

Collapse 541

Chapter 541 Oops, the update was interrupted!_1

There were still many players' bodies left in Lianhua University, all left behind due to the high school exam event.

Gu Mian estimated along the way that the bodies he passed numbered over a hundred.

Thanks to the weather, these bodies, dead for less than two days, still hadn't begun to stink. On the way back, Fatty recited mantras with every careful step, fearing he might accidentally step on someone's hand.

While Fatty was cautiously watching his step, a hand reached out and grabbed his ankle.

"Mother!" A shriek rang out in the dark night as Fatty jumped behind Gu Mian, clutching his coat and wailing, "Doctor, something touched me!"

Gu Mian turned around. Before checking what was touching Fatty, he shone his flashlight on Fatty's face for a few moments. Looking at this face, it doesn't seem worthy of being touched by anyone.

Only after sweeping the flashlight beam in a circle around Fatty did he slowly turn it to where the hand had emerged.

A pale hand lay among the rubble, its arm covered in scars.

Looking up the arm, he saw a person dressed in a white top. Half of her body was trapped beneath the ruins, motionless, as if touching Fatty just now had drained all her strength.

As Fatty cautiously craned his neck to look at the half-trapped person, Gu Mian suddenly took two steps forward and squatted in front of her.

He brushed the dust and debris off her face, revealing a familiar one.

Keke?

The one who first appeared in the Hide and Seek instance, likely the one who strangled Ji Bie Li?

She also recently appeared in the Werewolf Killing Dungeon, making some unknown secret agreement with Chu Changge. At the last moment, she betrayed him by committing suicide, leading another civilian to vote for Chu Changge, which allowed me to win.

"Ah," Fatty apparently also recognized the person, "is it Miss Keke?"

What is she doing here?

Chu Changge had said Keke only betrayed him because she needed something from Gu Mian. But besides my looks, I don't think I have anything else she'd covet.

"Anyway, let's take her back first," Gu Mian said, poking at the rocks pressing down on her. I still don't know what Keke wants, and I can't just let her die before fulfilling her wish.

Moving things was a specialty of Fatty and Xiao Hong.

In just a few minutes, HUFFING and PUFFING, they cleared the debris from Keke. Her other half was crushed and bloody. It's unclear if her bones are injured.

Gu Mian looked at the person on the ground with concern, "I think we might need a stretcher..."

Fatty ran off to the supermarket to buy a stretcher. Gu Mian, too lazy to move, gave Fatty his phone for protection.

So, in the middle of the night, those still awake in Accompany Me Next Year witnessed a peculiar sight—Gu Mian's group was returning, carrying a stretcher.

Although they were quite far away, it could still be seen that a woman was lying on it.

"What the hell," Accompany Me Next Year muttered, backing half a step away from the window, "why is he always bringing back women?"

And they were all unconscious.

She couldn't help but remember some of the web novels she had read in her young and naive days. The protagonist collected women one after another, one after another, one after another...

Soon, her mind was completely occupied with the phrase "collect one after another."

Gu Mian and the others quickly carried Keke back home. Upon their return, the forgotten Xiao Qiao was sitting on the bed in a daze. Hearing the door open, she immediately ran to the living room to look, coming face-to-face with the person on the stretcher.

This was Xiao Qiao and Keke's first meeting. Even though one of them was unconscious, they had indeed met.

The "catfight" scenario Fatty had imagined didn't happen.

Xiao Qiao didn't point at Keke on the stretcher and interrogate Gu Mian, "Who is this woman! You can fool around, but how could you find someone so pretty? You clearly don't take me seriously!"

Nor did Keke wake up with teary eyes, saying, "Sister, this is all a misunderstanding. He and I are just friends. If you don't like me, I won't disturb you guys here anymore, BOO HOO HOO..."

This certainly didn't fit their established personas.

The stretcher was placed on the ground.

Fatty saw Xiao Qiao walk over, squat down, then extend a finger and poke Keke's shoulder.

It was quite forceful. The unconscious person seemed to feel the pain and let out a soft GROAN.

Nonchalantly, Xiao Qiao retracted her finger and stood up.

Fatty finally heard the superstar speak. She didn't ask how she herself had gotten into this room, nor where they had just been. Instead, she inquired about the person on the floor, "Who is she?"

Fatty coughed, feeling the atmosphere was developing as he'd anticipated, "This is Keke... uh... a player who went through the Werewolf Killing Dungeon with us. It was thanks to her suicide—slandering Brother Chu to implicate him as the ghost—that the suspicion against the Doctor was cleared. Before dying, she even said she hoped the Doctor would help her with something..."

After hearing this, Xiao Qiao was silent for a few seconds before replying, "Oh."

Gu Mian was squatting to examine Keke's body, "As a neurosurgeon, I usually only observe craniotomies. If her skull were cracked open, I could close it. But if it's a broken bone, that might not be within my expertise."

There are medicines sold in the supermarket, but it seems there are none to treat fractures.

Gu Mian looked at Keke's crushed side. There were many abrasions, but no swelling. There was no sound when moved slightly. Her bones are probably fine.

With this, half a month of rest should be enough for her to recover, he thought, taking out the nearly depleted Evil God spray. This stuff could stop bleeding quickly and had some wound-healing effects. Keke has lost quite a bit of blood; I should get some pork liver to help her replenish it.

"By the way, Doctor..." Fatty began, looking at the spray in Gu Mian's hand, "When I went to get the stretcher, I took a look at the medical supplies section..."

If Fatty hadn't mentioned this section, Gu Mian would have completely forgotten about it. Although it contained many medicines coveted by players, the prices were too high for most to afford.

Gu Mian, who could afford them, never fulfilled his duties as a doctor, instead running around with a Saw every day.

The instance had even granted Gu Mian an [Angel Halo], directly changing him from a Doctor to a Priest, but Gu Mian still just ran around with a Saw.

The medicine they bought during the last plague outbreak hadn't even been used up yet.

"What happened?" Gu Mian asked, winding a bandage. "Did the prices go up again?"

"No," Fatty said, his expression hard to read, "The medical supplies section... it's gone."

Gone? Gu Mian looked up.

Is this another move by the Low-Dimensional World? he wondered. Even though the supermarket was opened by Earth, Earth and the Low-Dimensional World mutually restrict each other.

To use the supermarket as an analogy, it's like it has two shareholders. One proposes selling items cheaply, and the other proposes selling them at higher prices. Whoever gains the upper hand has the final say.

"Are any other sections gone?" Gu Mian lowered his head again.

Fatty shook his head. "No, just the medical supplies section is gone."

That's strange. If the Low-Dimensional World gained control of the supermarket, why didn't it remove food and other necessities? Why remove medical supplies instead? Removing medical supplies has little impact on the players because even if they weren't removed, others couldn't afford them anyway.

At this moment, Chu Changge suddenly spoke, "Do you remember what I previously found out about the origins of the goods in the supermarket?"

Of course, I remember. Chu Changge had discovered that the goods in the supermarket likely came from the instance worlds.

Gu Mian understood. "So you mean the medicine is produced in the Old World?"

So, because the Old World collapsed, the medical supplies section disappeared along with it?

But the Old World is a technologically undeveloped world. How could it produce such effective medicine, some of which can even prolong life?

Sensing Gu Mian's confusion, Fatty ruffled his hair. "Why don't we ask Miss Liu Ruyan about the pharmaceutical production level in the Old World?"

"It's not produced in the Old World."

Gu Mian, who was still bent over, suddenly heard Xiao Qiao speak. Surprised, he looked up to see Xiao Qiao repeat, "It's not produced in the Old World."

Well, this is very strange then.

Gu Mian didn't let himself get sidetracked wondering why the supermarket had removed the medicines while there was a nearly-dead person on the ground. He meticulously wrapped Keke up like a mummy, then went out and kicked open the door of the adjacent room. Turning back to Xiao Qiao and the unconscious Keke, he said, "You two can stay here for now."

Fatty looked at the kicked-open door, feeling slightly sheepish. "That might not have been necessary... Perhaps we could have asked Miss Liu for the Key."

Chapter 542 Almost to - 520!_1

Keke's body was remarkably resilient; she opened her eyes as the first ray of sunlight pierced through the window the next day.

As soon as she opened her eyes, she saw a face by her bed, a face she recognized. It belonged to a celebrity.

But Keke didn't stare blankly at this face. Almost in the instant she opened her eyes, she sat up in bed.

Her weak body couldn't withstand the sudden movement. Keke felt a bout of dizziness, as if she had taken a heavy hit to her head.

She fought the dizziness and lifted her foot to move off the bed. Xiao Qiao, who had been standing by the bed, finally spoke, "You better lie down."

But the person who had just gotten up did not heed Xiao Qiao's advice. She forcefully stood up by pushing against the bed, a dull pain coursing through her legs. "I need to find someone."

"Find who?"

"My sister."

After a round of mechanical questioning, Xiao Qiao understood. Keke and her sister had come to Lianhua City together. Due to certain reasons, only Keke took part in the college entrance examination event. Her sister stayed in the house they had sneaked into. Unbeknownst to her sister, Keke had an accident and fainted at Lianhua University for two straight days, so the moment she woke up, she was anxious to head home.

She bumped into Fatty, who had come to scout for information, as she stepped out of the door.

After listening to Xiao Qiao mechanically recount Keke's situation, the enthusiastic Fatty volunteered to go with Keke to the west side of the city and bring her sister back.

Since her sister had difficulty moving, Liu Ruyan, who was there to witness the commotion, specifically arranged a room for her on the first floor. Naturally, Keke wanted to stay with her sister on the first floor.

As for the abandoned Xiao Qiao, she packed her bedding and went to stay with Liu Ruyan.

As for why her sister needed to be carried back...

"That's what I would like to request from you." At this moment, Keke was leaning against the window, looking outside; it wasn't clear whether she was looking at the abandoned vehicles or the barren weeds. She had shed the panicked, rabbit-like demeanor she had displayed in the instance earlier; she was very composed.

Gu Mian stood beside her.

Keke stared out of the window for quite a while before finally diverting her gaze and slowly beginning to speak, "My sister, Xu Nuo. She has late-stage lung cancer, and she's in a lot of pain, with barely any strength to move normally."

Calling it lung cancer might not be accurate anymore. The cancer cells had now spread throughout her body, damaging her bones and relentlessly radiating pain, day and night.

Gu Mian was familiar with such patients. Once the pain reached this level, death was usually near.

And Keke had clearly come for her sister. But...

"I know that there are no specific drugs in the supermarket and that there is nothing much you can do right now... But as long as a person is alive, they will always harbor some hope. You are the only doctor I've met in the game, so I came here hoping that there might be a chance. I beg you, if there really is an opportunity, a real chance to keep my sister alive, please help her."

Gu Mian found the honorific "you" a bit strange. He nodded hurriedly and said, "I don't think you need to address me so formally."

"Ah," Fatty mumbled absently from the side, "after staying in the instance for so long, I'd almost forgotten that people in the real world could also get sick."

Some players were terminally ill before the game even began. Unable to secure resources, they quickly perished.

People like Xu Nuo were somewhat lucky, clinging to life, kept alive by her younger sister... Yes, just barely clinging to life. It's unclear whether that could be considered fortunate or not.

"So, you came to Lianhua City to find me?" Gu Mian asked.

Keke nodded slightly. "The one surnamed Chu told me in the Werewolf Killing Dungeon that you all participate in every event."

So Keke followed them to Lianhua University. Unexpectedly, before she could even meet Gu Mian, she was nearly buried alive. Fortunately, Gu Mian paid another secretive visit to the school at midnight.

If Chu Changge told Keke as much, she must have also attended the dragon boat race event.

Indeed, she continued, "I first went to the dragon boat race event. Of course, I went alone, but your boat was simply too fast for me to keep up..."

Gu Mian recalled there was a live broadcast showing the positions of each boat. He asked subconsciously, "Do you know which boat was ours?" The broadcast didn't show who was on which boat.

Keke paused, seemingly choosing her words. After a few seconds, she continued, "The name you all used was too obvious."

Gu Mian remembered. The name of their boat was coined by Fatty—"The Doctor's Stunning Fan Club."

At this, Fatty guiltily looked up at the ceiling. "The weather today is indeed quite beautiful."

"I didn't catch up with you all, but my ranking was still within the top twenty percent, which won me an admission ticket."

The college entrance examination event involved taking a school bus, and an admission ticket was required to board. Even if one didn't enter the exam hall to take the test, they could still enjoy the ride with the admission ticket. Given that Keke and her sister were both here...

Gu Mian thought for a moment. "So you conned an admission ticket off someone?"

Considering her behavior during the instance, she didn't seem like someone who would trade fairly.

Keke didn't say anything, seemingly admitting it by default.

Gu Mian wasn't interested in lecturing others. He then thought of the supermarket's medical supplies area closing. "Hmm, there's something you might not know. The pharmacy section in the supermarket has closed for some unknown reason, so we won't be able to buy medicine in the future."

Keke looked up in surprise. Although the supermarket didn't stock drugs to treat cancer, it did have painkillers.

She was stunned for a moment, then carefully took out two small, transparent vials of liquid, each about half a finger long. One of the vials had been opened, and only a small portion of the transparent liquid remained. The opening was plugged with what was clearly a homemade stopper and meticulously wrapped with many layers of plastic film.

This item was quite common, officially called an "ampule"—a sealed, transparent glass container. Doctors were often seen breaking these open with their bare hands in hospitals.

However, it was a single-use container, meant to be discarded after opening. Gu Mian had never seen one sealed with a stopper like this before.

"It's a tranquilizer with some pain-relieving effects... She's in too much pain. I wanted to buy painkillers, but they're too expensive."

As Keke spoke, she took out an old-looking syringe that seemed to have been used many times. "Every time my sister can't sleep because of the pain, I inject a little... but the effect isn't great."

Gu Mian remembered this was among the lowest-grade medicines in the supermarket. Even the lowest grade cost over a hundred Game Coins.

He only earned a thousand Game Coins for clearing an instance, enough to buy just ten small vials. Ordinary players would have even less.

"Thanks to you," Keke again used an honorific to address Gu Mian, "when the Hide-and-Seek instance collapsed, I was compensated with one thousand Game Coins. After that, it was the long winter..."

More than half the players on Earth had died as a result of this winter.

Keke seemed reluctant to recall that period but continued, "My sister and I survived the toughest few months on those one thousand Game Coins. We didn't freeze or starve to death."

Gu Mian instinctively began doing the math.

The long winter lasted about three months. Let's say one hundred days. So, one thousand Game Coins for one hundred days means ten Game Coins a day? Ten Game Coins a day had to cover food for two people, heating in winter to avoid freezing to death, and Xu Nuo's painkillers. Could ten Game Coins a day really cover all that?

Fatty could tell what Gu Mian was thinking just from his expression. As Gu Mian was deep in thought, Fatty leaned in and whispered in his ear, "Doctor, you're just too extravagant!"

Chapter 543 You haven't seen it in nine days! _1

While Gu Mian was quite extravagant, he still managed to accumulate a lot of Game Coins. Most importantly, he had great skills.

As a doctor, he possessed the skill [Highly Skilled Medicine (Lv. 5)], which increased the effectiveness of medications fivefold when used.

If Keke hadn't brought back a patient, Gu Mian would have almost forgotten he had such a skill.

The level of Highly Skilled Medicine had remained at level five for quite some time. This indicated that the game had not provided him with Attribute Points for a considerable period. Fatty and Chu Changge were facing the same situation, and presumably, so were the other players.

The sedatives for Xu Nuo for the following few days were all administered by Gu Mian, who specifically used a new syringe.

Even if the sedative's effectiveness was increased fivefold, it still wouldn't be of much help to a patient suffering from late-stage cancer.

Yet, this kind-hearted woman would always say, "Thank you," to Gu Mian after every injection, as if her pain had truly lessened.

Xu Nuo was only twenty-four years old, but she looked older than Liu Ruyan, who already seemed to have matured quickly, resembling someone in her early thirties.

Keke explained that it was because her sister was always working overtime, sometimes juggling three to four part-time jobs a day. She often stayed up all night for work and still had to walk two kilometers to the nearest subway station to get to work after sunrise.

Fatty, oblivious to such worldly hardships, was astounded upon hearing this and asked, "Don't you guys have parents?"

This wasn't a sarcastic comment from Zu An but a sincere question.

Keke remained silent, but her facial expression was like someone who had just heard a joke.

Accompany me next year didn't seem surprised by Xu Nuo's arrival. It seemed she was already used to Gu Mian bringing back a woman every day—at least this one wasn't as ugly as the lady in the red dress.

The more pressing consideration for them now was how to survive the next fifteen days with their dwindling Game Coins and scarce food supply.

While pondering the situation, she sighed and began to go over the figures, prices, and calculations on the piece of paper on the coffee table, "Fifteen days, with everyone combined, we only have one hundred and seventy-eight Game Coins left. We can only spend an average of eleven point eight six Game Coins per day. Pork belly at one hundred Game Coins per pound is out of the question. I haven't eaten meat in a long time. Rice and flour are fifty-one Game Coins per pound... Hmm, seventy-eight Game Coins would be enough for three and a half pounds. But there are five of us here, and we need to eat for fifteen days..."

As she scribbled on the paper, she forcefully circled some numbers and crossed out some calculations. Finally, she let out a long sigh and began to complain about the supermarket prices, "Damn it, the supermarket prices are so inflated! Is this game really trying to make humanity evolve? Is it really trying to make humanity evolve?!"

The amount of Game Coins they received when the game started was pitiable, so all they could do was scrounge in a small convenience store.

However, the original food on Earth had vanished rapidly, like oil evaporating. After the meager remains were scavenged, they had no choice but to shop at the supermarket.

Luckily, after a while, the game instances started dispensing more Game Coins, enough to save people from dying of hunger—though only just enough to survive.

"However, what's important now is that entry to the supermarket requires a ticket, and we don't have any. The ticket booth is closed, so we can't buy tickets. Even if it were open, a ticket would cost fifty Game Coins..."

Looking at the paper full of calculations, Accompany me next year put down her pen. She recalled that they hadn't had a decent meal in a long time.

The last time they had a proper meal was in an instance filled with the atmosphere of everyday life. However, food consumed in an instance only staved off hunger within that instance. After leaving, they were still hungry.

Moreover, they didn't often enter instances with a normal world background.

Just as she was fretting over the paper on the coffee table, she suddenly heard the footsteps of several people outside the door.

The footsteps seemed to come from downstairs and didn't stop at their floor but went directly upstairs.

It's probably Gu Mian and the others, Accompany me next year thought.

The soundproofing in this hotel wasn't very good. Through the door, she could hear Fatty talking as he went upstairs, "Doctor, the instance has been suspended for fifteen days. We should go to the supermarket a few more times and use up all the tickets. In previous months, we always had a stack of tickets left over, and Xiao Hong got all of them. What a reckless waste of good things!"

Supermarket tickets had limited sales each month and were time-sensitive. Tickets bought in a given month could only be used within that month; they would become void at the end of the month.

For convenience, Fatty always bought a large stack at the beginning of the month. At the end of the month, any leftover tickets would be taken by Xiao Hong to make paper boats.

As Gu Mian listened to Fatty planning their supermarket trips for the next few days, he suddenly heard the sound of a door opening behind him.

The person behind them seemed afraid they would leave and urgently called out, "Wait!"

Gu Mian stopped on the stairs and turned, looking down at Accompany me next year, who was peeking out from behind the door.

Gu Mian remembered stealing a noose from her. Consequently, every time he saw her, he thought she resembled a rope.

"Um," she began, choosing her words carefully, "if you have any supermarket tickets you won't be using up... could you loan us one?"

Loan? Gu Mian was momentarily confused by the word.

Accompany me next year hurriedly explained, "I mean! Rent... No, that's not right. I'd like to take out a loan from you. A loan for one supermarket ticket. After fifteen days, when the instances reopen, we'll repay you."

Then, she saw a strange look on Gu Mian's face.

Accompany me next year immediately became nervous, thinking he was displeased by her request for a ticket.

She was about to explain further when she saw the doctor take a ticket from Fatty's pocket, walk down the stairs, and tuck it into her hand.

Accompany me next year was stunned. She was just about to express her gratitude with a simple, "You're such a good person!" when she heard him ask, "And you offer no compensation?"

Chapter 544 You haven't seen it in nine days! _2

As the Old World instance collapsed, Gu Mian and his group were compensated with Game Coins.

There were four survivors in the team "Accompany me next year" during the instance collapse—Su Xiaocha, who was thrown into a cesspit; Xie Bi'an, who was just a bystander; Xingluo Buzhichu, who was barely noticeable; and You Si, Fatty's roommate.

They should have received a total of four thousand Game Coins in compensation.

Lai Nian seemed dazed. "Compensation? What compensation?"

Noticing her confused expression, Gu Mian took half a step back. "Forget I mentioned it."

Lai Nian saw Fatty's strange expression too. She opened her mouth but didn't say a word.

She remembered that after an instance collapse, the announcement would list those eligible for compensation. In fact, when she found out about the collapse of the Old World, she had looked forward to this. But You Si and the others who had survived the instance collapse all shook their heads, saying there was no compensation.

Gu Mian found it strange. Was the impact of the Old World's collapse really that severe? So much so that the Low-Dimensional World couldn't even afford to pay out compensation?

Lost in thought, he started heading upstairs.

As Gu Mian walked further away, Lai Nian heard him mutter, "Damn it, don't players these days know to buy one or two tickets at the beginning of the month just in case?"

Fatty's voice drifted over faintly, "Doctor, it's you who's too out of touch with the hardships of the common folk!"

Lai Nian clutched the ticket in her hand. She almost coughed up blood.

The one who was truly out of touch with others' hardships was Xiao Hong.

Perhaps stimulated by the amusement park, she had built a swing in the hotel's backyard.

Whenever she had nothing to do, she would drag Gu Mian over to admire her masterpiece. After some admiring, Xiao Hong would plop down on it, and Gu Mian would have no choice but to give her a few pushes.

Sometimes, she would also put Mr. Green, who had followed them there, on the swing and push it hard from behind, happily watching the little green figure swing up and down. For a period, Mr. Green's face was an even deeper shade of green.

Xiao Hong often swung in the yard downstairs. Every time Lai Nian and her group passed by, they would be startled by that horrifying face.

By the time she finally grew tired of the swing, fifteen days had passed.

Late on the night of June 25th, the last day of the instance suspension, the game released a new announcement.

Gu Mian had just been drifting off to sleep in bed when he was jolted awake by a loud shout from Fatty. The sound was as terrifying as if one had seen Chu Changge butchering a pig.

"Doctor!" With a yell, Fatty burst into his bedroom and plopped down on Gu Mian's bed, making Gu Mian bounce a few times. "Doctor, something big has happened! Quick, look at the announcement!"

At the same time, Lai Nian, who was still awake downstairs, also saw the game announcement immediately. The moment she opened it, her jaw dropped. Then, she shot up and shouted loudly, "Everyone, quick, look at the announcement!"

Simultaneously, other players who saw the announcement also gaped, feeling as if they had been plunged into an ice cellar.

What's wrong? Gu Mian pulled a hand out from under the blanket. Could there be anything more shocking than a global instance shutdown?

As he thought this, he opened his panel to check the announcement. The title read: [Regarding the Closure of the Instance Death Protection Mechanism]

"Hah, I thought it was something major," Gu Mian said, pulling his hand back. "Isn't it just that people can die in instances? That's how I've always treated them. It's not a big deal..."

He was about to tuck his head back into the blanket when something suddenly occurred to him. He sat up abruptly. "No, wait, this *is* a big deal."

He, Gu Mian, had never died in an instance, but Chu Changge and Fatty both had.

If there had been no instance protection mechanism from the start, those two would have long been buried by Gu Mian in pits he'd dug.

Pondering this, he carefully reread the game announcement's content, Should I start digging the pits in advance? Fatty will probably need a large one.

[Following a unanimous decision by the planning team, the operator has decided to disable the instance death protection mechanism effective immediately (June 25th). This means death within an instance will be true death, with no possibility of resurrection.]

[The instance injury protection mechanism will remain active. Severe injuries sustained in an instance will be healed upon exiting.]

The announcement was short; Gu Mian scanned through it in a few seconds.

After reading it, he fell into deep thought.

Just as Gu Mian was contemplating what size pit to dig for Fatty, the intended occupant of said pit started clamoring in his ear, "Doctor, we're doomed! If we encounter an instance like a werewolf game in the future and happen to be on opposing sides, wouldn't that mean a life-or-death separation for us?"

Gu Mian reached out and turned Fatty's head aside. "Yapping all day long. You're the king of yapping."

"This isn't yapping!" Fatty exclaimed, gesticulating wildly. "We need to prepare for unforeseen circumstances!"

"That won't be necessary," Gu Mian said, pressing down Fatty's agitated hand. "I have a solution."

"What solution?"

"I'll just enter instances alone."

Upon hearing this, Fatty predictably showed an expression that screamed, "I knew it would be some rotten idea like this."

While Fatty was frantically planning for the future, Gu Mian heard a loud commotion from downstairs. It sounded like someone was raising their voice, questioning something loudly, and others were arguing.

It seemed the other players were having an even stronger reaction than they were.

"Why would the game suddenly disable the instance death protection mechanism?!" Xingluo slammed his fist on the table and said heavily, "Did they perform maintenance for fifteen days just for this? Wasn't this game created for human evolution? I've been suspicious from the beginning! Prices are sky-high, then there's the harsh winter and the plague. How is this supposed to help humans evolve? They're clearly out to get us killed!"

Lai Nian also let out a long sigh. "I've been suspicious too, ever since I saw the prices. Something felt off... Besides, we've hardly received any Attribute Points that could actually improve us."

After experiencing the college entrance exam event, she had become even more bewildered.

Earth knew that death in the event would be real, so why did it set up such a huge trap in the college entrance exam?

And only the top twenty percent in the dragon boat race event could get an admission ticket. These top twenty percent must be the best among the players. Even if some sold their admission tickets to others, most of those who entered the college entrance exam event would still be from that top twenty percent.

The dragon boat race event and the college entrance exam event gave Lai Nian a peculiar feeling—as if the game gathered elite players through the first event, only to throw them into a trap in the next one to be annihilated.

Was this game really intended to improve humanity's physical fitness?

Eating only a little food each day for half a month had left her feeling weak. Without thinking much more, Lai Nian leaned back on the sofa to regain her strength.

"But now is not the time to be doubting such things!" You Si suddenly spoke up. "We need to discuss, discuss what we should do next."

Their group had come together during the college entrance exam event and hadn't known each other for long. However, one disaster after another had made them instinctively band together, thinking that perhaps with more people, they would have more courage to face what lay ahead.

Su Xiaocha, who had been quiet all this time, finally spoke up hesitantly, "Why don't we wait and see for now? We can go to the ticket booth tomorrow and observe the situation."

Chapter 545 The collapse - The dream of 2 billion girls_1

After fifteen days, Mr. Green could finally leave Gu Mian to continue his search for the instance.

Gu Mian was actually very curious.

Mr. Green doesn't want to stay in the real world. Is he afraid that Earth will strike him down?

But this host had been brought out for almost half a year now, and Earth hadn't shown any signs.

Fatty had muttered all night about how to prepare for a rainy day, and eventually fell asleep, his snores shaking the heavens.

It wasn't until noon the next day that the hardworking Fatty woke up.

When he woke up, his first thought was what he should eat today. But then he realized something was wrong. "Wait! Why did I fall asleep? Weren't we discussing the deactivation of the death protection mechanism yesterday?"

Chu Changge, sitting on the living room couch, glanced at him. "You were the one talking."

Yesterday, Gu Mian couldn't stand Fatty's incessant chatter, so he gave him some water to soothe his throat.

Fatty was pleasantly surprised to accept the water, never imagining that Gu Mian had added a sleeping pill to it.

When Gu Mian administered a drug, its effects doubled.

In fact, it multiplied several times over, transforming the sleeping pill into a knockout draught. Fatty, having consumed it, held out for another ten minutes or so before falling sound asleep.

He slept soundly until noon.

Fatty was secretly surprised for a moment, then he instinctively began looking for Gu Mian throughout the house. He hopped off the bed and jogged into the living room. Finding only Chu Changge there, he then turned to look at Gu Mian's bedroom. There was no one inside; only Xiao Hong was on Gu Mian's bed folding paper boats, with a CD on the bedside table.

Not seeing Gu Mian, Fatty asked, "Where's the Doctor?"

Chu Changge didn't even lift his head. "He went to the ticket booth. Keke went with him."

What are they doing at the ticket booth?

Fatty was stunned for half a second, then suddenly asked with a strange expression, "They wouldn't have entered an instance, would they?"

Chu Changge nodded. "Yes."

「On October 1st, a bus carrying thirty-eight passengers and one driver in Jinkou City overturned and fell down Fenshan Mountain. According to the Jinkou City Emergency Management Bureau, after a full search and rescue effort, as of 7:00 PM on October 5th, the bus wreckage had been found. A total of thirty-one people were recovered: one injured, thirty with no vital signs, and eight still missing. The search and rescue operation is still ongoing...」

"It's all your fault!" "It's all your fault!" "It's all your fault!"

Resentful voices, filled with malice, surrounded her, seeping into every pore. In front of her was pitch darkness, with only those sinister voices reverberating in her ears.

"It's all your fault!"

A pair of bluish-white hands suddenly stretched out from the darkness, grasping her neck.

"Ah!" Zhao Shuang abruptly woke up from her dream, soaked with cold sweat.

The overhead light was on. She turned to look at the alarm clock beside the bed; it was now seven in the evening. The sky outside the window had completely darkened, and the lights in the building opposite were on.

The television in the living room was broadcasting breaking news. She saw two people standing at her bedroom door; they were her two colleagues, who were currently looking at her with strange expressions.

"What... happened to you?" Keke hesitated before asking.

The name of this instance was "Amnesia." There were five players, and the task was to survive for thirty-six hours.

This instance also provided a detailed introduction to the story's background and the roles the players were to assume.

Setting that aside for now, when Keke entered the instance with Gu Mian, she couldn't see him. She only saw this female player with the nickname "Cangyue Shisi," an NPC lying on the bed, and... the news of the bus rollover being broadcast on TV.

Zhao Shuang wiped the sweat from her forehead. "I'm fine, just had a nightmare."

She was the sole survivor mentioned in the bus rollover news. On October 1st, thirty-eight people from her department went to Fenshan Mountain for a team-building event, and they all went missing that night.

Soon after, the police opened an investigation. They found Zhao Shuang in a coma at the team-building base halfway up the mountain at 1:00 AM on October 2nd. At 11:32 PM that same night, they found the bus that had rolled down the mountain. Inside were thirty bodies; the other eight people were missing. By October 5th, these eight people were still missing.

It's worth mentioning that Zhao Shuang survived not because of a timely rescue, but because she had stayed at the team-building base halfway up the mountain that day, while her other thirty-seven colleagues rode the bus to the mountaintop.

Her memory was impaired. All she could remember was staying halfway up the mountain while her other colleagues went to the mountaintop.

She didn't remember why the others went to the mountaintop, why she had fallen unconscious, or the major and minor events of that day.

However, a hospital check-up found nothing wrong, leading to the suspicion that she was suffering from intermittent memory loss due to shock.

Meanwhile, Keke and Cangyue Shisi were playing the roles of two female colleagues who hadn't participated in the team-building event that day. According to what they knew, three other colleagues also hadn't participated: Wang Chuan, Xia Jianren, and... Gu Mian.

As expected, Gu Mian's real name was maliciously used once again.

By now, the news broadcast on the television had stopped. Cangyue Shisi hesitated a moment before asking, "What... did you dream about?"

If this had been a previous instance, she might not have been in such a hurry to ask this kind of question.

But now things were different.

The rules of the instance had changed. The death protection mechanism was shut off. They had to be proactive and find a way to survive before danger arrived.

And the ghost this time very likely stemmed from the team-building event on October 1st.

Zhao Shuang took a deep breath. Ever since she had made it back alive, she often had similar nightmares. She would dream she was engulfed in darkness, with voices full of hatred and terror whispering in her ears, followed by pale hands choking her neck.

Each time, she would awaken startled from her sleep, even if she fell asleep during the daytime.

She had a strange feeling that the terrifying things in her dreams were the people who had died during the team-building day. She guessed she might have suffered such a great shock that it caused these nightmares.

Zhao Shuang placed her hands on her forehead and let out a breath. "I dreamt of those terrifying things again. I constantly feel... it's like they were our colleagues, and they resent me..."

Resentment?

Keke and Cangyue Shisi exchanged a glance, a suspicion forming in their minds.

Zhao Shuang looked up. "Oh, right. Xu Ke, Li Cangyue, I haven't thanked you both for accompanying me these past few days."

Xu Ke and Li Cangyue were the names of their current identities.

The two of them forced a smile. In reality, both Xu Ke and Li Cangyue lived in the staff apartments. Half of the thirty-odd people from the bus that crashed down the mountain had lived in this building.

Their roommates had all died, and so had Zhao Shuang's. After something like this, the young women didn't dare live alone, so the three of them moved into Zhao Shuang's room. According to their previous plan, they were going to move out once they found another place to rent.

"It's nothing," Keke said, shaking her head understandingly. "Why don't you go back to sleep? You haven't slept well these past few days, with only intermittent rest. You must be exhausted."

Zhao Shuang was indeed exhausted. Insomnia had pushed her body to its limit, but whenever she was surrounded by darkness, unease would envelop her.

She stared at the bright overhead light for a good while before, as if feeling a little safer, she nodded. "Then... I'll sleep a bit longer."

Watching Zhao Shuang lie down, the two exchanged a look and headed to the living room.

Once they were far enough from Zhao Shuang's bedroom, Cangyue Shisi spoke in an extremely low voice that only the two of them could hear, "That nightmare she mentioned... what are your thoughts?"

Cang Yue felt that any player who dared to enter an instance on the first day the death protection mechanism was shut down couldn't be an ordinary person, even though the young woman before her appeared gentle and quite young.

Keke shook her head slightly. "In an instance, a dream like that definitely isn't baseless. I guess the core of this instance is related to our colleagues who died on the bus. They very likely resent Zhao Shuang, but she has forgotten what exactly happened that day."

She paused, then mused, "Didn't they say eight people are still missing? Perhaps these eight people are the breakthrough point for this instance."

Cang Yue nodded in agreement. "This instance is called 'Amnesia,' so it must be related to Zhao Shuang's memory loss. Perhaps the key to finding the way out lies here. We'd better gather all the players to discuss this. Speaking of which..."

As she spoke, her brow furrowed. "Among the five of us, is there someone named Gu Mian?"

Gu Mian was the dream of billions of players.

The only person on the wanted list, who, in his own words, said, "Rankings are immaterial; getting on the list is all about your own abilities."

Of course, other players didn't possess such abilities, nor did they want any ranking.

But everyone hoped to encounter him in the real world and then stab him.

Now that death in an instance had become real, the players' aspirations changed. Everyone now hoped to encounter him in an instance and stab him there.

Cang Yue naturally had this thought. Gu Mian's bounty had multiplied several times and was now one hundred thousand Game Coins.

This was an absolute temptation.

The moment Cang Yue saw the name Gu Mian, she thought of the one hundred thousand Game Coins.

"Ah," Keke said, feigning ignorance. "Yes, there's a Gu Mian. Is he the one on the ranking list?"

Cang Yue nodded slightly. "Highly probable."

As she spoke, she glanced at the fruit knife on the coffee table. "Let's observe for now. We can discuss it once we're all together."

In this instance where death was real, survival itself was a struggle. Fear and eeriness constantly enveloped them as they painstakingly tried to stay alive. They might not have the luxury to worry about anything else...

Just then, a knock on the door suddenly sounded, followed by a young male voice calling out timidly, "Are you in there? Xu Ke? Li Cangyue? I'm Xia Jianren."

The voice was extremely soft, sounding timid and as if he had received a fright.

Xia Jianren was one of the five players.

Cang Yue strode to the door and only opened it after confirming his identity through the peephole. As she opened it, she whispered a reminder, "Zhao Shuang is sleeping. Please keep your voices down."

Hearing this, Xia Jianren immediately lightened his steps and darted in like a cat. Another man followed Xia Jianren. Cang Yue glanced at the other man's player panel; his nickname was "Wang Chuan doesn't want candy." This must be the player whose identity was Wang Chuan.

Xia Jianren glanced around and, after confirming which bedroom Zhao Shuang was in, spoke softly, "The two of us also live in the staff apartments, just downstairs on the fourth floor. We were in our apartments when we entered the instance. We heard you were living with Zhao Shuang, so we found her room number from the employee accommodation list."

And so, they came over.

Now, four out of the five players had gathered. Only Gu Mian hadn't arrived yet.

「At this moment, Gu Mian was in a taxi, almost at his destination.」

When he first entered this instance, he was transported to a main road near a mountain. Gu Mian learned from the instance introduction that the story began with a team-building event, and he was playing the role of a fortunate individual who had not participated in it.

The mission was to survive for thirty-six hours. Actually, it didn't matter to him whether he met up with the other players or not. Even without discussing things with others, it wouldn't be an issue for him to go climb the mountain alone.

If he decided to meet the other players, he might even get stabbed.

However, after seeing something by the roadside, he decided to head to the staff housing first.

Chapter 546 The Relationship Between Gu Mian and Poop that We Have to Address_1

Gu Mian arrived at the foot of the employee apartment building, drawing on his memory. The complex, built about five or six years ago, was neither old nor new. Due to its poor location, few people lived there, and property prices were somewhat low.

Most of their company's workers were from out of town. Consequently, the boss had bought dozens of adjacent properties in the complex to serve as employee apartments, thereby attracting prospective employees.

But even these slightly lower-priced apartments were far better than the employee dormitories offered by other companies. Most employee dormitories were just that—dorms, with bunk beds or a loft bed over a desk. Having a room to oneself was a luxury.

One could only say that this boss was young and had not yet fully grasped the system of exploitation in contemporary society...

Not dwelling on the young boss, Gu Mian stepped into the building entrance. Everyone lives here. Even though they're dispersed when entering the instance, they're still likely to gather here. Moreover, since Zhao Shuang was found, she has been resting in the employee dormitory. The amnesiac they're referring to must be her... Wiser players will certainly go to Zhao Shuang first.

Considering the high bounty of one hundred thousand Game Coins on his head, Gu Mian decided to make some preparations before appearing in other players' sights.

Inside the entrance was an elevator. He stepped in and pressed the button for the fifth floor. Because "Gu Mian" had previously helped Zhao Shuang collect packages, he knew her apartment number.

The apartment building had seven floors and a basement parking garage on level negative one, directly accessible by the elevator.

In the cramped elevator, Gu Mian unzipped his guitar bag and pulled out a dangerously sharp chainsaw that glinted coldly.

After all, he was worth a lot. If other players were to attack him on sight, the scene wouldn't be pretty.

To prevent such a scenario, he decided to first pull out a more intimidating weapon for deterrence.

If any innocent bystander had tried to take the elevator at that moment, the sight inside would have scared them witless.

Fortunately, few people were using the elevator at this time. Gu Mian ascended safely to the fifth floor. The elevator stopped, and the fifth-floor button light went out.

Then, the elevator doors slid open. Gu Mian looked out onto a dim corridor that exuded an indescribable, eerie feeling.

Ignoring the peculiar corridor, he clutched his terrifyingly large chainsaw and hurried towards Zhao Shuang's dormitory. This floor had a layout of six apartments. In no time, Gu Mian was knocking on the door of Room 504.

Cangyue Shisi and the others were preparing to discuss clues when they heard a knock on the door.

Keke immediately ran to the door and looked out through the peephole. A couple of seconds later, she turned back to the three others. "I think it's another player."

The three exchanged uneasy glances.

Gu Mian's name was infamous. The moment they heard it, they thought of the figure on the wanted list, though they weren't yet sure if this was *that* Gu Mian.

Wang Chuan doesn't want candy pondered for a moment before saying, "Let's open the door. What do you all think?"

Since it might be the person on the wanted list, they had to consider his potential danger.

Keke did not object. "He doesn't look like a bad person, and he doesn't seem dangerous."

The others also nodded in agreement.

So Keke turned, gripped the handle, and twisted it down. SQUEAK. The door swung open.

The other three then saw Gu Mian standing outside.

He wore a white lab coat, the type doctors often wear, over a light gray, solid-colored shirt. The shirt fit smoothly, its hem tucked neatly into his trousers.

Of course, the most eye-catching thing was the enormous, orange-handled chainsaw he held.

So this is what Keke meant by 'not dangerous'? Cang Yue was dumbfounded.

Before they could react, Gu Mian stepped over the threshold, holding the door open with his foot. He wore a pleasant expression. "Ah, everyone's here. Looks like I'm the last to arrive."

Muttering to himself, he strode into the living room. "It's all that taxi driver's fault, going on and on about some story from his mountain climbing trip..."

Cang Yue and the other two instinctively took a step back, wanting to put distance between themselves and the bright orange chainsaw.

"Excuse me... sir..." Cang Yue began, clearly choosing her words carefully, "Are you..."

As she spoke, her eyes kept drifting to the menacing chainsaw in Gu Mian's hand.

Now that death in the instance was real, although they wanted to make a move on Gu Mian, they had to ensure their own safety first. Judging by this man's aura, our schemes will probably get us killed before we even get started!

Taking a step forward, Gu Mian closed the door. "There are always villains trying to... I mean, I'm just unlucky, always running into robbers and the like. A fortune-teller advised me to carry a saw. Sure enough, I've met fewer robbers since then."

As Gu Mian spoke, he took another step forward. The three people behind Keke simultaneously retreated a large step.

Their dream of obtaining one hundred thousand Game Coins shattered before it could even begin.

Ultimately, it was Keke who broke the strange silence, "Zhao Shuang is still asleep, and we don't know when she'll wake up. We should share any useful clues we have now..."

After witnessing the deadly weapon in Gu Mian's hands, their aggressive intentions had mostly subsided.

Forget about trying to kill Gu Mian; judging by his stance, they'd be lucky if he didn't kill them first!

Their dreams of punishing evil and promoting good were shattered. They had no choice but to compose themselves and face the instance. The instance's death protection mechanism had been deactivated, and they now needed to focus with utmost concentration on finding a way to survive.

As the others were lost in these thoughts, Gu Mian glanced sideways at Zhao Shuang, asleep in the bedroom. She's the protagonist of 'Amnesia,' and most likely the core of this instance.

Cang Yue and the other two had no objections to Keke's suggestion. The five players were temporarily in the same boat, having formed a precarious and shaky alliance.

Since Keke had made the suggestion, she spoke first, "Zhao Shuang is asleep in the room... Actually, before you three arrived, she woke up once."

Her voice was soft, as if afraid of waking Zhao Shuang in the bedroom. "Before you arrived, she woke up with a start. She said... she dreamt her deceased colleagues were resentful towards her. It wasn't just today; this has been happening for the past few days. She's been waking up from such nightmares every day."

Xia Jianren and Wang Chuan nodded thoughtfully, deep in thought.

After a while, Xia Jianren also spoke up, "Actually, we found something in our rooms too. Wang Chuan and I are roommates. The reason we didn't go to the team-building event was because we'd had a conflict with Zhao Shuang not long ago and didn't want to see her and cause more trouble. But we're still not clear on what the conflict was about."

As he spoke, he took out his phone to show the others; on the screen was the chat history with Zhao Shuang.

Gu Mian scanned it briefly. The chat log contained only a few messages, all initiated by Zhao Shuang.

Zhao Shuang: Xia Jianren, did you and Wang Chuan know about this all along?

Zhao Shuang: So, you were just hiding it from me, weren't you?

Zhao Shuang: Are you guys sick?

Zhao Shuang: So you don't dare to talk now, alright then, just wait and see.

There were only these few messages, and Xia Jianren hadn't replied to a single one, making it seem as if he indeed had something to feel guilty about.

Seeing this, Cang Yue couldn't help but wonder what Zhao Shuang had been kept in the dark about, and if she still remembered her conflict with Xia Jianren and Wang Chuan.

"This is the only clue we've found. We still don't really know what happened..." Xia Jianren's voice grew quieter as he spoke. He then glanced at Gu Mian, his expression seeming to say, I'm done, now it's your turn.

Gu Mian, who was quite good at reading people, understood Xia Jianren's meaning. Gripping the chainsaw handle with one hand and stroking his chin with the other, he said, "When I arrived, I was on a main road next to a mountain. That mountain is Fenshan Mountain, where the accident happened..."

He actually really wanted to complain about the name. Team building on Fenshan Mountain? Wasn't that like carrying a lantern into a latrine—courting death?

Chapter 547 My Gu Gu Spirit Never Gu Gu! _1

Gu Mian stroked the saw in his hand as he spoke.

The other players never took their eyes off this ferocious object, fearing that the seemingly abnormal Gu Mian would suddenly go mad and saw them all up.

At this moment, the fruit knife on the nearby coffee table seemed small and pathetic in comparison. Cangyue Shisi had completely abandoned the idea of comparing it to Gu Mian's saw.

"Then, I flagged down a driver on the way and had him bring me here," Gu Mian continued. "He rambled on during the journey, telling me stories about how Fenshan Mountain has supposedly been haunted since the first of October..."

After internally complaining about the name Fenshan Mountain yet again, Gu Mian added, "Apart from that, there's nothing else. According to the driver, the ghost in this instance is likely one of our former colleagues. According to the setup, there were thirty-nine people on the bus. Zhao Shuang survived, and eight are missing, which means there are at least thirty ghosts."

When Gu Mian said this, the atmosphere in the room noticeably changed.

Their expressions turned grim. Although they had mentally prepared for this, hearing it spoken aloud still filled them with fear.

Of course, the most terrifying presence at that moment was the man before them, dressed as a doctor.

He wore a slightly yellowed white medical coat over a light grey shirt, with a green leaf-shaped brooch pinned at the collar. Opening the player panel revealed that the name under his player icon wasn't "Gu Mian" but a green "Doctor." The color of the text rather matched his brooch.

Cangyue Shisi didn't dwell on why "Doctor" was displayed above his head instead of "Gu Mian."

Anyone with the name "Gu Mian" would probably want to disguise it, she thought. He's clearly obtained a special item that can conceal his gamertag.

Wang Chuan and Xia Jianren also didn't probe Gu Mian's green gamertag much further. Like any normal person, their attention was riveted on the terrifying saw in Gu Mian's hand.

Among everyone present, only Keke listened intently to Gu Mian, unconcerned about whether the saw might fall on her head.

She was somewhat puzzled as to why Gu Mian had come.

Gu Mian was the only one on the bounty list. A single wrong move could turn a life into tens of thousands of Game Coins. After discovering the players were initially scattered, Keke had assumed Gu Mian wouldn't join them.

To her surprise, he hadn't just come; he'd done so ostentatiously.

Keke was slightly baffled.

Meanwhile, Cangyue Shisi clasped her hands, reluctantly realizing she needed to ask something.

She stared at the object in the Doctor's hand. After a few seconds of deliberation, she mustered the courage to speak, "Um, I suppose we should discuss how to survive next. But before we discuss how to deal with this instance, I'd like to ask, Doctor..."

As Cangyue spoke, she glanced up at Gu Mian, struggling to maintain a composed expression. "Your name is Gu Mian, right?"

"Indeed," Gu Mian didn't deny it; he had grown accustomed to his real name being exposed. "You should have known when you first entered the instance."

Upon receiving confirmation, the other two male players took deep breaths, their expressions unreadable.

Cangyue pursed her lips and nodded. She didn't ask the idiotic question of whether he was the person on the bounty list.

Now she finally had some understanding of why this Mr. Gu Mian had managed to dominate the bounty list for so long—his weapon alone spoke volumes.

"Well," Cangyue said, forcing a composed expression as she glanced at Zhao Shuang, who was fast asleep in the bedroom, successfully steering the topic away from Gu Mian. "Everyone knows that death is real in this instance, so we can't approach it like before..."

Although players had always risked their lives in previous instances, the death protection mechanism had offered some comfort.

'You can resurrect even if you die'—this thought had often eased players' minds in desperate situations during instances, making impending doom seem less terrifying.

But things were different now.

The death protection mechanism in instances was disabled; players now faced actual death.

The atmosphere in the room remained oppressive. Everyone seemed deeply concerned that the death protection mechanism was disabled—everyone, that is, except for the unreliable Doctor, who appeared rather indifferent.

"Anyway, let's discuss our strategy. I believe everyone here has experience with several instances," Cangyue said, pointedly glancing at Gu Mian. "If anyone has suggestions, feel free to share them while Zhao Shuang is still asleep."

The sole survivor, Zhao Shuang, remained unconscious, giving the five players an opportunity to discuss their strategies.

Wang Chuan Doesn't Want Candy was the first to offer his thoughts. A man in his early thirties with a composed demeanor, he spoke cautiously, "Based on my experience, more clues help complete tasks. Clues within an instance can sometimes be key to survival. Therefore, I suggest we actively investigate the current mysteries: why the bus overturned and what Zhao Shuang has forgotten. Understanding this could greatly increase our chances of survival."

As he spoke, he tried to look away from Gu Mian's chainsaw, pretending not to see it.

"That makes sense," Cangyue chimed in after Wang Chuan finished. "I've been through quite a few instances, and sometimes a key clue can indeed determine everyone's survival."

Gu Mian stood silently, not saying a word. What the two had said wasn't wrong; in many instances, possessing a key clue could indeed prevent casualties.

This had been true for the taxi instance, hide-and-seek instance, trolley instance, Fairy Tale City instance, and Gaokao event he had experienced.

Correct exploration could significantly boost players' survival rates. However, players might sometimes take a wrong turn and find themselves in a predicament. In such cases, the probability of being wiped out was high; staying put would actually guarantee a higher survival rate.

Xia Jianren, standing nearby, seemed to grasp this concept well. He immediately offered a different opinion in a hushed voice, "I understand the reasoning. But as we know, from now on, we face real death in instances. This is our first time in an instance with true death. If there's any slip-up, we could all be doomed. Therefore, I suggest we be conservative and avoid reckless actions."

Hearing this, Cangyue nodded subtly. "Indeed, pursuing clues can sometimes lead to heavy casualties. We even risk death if we're alone. It would be best if we avoid acting alone..."

She looked conflicted, her brow furrowed.

Keke remained silent, merely watching the other three. She appeared indecisive, just as she often had in past instances.

After a few moments of contemplation, Cangyue finally looked at Gu Mian.

By this point, Gu Mian had managed to discreetly slip the chainsaw back into the guitar bag. After all, an NPC was sleeping on a bed not far away and could wake up at any moment. If she did, Gu Mian couldn't very well claim he was carrying a chainsaw to fix pipes, could he?

Although the chainsaw was now hidden in the guitar bag, its intimidating presence hadn't lessened.

Cangyue cautiously began, "So, Mr. Gu Mian, do you have any thoughts?"

In her view, the only person on the game's most wanted list must cherish his life dearly and thus be quite experienced in dealing with instances. He could likely propose a good plan.

However, this so-called "Doctor" didn't seem very interested in the instance; he appeared lost in thought. When finally addressed, he responded with a startlingly absurd comment—

"Do as you like. I'm going out to take a look."

What on earth? Cangyue's eyes widened. Before she could even protest, she watched him sling the guitar bag over his shoulder, open the door, and step into the dark hallway.

The other two male players were equally dumbstruck. Xia Jianren stared at the open door and the dark hallway beyond, swallowing nervously. "Is this really okay? This is an instance where we could actually die. Is he serious?" It's like he has a death wish!

"Are people on the bounty list always this confident...?" Wang Chuan murmured, rubbing his hands.

Chapter 548 This month, I want to be a better person! _1

Keke silently watched Gu Mian walk away. Considering this instance involved real death, Gu Mian hadn't notified Chu Changge or Fatty before entering. He planned to test the waters alone initially. However, Keke stopped him halfway. The Doctor role was the only hope of saving her sister, so she naturally wouldn't stand by and watch Gu Mian enter the instance alone.

Compared to other players, Keke, who had to support two people, possessed considerable experience with instances and a remarkably low death rate within them. She was confident she could lend Gu Mian a helping hand if he was in danger.

Though this person usually wouldn't be in any critical situation.

After entering the instance, she initially planned to avoid other players and find Gu Mian alone. However, to her surprise, Gu Mian went directly to the employee dormitory and voluntarily joined the other players.

All players knew Gu Mian's name was on the wanted list.

Logically, a wanted person, if sane, would never deliberately mingle with a crowd, yet he came voluntarily...

Just as Keke furrowed her brows slightly, questioning Gu Mian's intentions, Cangyue Shisi suddenly leaned in and asked tentatively, "Do you know him?"

Keke instantly straightened her neck and cast a puzzled look at the person beside her. "Who?"

"Never mind." Seeing Keke's reaction, Cang Yue chuckled softly. "I thought you knew him well, which is why you could say Gu Mian doesn't look dangerous."

Keke also forced a smile. "Earlier, I didn't notice what he had in his hand."

Cang Yue chuckled and didn't press further.

Meanwhile, Wang Chuan doesn't want candy and Xia Jianren nervously averted their gazes, exchanging surprised glances.

"Is it really okay for him to go out like this?" Xia Jianren seemed worried.

Of course, he wasn't concerned about Gu Mian's safety but rather feared Gu Mian might accidentally trigger the instance's restrictions and implicate him.

Despite his fear, Xia Jianren didn't dare follow and monitor Gu Mian, so he had to abandon the idea.

Wang Chuan, beside him, quickly averted his gaze. "Don't worry too much. We're all intelligent people; I assume he won't act recklessly."

As Wang Chuan spoke, he glanced toward the bedroom where Zhao Shuang was still sleeping. The television had stopped broadcasting the news about the traffic accident at Fenshan Mountain and was now showing another news report.

"In recent months, the world has experienced frequent natural disasters, causing a huge blow to economic development..."

Cang Yue picked up the remote and turned down the television volume to avoid waking Zhao Shuang.

She averted her gaze from the television screen and looked at the other three. "Let's discuss this instance first. The mission this time is to survive for thirty-six hours. The duration actually isn't that long..."

Cang Yue had encountered survival missions in instances that required surviving for several weeks; this mere day and a half was the shortest survival task she had ever received.

She began hesitantly, "Actually, Xia Jianren's suggestion isn't bad. If we're careful during these thirty-six hours and do less, we might be able to survive until the end."

Actively investigating the instance or not each had its pros and cons.

Actively exploring the instance had a higher probability of fatalities but might reveal the path to survival at once. If a path was found, the remaining survivors would be certain to make it through. However, it could also trigger a dead end, turning an instance where survival was possible into a death trap, leading to the entire group's demise.

Not actively exploring the instance meant neither finding a path to survival nor triggering a dead end. Survival would then depend entirely on fate.

"This is our first time entering an instance with real death. I believe it's safer to be cautious and avoid investigating the instance too much for now," Cang Yue mused aloud.

"I think so too!" Xia Jianren nodded eagerly. "In the past, I've seen many players trigger restrictions because they were overly active. In contrast, those who were initially less active had a greater chance of survival."

Wang Chuan frowned, clearly not entirely agreeing with Xia Jianren, but he didn't immediately refute him. "Actually, I think actively finding the path to survival is best. Being passive does offer a chance of survival, but one's fate isn't in one's own hands then... Of course, this instance is special. Even if I have different ideas, I can't act alone. If you all think Xia Jianren's advice is good, then I'll go with the majority. Keke, what do you think?"

Keke, having been addressed, looked up. After glancing at the others, she reluctantly said, "I'll go with whatever you decide."

Currently, Cang Yue and Xia Jianren both supported not actively exploring the instance. Wang Chuan disagreed, and Keke maintained an "I'll do whatever you guys do" stance.

The situation became somewhat awkward.

"Perhaps we can ask Gu Mian for his opinion when he returns," Wang Chuan suggested.

"I always feel he won't offer any reliable suggestions," Cang Yue muttered, her gaze fixed on the nearly silent television screen as she participated in the discussion, careful not to miss any news related to the instance.

At this point, Xia Jianren also asked, "That Gu Mian still hasn't returned. Do any of you know him?"

No one responded.

A few seconds later, Cang Yue replied, "I matched into this instance alone. What about you all?"

Xia Jianren and Wang Chuan stated they also matched individually. Keke, feigning ignorance of Gu Mian, said, "I'm the same as you."

She had never intended to reveal her acquaintance with Gu Mian from the start. Whether others believed her or not was a different matter.

"So, it seems none of us know each other..." Wang Chuan turned to look at the sky outside. It was already exceptionally dark past seven in the evening. They would have to spend the next nearly ten hours in darkness.

On the bed, Zhao Shuang lay with her eyes closed. Her furrowed brows suggested she was still having a nightmare.

Cang Yue suddenly said, "Of course, even if we decide not to actively participate in unraveling the instance, it doesn't mean we should discard all clues. Otherwise, we'll be completely in the dark."

Having a decent understanding of the instance could increase their chances of survival.

Some clues are given at the start of the instance, like the chat history on Xia Jianren's phone.

"We already know there was some conflict between Zhao Shuang and you all before the team-building event on October 1st," Cang Yue said, looking at the two men before her. "It seems she found out about a secret you were hiding."

Wang Chuan looked at the phone in Xia Jianren's hand and nodded. "I think so too, but we don't actually know what the secret is..."

They were players who had only recently entered the instance and were clueless about the chat history on the phone. Perhaps this secret was key to the instance's core.

"What Gu Mian said wasn't very useful either. Only that the taxi driver told him Fenshan Mountain was haunted, but he didn't elaborate," Cang Yue frowned. "Speaking of which, he's been out for quite a while now, hasn't he? What on earth is he doing that he hasn't returned?"

The others also looked towards the door. Gu Mian had indeed been gone for a long time.

Wang Chuan turned his head and glanced at Zhao Shuang, still asleep on the bed. "Should we go out and take a look?"

Even though this was an instance where real death could occur, they couldn't huddle in this small house forever. They would have to venture out sooner or later.

Xia Jianren didn't seem mentally prepared. He hesitated before saying, "I don't think it's a good idea to leave Zhao Shuang here alone. After all, she's a key figure in the instance... Let's wait a bit longer, maybe until she wakes up?"

Of course, if Zhao Shuang didn't wake up until the next day, they couldn't possibly wait here until the next morning.

It was well known that dangers would appear not long after an instance started. It was unlikely they could stay here safely until the next morning.

"We don't necessarily have to wait for her," Cang Yue shook her head slightly. "If we decide not to actively explore the instance, this key character will be meaningless to us. In fact, it might be better to stay as far away from her as possible."

Wang Chuan agreed with Cang Yue. "Cang Yue is right. If we decide not to actively participate in unraveling the instance, it's best to stay away from key NPCs. For example, this instance is named 'Amnesia,' and Zhao Shuang happens to have amnesia. She's obviously the key character of this instance..."

Just as Wang Chuan was speaking, a knock on the door suddenly interrupted him.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

Everyone simultaneously looked towards the door.

Is he back?

Cang Yue instinctively took a few steps forward, but then she sensed something was wrong.

At the same time, Xia Jianren also exclaimed, "Wait!"

Cang Yue stopped, holding her breath and looking at the door. Something is wrong. This knocking isn't right.

The others also fell silent, staring wide-eyed in the direction of the sound.

The dark brown door blocked their view, preventing them from seeing outside. Only the rhythmic knocking could be heard.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

The sound echoed in the silent room. No one spoke. Xia Jianren opened his mouth but didn't utter a word, then closed it again.

It's regular, stiff, rigid. No normal person would knock like this.

Moreover, from start to finish, not a single voice, not even a cough, had been heard from outside. It was as if it wasn't a person knocking, but the door itself making the sound.

This is the residence of the dead. It's obvious who would be knocking like this.

Don't make a sound! Cang Yue glanced at the others, signaling them with her eyes.

Even without her signal, the others wouldn't have dared to make a sound. They all kept their mouths tightly shut, their eyes wide.

Everyone remained silent. After a few minutes, the knocking seemed to grow tired, and the sound weakened.

After a little longer, the rhythmic knocking stopped completely, as if whatever was outside had left.

Just as they were about to sigh in relief, a voice suddenly came from the bedroom. "Is someone knocking at the door?"

The voice wasn't too loud or too soft; everyone in the living room heard it clearly. They looked over in shock to see Zhao Shuang, who had woken up at some point, sitting on the bed and looking at them.

Simultaneously, the knocking, which had stopped, suddenly resumed. This time, it wasn't rhythmic; it was violent pounding.

It heard Zhao Shuang's voice! It wants to come in!

The tremendous pounding on the door resounded continuously. The dark brown door vibrated violently, as if it would be smashed open at any moment.

"Everyone hide!" Cang Yue instructed in a hushed, panicked voice.

The living room wasn't large; only the area behind the sofa offered cover. They quickly ducked behind the sofa, concealing themselves.

Zhao Shuang also seemed to realize something. She made no further sound, only wrapped herself tightly in her blanket, shivering as she watched the vibrating door.

"So what the hell is that thing outside? A ghost?" Xia Jianren asked, his voice barely audible from panic.

Wang Chuan held his breath and nodded slightly, not speaking.

"That guy is still outside, isn't he?" Xia Jianren asked, eyes wide. "Could he be dead already?"

Chapter 549 Today is also a thrilling day_1

Just as Xia Jianren was anxiously speculating about Gu Mian's fate, the fierce knocking on the door abruptly ceased.

The sound died away instantly, plunging the room into silence.

Only after they were sure no more sound was coming did the few people behind the sofa carefully poke their heads out. They saw the door panel, previously vibrating from the impact, was now still. Zhao Shuang also poked her head out from the bedroom, looking towards the front door. "What was that just now?"

Cang Yue, still shaken, turned to look at Zhao Shuang, the female protagonist of this instance. It was Zhao Shuang's untimely interruption that had endangered everyone. Just like before, she was now asking questions again before they had confirmed it was completely safe.

If Cang Yue had encountered a player like Zhao Shuang in an instance, she would undoubtedly abandon her without hesitation.

But Zhao Shuang was an NPC in this instance. Presumably, she had never encountered such a perilous situation before, so her reaction was understandable.

Luckily, whatever was outside the door had truly left and wasn't drawn back by Zhao Shuang's hasty remarks.

Cang Yue sighed and, not concealing anything from Zhao Shuang, said, "It was something unclean. You mentioned you frequently have those kinds of nightmares. It's... your... our colleagues who've come back..."

Zhao Shuang's eyes widened. "Are you saying... a ghost? How is that possible?"

Telling someone "your deceased colleagues have come back as ghosts" is something no normal person would believe.

"But you saw what just happened. The knocking at the door didn't sound like it was made by a person..."

Just as Cang Yue was explaining to Zhao Shuang, Xia Jianren reached over and tugged Keke, who was standing next to the car. "Gu Mian is still outside, right? If he's alive, he definitely would've heard such a loud noise from us."

Keke nodded obediently, an expression of not knowing what to say on his face.

Xia Jianren didn't care whether Keke answered. Instead, he frowned and muttered to himself, He's still not back. He couldn't really be dead, could he? He seemed quite capable; he shouldn't have died so easily.

Zhao Shuang seemed to have a hard time accepting the reality before her. Her eyes were vacant, her expression blank as she stammered, "But... even if they've become ghosts, why would they act like this?"

Clearly, she had also figured out the intent of whatever had been knocking earlier. The sound had carried an immense, chilling malice.

An Evil Ghost never needs a reason to kill.

The players were all certain of this. However, Zhao Shuang evidently didn't understand this and even seemed somewhat in denial about the existence of ghosts.

At this moment, Wang Chuan stood up and quickly walked towards Cang Yue. "Regardless of our plans, I suggest we leave this place first. After all, this place is..."

Even though he didn't finish his sentence, everyone understood what he meant.

This was the staff dormitory, where the deceased had lived—an extremely dangerous place.

"So what about her..." Xia Jianren glanced at Zhao Shuang, whispering to the other players, "If we leave, do we take her along?"

Cang Yue frowned. In such a situation, anyone without experience in the instance would be a burden. Zhao Shuang had just demonstrated this perfectly.

However, something that had just happened gave Cang Yue an idea.

"You all saw it. When that thing was knocking earlier," Cang Yue began, her brows furrowed, "it went berserk as soon as it heard Zhao Shuang's voice. It seemed very focused on Zhao Shuang. Actually, I'm not sure if it went berserk because it heard a voice in general, or specifically because it was Zhao Shuang's voice. Moreover, the name of this instance is 'Amnesia,' which is closely connected to Zhao Shuang..."

"Wait a second!" Xia Jianren interrupted Cang Yue. "Didn't you agree we wouldn't actively investigate the instance? Why are you suddenly so keen on researching the connection between Zhao Shuang and the instance?"

"Not actively investigating the instance is to avoid triggering taboos, but that doesn't mean we should push away all clues. This one practically delivered itself to us. Besides, I have a hunch," Cang Yue's frown deepened, "these ghosts... might have some conflict with Zhao Shuang. Perhaps even... Zhao Shuang caused their deaths!"

The rest of the players all sucked in a breath of cold air.

"If I'm right, then it would make sense why the ghost became violent upon hearing Zhao Shuang's voice. Zhao Shuang lost her memory after October 1st, forgetting what happened that day. I suspect the way to survive this instance is tied to her memories. Players need to help Zhao Shuang regain her memory of that day and understand the truth about the car crash on October 1st. And then..."

Cang Yue paused, and Wang Chuan continued where she left off, "If things are as you suspect, then the ghosts are targeting Zhao Shuang, not us. We just need to keep our distance from Zhao Shuang..."

"No." Cang Yue refuted Wang Chuan. "Although I suspect the ghosts only have a grudge against Zhao Shuang, we all know ghosts don't need a reason to kill. As players, we can't assume we're safe. I think there's one way to prevent them from attacking us."

Xia Jianren immediately understood her. "You mean... avenge the ghosts?"

If the people in that vehicle really died because of Zhao Shuang, then as long as we help the ghosts kill Zhao Shuang, their resentment won't be directed at us.

"But is everything really as you guessed?" Keke looked at Cang Yue.

They could also trigger a fatal trap in the instance by blindly killing Zhao Shuang.

Everyone clearly understood this, so nobody was prepared to kill Zhao Shuang at this time.

Xia Jianren couldn't help but ask, "But didn't we initially plan not to investigate anything proactively? Now you're even considering that killing Zhao Shuang might be the path to survival. So, what's next? Do we look for clues or find a place to hide?"

Cang Yue took a deep breath and, after a moment of deep thought, said, "For now, let's leave here. And we take Zhao Shuang with us."

This was the first instance she'd participated in where death was real. She had originally planned to proceed cautiously, but the path to survival in this instance seemed so ridiculously obvious that she was reluctant to let this chance go.

Even if it wasn't necessarily the true path to survival, it was too simple and too obvious to pass up.

"We're still missing one person," Wang Chuan said, remembering Gu Mian, who hadn't returned.

"Let's not wait for him. There's no need to stay in this dangerous place waiting," Cang Yue said, walking into the bedroom and reaching to pull Zhao Shuang from the bed. "We're not staying here. You don't want to stay here alone, do you?"

Zhao Shuang certainly wouldn't dare.

She asked, somewhat bewildered, "Then where are we going?"

Cang Yue pulled her up from the bed. "Let's get out of this building first. It's too dangerous here."

"Okay..." Zhao Shuang agreed, fumbling for her phone on the bedside table. She stuffed it into her pocket, then reached for her ID and keys.

By now, Xia Jianren was at the door, looking out through the peephole and grumbling, We agreed not to be proactive. This is too dangerous.

"Nothing outside, right?" Wang Chuan asked from nearby.

Xia Jianren, using the faint light from the corridor window, said, "Looks clear. No one, nothing out there."

"That thing must have left. It's not in this building anymore. Let's go," Wang Chuan said, reaching for the doorknob. But the moment his fingers touched it, a sudden loud noise from upstairs startled everyone.

It sounded like something heavy hitting the floor, followed by footsteps—like someone walking around upstairs in shuffling slippers.

"What are they doing upstairs?" Xia Jianren let out a breath. "That scared me to death. Let's get out of here, quick..."

"Wait a minute!" Zhao Shuang suddenly interrupted him.

Xia Jianren turned to look at Zhao Shuang. Her face was deathly pale, her teeth chattering uncontrollably.

Seeing her like this, Xia Jianren also felt a little panicked. "What's wrong?"

Zhao Shuang's pale lips trembled, and it took her a long moment to form a complete sentence.
"Upstairs... Upstairs is also a dormitory! They're all dead... How can there be someone up there?!"

Chapter 550 You're Really Something _1

Cang Yue and the others felt their scalps prickle. They haven't left the building! They're still here!

"Don't open the door!" Cang Yue raised her voice slightly to remind Xia Jianren. As long as the ghosts were still in this building, they weren't safe. Opening the door in this situation was undoubtedly courting death.

Xia Jianren didn't need Cang Yue's warning; he had already snatched his hand back and even retreated several steps, distancing himself from the main door.

He anxiously looked up at the ceiling. "But we can't stay here forever. I guess they'll come to this room eventually... But the ghost didn't enter this room just now. Could it be that they can't get in?"

Cang Yue said softly, "The instance just started. The ghosts obviously won't kill all the players within half an hour of the instance beginning. Previous instances tended to follow a pattern." In other words, it was too early for anyone to die.

As she spoke, Cang Yue glanced at the clock. It was already eight o'clock, and it was pitch black outside.

Hearing this, Xia Jianren also grew very anxious. "Then we..."

But before he could finish, everything before them suddenly went dark. The power had gone out.

The sudden darkness frayed Zhao Shuang's fragile nerves. She opened her mouth in terror, about to scream, but Cang Yue quickly strode over and clamped a hand over her mouth.

"Don't scream!" Cang Yue pressed her hand firmly over Zhao Shuang's mouth, preventing her from doing anything else foolish.

The other players were also startled but quickly calmed down, making no sound other than a few shivers.

They keenly observed that when the power went out, the footsteps from upstairs also stopped. The room was instantly plunged into an eerie silence.

The sudden darkness prevented Keke from seeing her surroundings. Before her eyes could adjust, a cacophony of sounds assaulted her ears: the sharp screech of tires scraping against the ground, the jarring screams of many people simultaneously, and the thud and clatter of something heavy falling and rolling.

And beyond these sounds... there seemed to be the noise of many people coming downstairs.

Clearly, they had all heard this sound. Keke felt Xia Jianren trembling beside her and heard his faint voice ask, "Are those things from upstairs coming down?"

The screams from an unknown source grew louder and louder, filling the entire room with heart-wrenching cries. No one was in the mood to answer his question. Everyone was pale, hands clamped over their ears, their heads throbbing from the din.

During this prolonged torment, Xia Jianren thought he heard the sound of footsteps descending the stairs stop right outside their door.

At the same time, another piercing sound suddenly erupted: a telephone ringing.

The staff dormitory was equipped with a company telephone line for internal calls, free of charge.

The phone had no caller ID. Its small screen merely flickered, looking particularly eerie in the darkness.

This isn't a call from a human. It's a call from a ghost.

Cang Yue stared wide-eyed at the small screen, the only source of light in the room. Biting her lip, she looked at Zhao Shuang. "You answer it."

She knew this call was almost certainly for Zhao Shuang.

Zhao Shuang's hand trembled as she reached for the persistently ringing phone. Shuddering, she picked up the receiver and pressed it to her ear.

From the other end came an incredibly chilling sentence, delivered in a hollow voice as if by a group of people speaking in unison: "We've returned."

「It was now 8:30 PM.」

The weather was poor that day. Heavy clouds obscured most of the sky, allowing only a dim moon to peek through.

Gu Mian was examining a phone booth at the entrance to the residential complex.

This phone booth was no different from those in the real world: four glass sides and a landline telephone inside. The only distinct feature was a "Call Taxi" button in the phone's lower-left corner.

These phone booths were quite common. Gu Mian had seen them along the road when he first entered the instance; in fact, he had used one to call a taxi initially.

He had to admit, this contraption looked and sounded very familiar.

If one pressed the "Call Taxi" button in the lower-left corner, a sweet female voice would say, "Hello, this is Sunshine Taxi..."

Gu Mian had been in a hurry when he arrived and hadn't studied the phone booth carefully.

Now that he finally had the time, he stood inside the transparent booth, staring at the landline before him, deep in thought.

After pondering for a moment, Gu Mian picked up the receiver and pressed the "Call Taxi" button in the lower-left corner.

The same familiar voice, the same familiar Sunshine Taxi.

"Hello, this is Sunshine Taxi."

"I need a taxi."

"Alright, your address has been noted. Please wait a moment..."

It was the same familiar script; she didn't ask Gu Mian for his location.

"Wait," Gu Mian suddenly interrupted the female voice. "I have a question I'd like to ask."

"Please, go ahead."

"Is the Antarctic Chemical Factory far from here?"

Silence hung on the other end for several seconds, as if the voice was trying to place the location.

After a moment, the female voice continued, "I'm sorry, sir, but I don't believe there's a place called the Antarctic Chemical Factory nearby."

"What about Shicha Sea?"

"That's not here either."

"Crazy Game City?"

"I'm sorry, there's no such place here."

Gu Mian searched his memory for other locations and asked, "Is there a Sweet Manor?"

The customer service agent's tone had become a little strange, as if she thought she was dealing with a lunatic. Nevertheless, she answered patiently, "There seems to be a place called Sweet Manor in the next city. Do you want to go there? Now?"

As soon as Cang Yue and the others rushed out of the residential complex's gate, they spotted the Doctor. He had left the staff dormitory much earlier and was now idly standing in a phone booth, apparently making a call.

He looked relaxed, a stark contrast to them, who had desperately fled the staff dormitory.

After Zhao Shuang had taken the call, they discovered the door to their room had been opened at some point.

Terrified, the group immediately swarmed out. They didn't dare take the elevator, instead racing down the stairs and not stopping until they were out of the residential complex's gate, finally pausing to catch their breath.

They hadn't expected to run into Gu Mian.

"I thought he was dead! Don't tell me he's been here making calls all this time!" Xia Jianren had clearly also seen Gu Mian standing in the phone booth. "He left the dormitory just to come here and make a call? But who could he possibly call in this instance?"

Panting, Cang Yue quickened her pace and approached the phone booth.

The booth's soundproofing wasn't very good, and Gu Mian's voice could be heard drifting out from inside.

"No, I don't plan on going to that place in the middle of the night. Um... Miss, I also wanted to ask if you've seen a variety show called 'Crazy Guessing Words'... What about 'Sweet Lovers' then?"

Cang Yue stood before the phone booth, her eyes wide.

They had just narrowly escaped the staff dormitory, so terrified they barely dared to breathe. Yet this man was in a phone booth, casually asking some woman if she'd seen a TV variety show?

"You've really got some nerve!" Cang Yue exclaimed.