

Collapse 57

Chapter 57: Rankings_1

When Gu Mian got home, Chu Changge and Fatty noticed a roll of steel wire in his hand—the wire rig he had extracted.

Fatty curiously prodded the coil of steel wire. This is way more useful than the gophers he'd pulled out before.

Chu Changge adjusted his glasses and said to Gu Mian, "I saw it. The game notification said that an instance called 'Deadly Curse' had collapsed, and your name is on the compensation list."

"Probably because I cut off the head of the curse's source," Gu Mian replied with a slight nod.

Fatty, who was still fiddling with the wire rig, felt his scalp tingle.

Then, as if suddenly remembering something, Fatty blurted out, "Dr. Gu, did you blow something up this morning? I think I heard an explosion."

"No," Gu Mian shook his head. "The East City Police Station was hit by a rocket launcher."

"A rocket launcher?" Fatty's hair practically stood on end. "Someone attacked a police station with a rocket launcher? And the police didn't do anything?"

"The police can't exactly go head-to-head with a rocket launcher, can they?"

If they tried to fight it head-on and died, it would be a significant loss. Death in an instance isn't true death, but death in reality is terrifyingly real.

Humans are an inherently adventurous species. When another possibility presents itself, you can't expect people to remain docile; they usually rise to the challenge. That's why people who dared to bomb the police station had appeared.

Undoubtedly, more would follow—perhaps even people willing to burn down schools.

By now, quite a few people probably possessed lethal weapons, enough to take on the police directly—and potentially get away unscathed. Going out on the streets had become extremely dangerous.

On his way back, Gu Mian had seen what looked like several bodies lying in concealed alleyways. Apparently, more conflicts had broken out that morning.

Chu Changge turned his head slightly. "This morning, while you were in the instance, we tried the radio again, but there's still no signal at all. However, Fatty got some news from his friend..."

Fatty nodded continuously. "It's that female celebrity from the Spirit Car instance; I added her as a friend." He was talking about Xiao Qiao.

"She's in the capital now. She said many people from different places have formed large organizations... like bandits claiming a mountain stronghold."

"These groups are mostly made up of able-bodied young men who go around raiding and killing. I heard there's one in the capital too, but there are plenty of soldiers there, and they were contacted directly. So, they used tanks to crush those bandits before they could get too big."

"She said the capital is completely locked down now. People inside can get out, but no one from the outside can get in..."

These organizations definitely need to be crushed before they can grow.

Otherwise, as the game progresses, some organizations could quickly become more powerful than the military, and a major conflict would be inevitable.

But while the capital could take such a hard line, other places couldn't.

Military resources were tight; they couldn't cover every region. The forces they could mobilize were probably only enough to protect major cities.

Moreover, the military personnel also had to enter instances to enhance their physical capabilities; otherwise, they'd soon be unable to suppress these large organizations.

"Her nickname is Xiao Qiao, right?" Gu Mian stroked his chin.

She's in the capital now.

Fatty nodded. "Yep."

Gu Mian immediately typed "Xiao Qiao" into the friend search bar and sent a request.

Shortly after, the other party accepted his friend request.

Captain Feng had previously sent Gu Mian a list of police officers in Lianhua City. Gu Mian copied the list and sent it to Xiao Qiao. "Hey, this is a list of contacts for the Lianhua City police. Could you help get this to the police in the capital?"

This way, the Lianhua City police should be able to contact the capital authorities directly.

The capital has a large military garrison, so it should be relatively safe. Strolling around there generally wouldn't get you killed.

A few seconds later, she replied, "Okeydokey."

Gu Mian: "..."

Where the hell did she learn that from?

Xiao Qiao worked incredibly fast. By dusk, Gu Mian received a message from Captain Feng.

Lianhua City East Police Station Captain Feng: Damn, Gu Mian! You actually got the list straight to the capital! We've made contact with the higher-ups now.

Gu Mian: What did they say?

Lianhua City East Police Station Captain Feng: *Sigh*... They said it's going to be chaotic down here for a while longer. There are organizations, big and small, popping up all over the country, and there just aren't enough troops.

Lianhua City East Police Station Captain Feng: I have a classmate who said an artillery unit had finally cleared a road and was heading to another provincial capital. Halfway there, they all got dragged into a special instance. When they came out, they were dumbfounded—their vehicles and equipment, all gone. Snatched by someone else.

That's pretty rough.

Lianhua City East Police Station Captain Feng: And I hear this kind of thing has happened more than once or twice. It seems like the game's special instances really like to target the military. They suffer heavy losses every time.

Lianhua City East Police Station Captain Feng: As a result, the higher-ups are extremely cautious about deploying troops now, terrified that some special instance will pop up mid-route.

So tragic!

Lianhua City East Police Station Captain Feng: The government will do its best to maintain order, but you guys need to be careful. It's really chaotic these days, so try not to wander around.

Gu Mian: Okeydokey.

Lianhua City East Police Station Captain Feng: Where on earth did you pick that up...

Gu Mian had just collapsed an instance, and now two announcements on the bulletin board bore his name.

He wasn't in a hurry to get his name up there a third time, so he spent the next few days at home, researching the game.

Although he didn't want his name to become common knowledge, the game apparently had other ideas.

One morning, Gu Mian had just opened his eyes when he heard Fatty yelling from the living room, "Dr. Gu! Get up! Quick... come look at the game interface!"

He came barging in, practically bouncing, and yanked Gu Mian's blanket off.

It was nearing the Spring Festival, and Gu Mian shivered as the cold air hit him. "What are you doing?"

Fatty said urgently, "Quick, look at the game panel! The ranking system is up!"

Hearing this, Gu Mian suddenly had a bad feeling. He opened the game panel, and sure enough, the "Rankings" section was now accessible.

He clicked on the rankings with a sigh of resignation. Of course. His name, Gu Mian, was at the very top, in first place.