Law Code.

With no idea where the original was, Gu Mian had no choice but to rush to the second floor in search of the reproduction stashed in the school.

Chu Changge pointed ahead, "It's the fifth one down, but the door is locked."

Of course, a locked door didn't pose much of a challenge to Gu Mian.

With a quick swipe of his saw, the old lock fell off.

Gu Mian quickly entered and shut the door, then pressed Big Brother against it to block it.

Looking around, he saw a square table in the middle of the room, on which sat a delicate, carved wooden box.

Gu Mian strode to the table and carelessly flipped open the box's lid. Inside lay a white-covered book, and printed slightly above the center were two large characters—"Law Code."

The mob had caught up. They were making their way towards the room containing the Law Code.

On seeing the sawed-off lock on the ground, the director almost leaped in anger.

The school doors were all of a uniform style, and the door to this room was no different. Like a conventional classroom door, it had a long glass strip allowing a glimpse inside from the hallway.

The director immediately peered through the glass. Big Brother's body was blocking much of his view, but through the narrow remaining gap, he could just make out Gu Mian's figure.

He watched Gu Mian pick up the book in the box with his index finger and thumb, a look of distaste on his face.

The director hammered at the door in a rage, but it wouldn't budge an inch.

He looked at the gray-haired man blocking the entrance, puzzled.

There were no other races in the Old World, so the director was seeing a gray-haired, brown-eyed person for the first time. He found it strange that someone with such features existed, wondered where this man had appeared from, and why he was helping these celebrities.

Puzzled, the director slammed against the door a few more times, but it still wouldn't budge.

At that moment, he saw Gu Mian inside, casually flipping through the white-covered book. The gray-haired man was holding a camera, its entire screen filled with Gu Mian's face.

He wasn't filming anything else; he was solely concentrated on Gu Mian's face.

Gu Mian had brought the camera to allow everyone to witness the defilement of the Law Code, thereby inciting the viewers' fury and, consequently, creating a larger impact.

A cameraman aware of his intentions would naturally aim the camera at the Law Code. Gu Mian was unaware that Big Brother was solely focused on his face; if he had known, he would have been infuriated.

Chu Changge glanced at the camera screen and, upon seeing what it captured, turned away expressionlessly, choosing to ignore it.

Unaware of this, Gu Mian, tugging at the book in his hand, said cheerfully into the camera, "Now, for the best part of our show, Metamorphosis. Transforming others all the time can get a bit boring. So today, I'll perform a Metamorphosis of the Law Code. You may call it the real Metamorphosis."

Although Gu Mian's face was all that could be seen on the screen, his words were enough to indicate what was happening.

The viewers watching the program, consumed by rage, wished they could leap into the screen and rip apart the gleeful face they saw.

Meanwhile, the director outside the door widened his eyes as he desperately slammed against the door, "What do you think you're doing? Put the Law Code down!"