

Collapse 601

Chapter 601 Even Princess Mianmian felt scared _1

Fatty found it very strange.

Two strangers appeared out of nowhere, insisting on helping him with his task.

Both were in navy blue suits. They both had strings around their necks, but whatever was tied to the strings was tucked into their jackets, out of sight.

Fatty eyed the unexpected duo with caution. "Are you guys inspectors?"

They put down the rubbish in their hands and looked at Fatty. "Do you know that there are inspectors here in this instance? Did an acquaintance send you?"

They seemed ready to beat up this "acquaintance."

A floating eyeball flew over Fatty's head, then drifted off as if nothing had happened.

"Ah," Fatty said, looking at the people in front of him. "An NPC named Mr. Green told us there's something we're looking for in this instance. That's why we came."

As he spoke, he glanced at the new garbage the two had picked up, surprised that the inspectors here were so eager to help.

"How kind-hearted!" Fatty exclaimed.

The two inspectors laughed stiffly. "HEH HEH."

From their expressions, it was clear they remembered who Mr. Green was.

"So what is it you are looking for here?" asked the male inspector. "People familiar with this place know that it's just a recycling center full of worthless junk."

Although some items of slight value might be discarded here along with the rubbish, those were not abundant.

Most of the valuable items here were those NPCs intentionally discarded because they no longer needed them. These items were mostly useful, but since their owners didn't want them, they ended up in the recycling center.

For instance, the monster a certain goddess had previously discarded, used makeup products from some female NPCs, and Dungeon Entry Tickets for some instances.

It was rumored the operators of that instance didn't want any players inside, so they collected all its Dungeon Entry Tickets and dumped them into the recycling center...

Wait a minute.

Realizing something, the two looked at each other. "You guys didn't come here for those special Dungeon Entry Tickets, did you?"

Fatty looked at the two in front of him, confused. "What special Dungeon Entry Tickets?"

Seeing Fatty's sincere expression, which didn't seem feigned, the two fell silent, exchanging a glance.

They then repeated their previous question. "If it's not for that, then what are you here for?"

Having spent a long time by Chu Changge's side, Fatty's ability to tell convincing lies had greatly improved.

"We've been to an instance called Angel Redemption, and we were told that a goddess had thrown something good into this instance. We came here specifically to find it."

Upon hearing this, both inspectors had strange expressions.

The man spoke first. "Speaking of which, the 'lost' goddess from that instance did throw a big fellow in here. Fortunately, it's not aggressive, but that's hardly something good, right?"

Fatty perked up his ears to listen.

"It's just a giant monster," the female inspector said, looking at Fatty. "I don't remember her throwing anything else into this instance."

"That's not something worth looking for. I suggest you complete your task quickly and leave." As she spoke, she stealthily glanced at Gu Mian on the high platform.

The demon behind Gu Mian looked listless, as if it wanted to jump down.

If Fatty made a few more mistakes, it might commit suicide on the spot.

"As instance inspectors, we also help players if they encounter difficulties," the male inspector said, managing a forced smile. "Don't worry, we'll help you complete this instance quickly."

Fatty looked puzzled. "Are you guys normally this enthusiastic when you encounter other players?"

The expressions on the two inspectors' faces were a bit unnatural, but they still affirmed, "Of course. We've already notified others, and more people will be here to help you soon. You'll be able to leave this instance quickly!"

"Ah, is that so...?" Fatty scratched his head. But they don't want to leave this instance.

But the two inspectors had already called for reinforcements. Fatty felt anxious, momentarily unsure what to do.

Meanwhile, the two inspectors had already filled the third-level garbage bin. Their efficiency was high, indicating their familiarity with this instance.

If it continued this way, they would pass the fourth level in a few minutes.

At that point, Gu Mian and his team would have completed the task and would leave this instance.

Fatty scratched his ears and cheeks, thinking of how to cause a disruption.

What if I lie on the garbage can and pretend to be dead? Could that slow them down?

But Fatty soon realized that even without him playing dead, the two inspectors would have a hard time passing the next level.

At this moment, the task for the fourth level appeared, and all three of them saw it.

The two inspectors froze at the sight of the task.

Fatty looked at their stiff backs, imagining the expressions on their faces.

On the fourth level's garbage can, an unbelievable line of text appeared—

"Please fill with garbage that even Princess Mianmian would find scary."

Garbage that even Princess Mianmian would find scary...

Fatty glanced towards Gu Mian, who was sitting on the high platform, unable to imagine what kind of garbage should be thrown into this bin.

The two inspectors stared at the fourth garbage can for a long time before finally speaking.

"I remember this final level is indeed tailored to the player..."

"Let's not discuss how this final level's task was formulated for now. First, let's consider the immediate problem: where on earth are we going to find such garbage!"

If any other player were playing Princess Mianmian, it would be manageable. Everyone is afraid of something. Most female players are afraid of mice, or snake-like and other soft-bodied creatures, and a few mice can be found in this recycling center.

Male players would also be manageable. Normal people are afraid of ghosts. If things got desperate, they could contact another instance and have a ghost thrown in here as garbage.

A normal player, upon seeing a ghost, would definitely be scared out of their wits and flee.

But as for Gu Mian...

If a ghost were delivered right before him, he might just exclaim, "There's actually something this good?"

"What are we going to do?" The male inspector's forehead was beaded with sweat. "Even if we called in a hundred people, we might not be able to complete this task!"

The female inspector also broke out in a sweat. "If it really comes down to it, we can contact the backstage staff and have them forcibly stop this instance... but that would be a violation..."

Fatty listened stealthily from the side, surprised. So NPCs can forcibly stop a running instance?

Previously, instances were only stopped due to irreparable damage.

It's never happened before that an instance was immediately terminated just because an NPC saw Gu Mian enter.

And this term "violation"... it's as if the instance has an agreement with someone...

The two inspectors continued to whisper among themselves.

"A violation is still better than this place completely collapsing. You know how many instances are connected to this place. If this place ceased to exist, where would all those collapsed instances be thrown in the future?"

Chapter 602 Oh no! Fallen into Gu Mian's hands!_1

"Anyway, we need to get him out of here! This is so unlucky. If I'd known this would happen, I would've bought a peace charm from the Toy Goose Company. I've heard the peace charms their factories produce are quite effective—it's said that players who bought those peace charms never encountered Gu Mian."

"That's all nonsense. We have plenty of their factory's failed products right here. Who knows, if we rummage through this trash heap, we might even find a few peace charms they carelessly discarded."

The two inspectors' discussion strayed further and further from Gu Mian, turning to the Toy Goose Company and then back to peace charms.

Fatty felt that in the eyes of these NPCs, Gu Mian was like some kind of ghost.

Don't people generally go to the temple to get peace charms when haunted by a ghost?

"Enough with the chitchat. Think about how to pass the fourth stage! If we can't pass it, our only option is to request to terminate the instance." The female inspector steered the increasingly tangential conversation back on track. "Who the hell came up with this fourth challenge!"

Logically speaking, the creators of this instance definitely didn't anticipate these challenges becoming a problem for the NPCs.

Seeing both inspectors so agitated, Fatty hurriedly interjected, "Our Doctor is very honest; he won't cause any destruction!"

The two inspectors looked at Fatty, both wearing expressions that clearly said, "As if we believe that."

The person on the high platform was indeed behaving very docilely at the moment.

He sat quietly on the princess's throne, barely moving, only occasionally glancing back at the demon that had kidnapped him.

Every time Gu Mian turned his head, the demon's expression behind him turned a few shades more hideous—it was truly an effort for it to contort its pitch-black face into an expression.

Although Gu Mian looked very docile right now, no one could guarantee what he might do the next second.

He might suddenly go mad, pull out a bomb, and blow up the recycling station.

Didn't that happen to the food processing factory last time?

The male inspector looked troubled. "The people who received the news are probably on their way. Should we wait a bit longer to see if they can come up with any ideas?"

Fatty continued to seize every opportunity to argue, "The previous instance collapses weren't the Doctor's fault. I can testify that the instance made the first move! Our Doctor was just acting in self-defense!"

It was indeed the instance that had made the first move in the beginning.

Fatty still remembered the first 'Grudge High School' instance. All the other players had completed their tasks and left. However, the malicious instance had deliberately kept Gu Mian alone inside, which eventually led to a conflagration.

That must have been the first time the instance realized something was seriously wrong.

Ever since then, Gu Mian seemed to have flipped some kind of switch. Everywhere he went, chaos erupted, and countless Evil Ghosts shed tears of blood.

But I digress.

Fatty looked at the two inspectors in front of him. Of course, he couldn't let them just end the instance; they hadn't found what they were looking for yet.

The Greedy Mad Dog was still running wild.

The Fortune-teller was already exhausted. She could feel that the dog was near the clown mask, but after it had run many laps, the mask was still nowhere to be found.

The dog was going around and around in the same area, stuck in an endless loop.

Luckily, Xiao Qiao, who was searching for useful trash, happened to pass by. The Fortune-teller, nearly out of breath, asked Xiao Qiao to carry her to the dog's location.

When the Fortune-teller recalled the Greedy Mad Dog, her face was deathly pale, and she looked as if she could collapse at any moment.

But she persevered, looking around. She saw no difference from other places—just piles of garbage mountains, so numerous they were dizzying.

Xiao Qiao looked at the Fortune-teller with concern, then took out a can of energy drink from her inventory and started drinking it herself.

Fortune-teller: "..."

The Fortune-teller remembered a similar situation in the previous instance. She and Gu Mian had gone around in circles in the food factory, only to discover later that the item they were searching for was underground.

But... Her face pale, she looked at the ground in confusion. The ash-gray surface, made of some unknown material, felt as hard as an iron plate to the touch.

"Could it be underground?" the Fortune-teller wondered, taking a deep breath.

At that moment, they suddenly heard the sound of many footsteps approaching from a certain direction.

They turned to look and saw a group of people rushing out from that direction, heading straight for the high platform.

"Who are these people?" The Fortune-teller widened her eyes in surprise as she watched the group hurry past them.

Xiao Qiao, beside her, was completely clueless. Ultimately, another voice answered her question.

"They are NPCs summoned by the inspectors, probably here to help us complete the stage. They know Gu Mian is in this instance." Chu Changge slowly walked over from the direction the group had come, his gaze fixed on their receding figures.

The Fortune-teller was taken aback. "To send Gu Mian away sooner? So, we don't have much time left?"

Chu Changge nodded slightly. He retracted his gaze and looked at the Fortune-teller. "Have you found anything?"

The Fortune-teller leaned against a nearby garbage pile. "I divined that the clown mask is in this area, but I can't pinpoint the exact location. My dog just kept running in circles here. I encountered a similar

situation in the previous instance. Back then, Gu Mian had me look for the NPC office. We searched in one spot for a long time before realizing the office was underground."

Hearing this, Chu Changge looked down at the ground. He had noticed it when he first entered the instance: the ground here was grayish-white and extremely hard, like metal.

"The NPCs in the Circus Dungeon threw the clown mask underground?" Chu Changge pushed up his glasses. "Would they really go to such lengths?"

Just then, the three of them simultaneously heard a rustling sound nearby, as if something was crawling.

Xiao Qiao was the first to locate the source of the sound.

She excitedly threw down the energy drink in her hand and charged in a certain direction.

The Fortune-teller deftly caught the can.

Chu Changge's gaze followed Xiao Qiao. He saw her suddenly pounce on the ground, apparently having caught something.

Then, he and the Fortune-teller saw her stand up, holding a huge rat by the tail, and displaying it to them. "Look! Moving trash."

This large, fat gray rat dangled by its tail, its body twisting continuously. But even though it was caught, it didn't loosen its grip on the item in its mouth.

Chu Changge quickly stepped forward and snatched the item from the rat's mouth.

It was a special item.

An undamaged special item, it looked utterly out of place in this recycling station filled with trash.

[Happy Atmosphere Perfume]

[Description: Perfume produced by an unknown cosmetics company, said to bring happiness to people.]

[Function: Spraying it allows anyone who smells its fragrance to feel joy.]

It was a rather useless special item. However, Chu Changge wasn't interested in the item itself, but in the rat Xiao Qiao was holding.

He adjusted his glasses. "This rat must have spent a long time in the recycling station. It's very familiar with this place."

The Fortune-teller's voice came from behind. "Are you suggesting we ask this rat if it knows where the clown mask is?"

The Fortune-teller said this while looking at the rat, which was still writhing and struggling.

Although it looked a bit more intelligent than Xiao Qiao, the Fortune-teller had no expectation that this creature could actually speak.

Chapter 603 Xiao Qiang Must Strive to be Joe!_1

Xiao Qiao had no clue what the Fortune-teller was thinking. She was just excitedly holding the rat's tail.

Chu Changge seemed to guess what the Fortune-teller was thinking. He looked at the constantly struggling rat. "This rat has been staying in the recycling station for a long time. I guess it knows what items are useful. It probably wanted to drag this perfume bottle to its rat hole."

The not-so-bright Xiao Qiao thought for a few seconds and then asked, "Do you mean this rat drags many useful things into its hole?"

Chu Changge nodded slightly.

The Fortune-teller, who had regained some strength, also understood. "You're right. If that thing is really underground, it's likely that the rat dragged it into its hole. We can't dig open the surface, but if we find the rat's hole, we might find a way to get underground."

However, it wasn't easy to find the rat hole. Many NPCs were rushing towards Gu Mian, presumably to help him complete his task.

They didn't know how much longer they could stay in this instance.

Chu Changge stuck the perfume bottle back in the rat's mouth. "So we have to let it go. The rat's hole is likely nearby. If it faces danger and is released, it will surely run towards its hole. We just need to follow it to find the entrance."

Time was pressing, and Xiao Qiao let go of the rat upon hearing Chu Changge's advice.

The freed rat, as expected, darted off in one direction once it hit the ground.

The group followed closely behind. After circling several garbage hills, the rat disappeared.

Chu Changge looked at a nearby garbage hill; the rat had disappeared underneath it.

"Found it here," he said, squatting down.

Searching for rat holes in instances wasn't something regular players usually did.

Normal players wouldn't even consider it, especially female players. What if a rat suddenly jumps out while they're digging and bites them?

Xiao Qiao, on the other hand, didn't mind any of that. She dared to catch rats bare-handed, so digging was naturally no problem for her.

The Fortune-teller used to be scared of being bitten by rats. However, after experiencing numerous horror instances, her mindset had completely changed. Now, not only was she unafraid of being bitten by rats, but she even dared to bite one herself if necessary.

She drank the energy drink in one gulp and joined the search for the rat hole. The energy drink was very effective; she felt her strength gradually returning.

With time running out, she buried her head and began rummaging through the garbage pile.

Sure enough, it didn't take long for the Fortune-teller to find a tunnel hidden in the garbage.

She cleared the surrounding garbage to one side and called out to Chu Changge and Xiao Qiao, "Over here!"

Hearing her call, the other two gathered. The three of them huddled together, looking at the hole the Fortune-teller had found.

They saw a human head-sized hole in the grayish-white ground. It was the first time they had seen such a large rat hole.

Chu Changge adjusted his glasses as he looked at the dark hole. "Rat holes are usually small and hidden. I guess it dug such a large hole to drag bigger things inside."

The Fortune-teller measured the size of the hole with her hands. "A hole that big could indeed drag the mask inside."

The hole was large for a rat hole, but it was still very small for the three of them.

Xiao Qiao tried to stick her head inside, but it got stuck halfway.

While pulling Xiao Qiao out, Chu Changge said, "The clown mask is likely in this rat hole, but we can't get in..."

The Fortune-teller grew somewhat nervous. "What do we do? Those NPCs should have reached Gu Mian by now. I don't know how long we can stay in this instance."

Wouldn't it be a total waste if we left without the clown mask?

As she spoke, she gestured at the hole again. My dog definitely wouldn't fit in there, she thought.

Chu Changge finally pulled Xiao Qiao out. He thought for a moment and then opened the group chat to text Fatty.

Fatty was lurking somewhat furtively among the NPCs, eavesdropping on their conversations.

At this point, the NPCs were engrossed in a heated discussion, completely oblivious to Fatty's presence.

It's worth mentioning that these NPCs were divided on whether to end the instance prematurely.

There was the conservative faction.

"Ending the instance prematurely would be a violation. The contract explicitly states that an instance can only be terminated if the instance itself or any important NPCs suffer significant damage... Even though no one took this rule seriously when it was drafted, thinking such a thing would never happen..."

"If we violate the rules, we'll face severe punishment! I reckon everyone knows what the punishment is. We might all be done for. If you really want to terminate the instance, then all I can say is Joyful Cemetery is having a promotion: buy one grave, get one free. We should all go together and reserve a few spots."

"In this instance, Gu Mian can only sit on the platform; nothing should happen. As for the bomb at the food factory last time, I heard it was supplied by a player who was a Fortune-teller. Fortunately, that bomb was one of a kind, so we don't need to worry about this place being blown up too."

Then there was the radical faction.

"Everyone knows that no instance targeted by Gu Mian has ever survived. That fiend can even sabotage another instance from within one he's currently in! If you ask me, we should terminate the instance immediately and kick him out without a second thought."

"As for whether we'll be done for, terminating the instance isn't necessarily the worst outcome. Look at Coach Che, isn't he worse off than us? He's truly trapped with no way out. And Host Green had it even worse; he was directly carried out. If we don't terminate the instance, we might end up just like them!"

"Just look around this recycling station! See all the garbage left from those two other instances? Coach Che's cars, the cages from Host Green's instance... You see those things, then you look at Gu Mian. Doesn't it send a shiver down your spine?"

"I agree completely. Other instances might be one thing, but this one is connected to many worlds. If this place blows up, who knows where all the garbage from inside will fly."

"Besides, I heard that *that other* instance lost a pile of its own entry tickets here, didn't it? If Gu Mian's teammates find those tickets, the consequences would be unimaginable."

"You mean the Beast Tamer's instance? Yes, we absolutely cannot let Gu Mian get there. Ever since its main attraction collapsed, that world only has the Circus left as entertainment. If Gu Mian gets into the Circus, it'll be all over for it!"

"You're right; we absolutely can't let Gu Mian into that instance!"

"Even if we submit a request to terminate the instance mid-process, it requires a cooldown period. It would take at least six or seven minutes to shut down. To save time, let's just vote directly. All in favor of immediately shutting down the recycling station, raise your hands..."

Just as Fatty was racking his brains on how to stop the NPCs from ending the instance prematurely, he noticed Chu Changge had sent him a message in the group chat.

[Chu Changge]: Wang Xianzhi, after getting off the rail, go straight, pass five garbage hills, then at a garbage pile with a single bed on it, turn right. Walk about 250 meters, and you'll see us. Come to us.

Fatty was a bit surprised to suddenly see his name.

He could tell Chu Changge had typed in a rush; he hadn't even put a period at the end.

Then Xiao Qiao sent an almost identical message.

[Trying hard to be as strong as Xiao Qiao]: Wang Xizhi, after getting off the rail, go straight, pass five garbage hills, then at a garbage pile with a single bed on it, turn right. Walk about 250 meters, and you'll see us. Come to us.

He could tell it wasn't a copy-paste.

Although Fatty didn't know why Chu Changge was in such a rush, he quickly jogged in the direction indicated.

Before leaving, he glanced back at the NPCs' passionate voting.

Chapter 604 Xiao Gu Must Strive to be Strong!_1

The NPCs had already begun raising their hands to vote, and it seemed more were in favor of immediately closing this instance.

The demon on the high podium was eagerly watching the "First Instance NPC Representatives Conference" below, almost unable to resist rushing down to vote himself.

Not far from the demon, Gu Mian was also watching the crowd's voting process with interest.

These NPCs don't know I still have another Dungeon Entry Ticket, Gu Mian mused. Even if they vote me out of the instance this time, I can just come back in. If things really develop that way, the expressions on these NPCs' faces when they see me again will be quite something. Even if the Recycle Station instance is prepared for me after this and I can't get in next time, it won't stop me from stirring up trouble in other instances. Can't get hung up on just one tree, right? If I can't get into the Circus Dungeon, there are other instances I can enter.

However, the "violation" these NPCs mentioned did pique Gu Mian's interest.

He sat on the princess's throne and contemplated, A violation? Would terminating a normally running instance midway be a violation? Are these rules jointly established by Earth and the Low-Dimensional Worlds?

These NPCs seemed terrified of the punishment for such a violation. But they were even more afraid of ending up like Coach Che and Mr. Green.

Speaking of Mr. Green...

Gu Mian looked around for the small eyeball Mr. Green had given him before they entered the instance. But the eyeball was nowhere to be found now. It probably vanished when the group of NPCs mentioned, "Mr. Green's big iron cage from the instance is still here."

Realizing this, Gu Mian's gaze swept past the high platform to the ground. Sure enough, not far away, near a garbage heap, he saw several large iron cages. Gu Mian recognized these large iron cages. They were from the Crazy Guessing Words instance—Mr. Green's instance.

The small eyeball was indeed hovering around those large cages, looking somewhat dejected.

Others weren't as leisurely as Gu Mian.

When Fatty arrived, panting, at the location Chu Changge had indicated, he found him using the "Supernatural Editor Simulator" to write something next to a hole in the ground. The Supernatural Editor Simulator was a pen-shaped special item Chu Changge had obtained during the dragon boat

event, capable of slightly modifying non-living objects. Chu Changge was currently writing the word "Expand" beside the hole with the pen.

As expected, the hole widened slightly. The Supernatural Editor Simulator's ability was limited; the hole only expanded by a few centimeters. However, it was enough for Xiao Qiao to stick her entire head in.

"Brother Chu," Fatty panted, running to Chu Changge's side. "Why did you call me over? I saw those NPCs holding some kind of vote. They're deciding whether to end this instance early."

"What's the result of the vote?" the Fortune-teller asked nervously, pulling Xiao Qiao's head out.

Fatty shook his head slightly. "They had just started voting when I left, so no result had been decided. But I think most of them favor ending the instance early."

Fatty's guess was correct. The NPCs' voting had already concluded. Gu Mian, watching clearly from above, saw that including the patrol officers, nine NPCs were present. Seven voted to close the instance immediately, and two voted against.

"In that case, I'll notify headquarters that we're closing this instance. It'll take a few minutes for the buffer time," the male patrol officer said, taking out a walkie-talkie. "The instance will close shortly after." He pressed the call button on the walkie-talkie and spoke to someone on the other end.

The remaining NPCs gathered and began to discuss.

"Sigh, this is the only way now. Let's get Gu Mian out first and deal with things later."

"Nothing should go wrong in these few minutes, right?"

"By the way, where are his teammates? I saw that Fatty nearby just moments ago. How did he vanish in the blink of an eye?"

"I saw him leave in a hurry earlier."

As soon as this was said, everyone fell silent. They looked left and right but couldn't find any sign of Fatty.

The female patrol officer suddenly spoke. "Right, that Fatty mentioned earlier they entered this instance to find something. When I asked what he was looking for, he was vague. He only said they were looking for something belonging to the goddess from the Angel Redemption instance. But that goddess has no valuables here. I guess they must be looking for something else."

"There are only a few useful items in this recycle station. Damn it... they can't actually be here for the Circus Dungeon Entry Tickets, can they?!"

"Did that Fatty run off in such a hurry because he knows the instance is about to close, and he's gone to find the entry tickets?"

"Damn it, we need to find those people quickly!"

"We absolutely cannot let Gu Mian enter that dungeon!"

"I saw that Fatty heading in that direction just now!" An NPC pointed, and everyone immediately rushed off that way.

Meanwhile, Fatty, who was checking the group chat, saw a message from Gu Mian.

[Gu Mian]: The instance will close in a few minutes. Those NPCs are coming for you.

Fatty turned pale. "Oh no, Brother Chu! The vote is over, and they're going to close the instance! And the Doctor said those NPCs are coming for us!"

The Fortune-teller wiped the sweat from her forehead. "What are we going to do now..." She looked helplessly at the hole in the ground, which was only big enough to fit a head. Unless someone present knew bone-shrinking techniques, there was no way to retrieve the clown mask from underneath.

The Fortune-teller glanced at 007, who had arrived recently. Among those present, 007 was the slimmest. The Fortune-teller quickly sized up 007 but concluded that even she wouldn't fit into the hole.

007 had followed Fatty here. She had been searching for the clown mask when she saw Fatty rushing in this direction. After a quick search through the trash in her hands, she had also walked a few steps this way and spotted Chu Changge and the others gathered there. Now, being stared at by the Fortune-teller made 007 feel a chill run down her spine. She rubbed her arms and took a few steps back.

They weren't far from the high platform. It would take the NPCs less than two minutes to reach them. If they weren't done before the instance closed, they would be caught.

Chu Changge, however, showed no signs of panic. He looked at Fatty. "Give me the disc."

Fatty clutched his pocket. "You're not going to throw it into the mouse hole, are you?"

From Chu Changge's demeanor, it seemed he intended to throw Brother in there to have him retrieve the mask. Although Brother was a ghost, he didn't seem to have the ability to shapeshift. Tossing him into the mouse hole would just get him stuck. Moreover, if the disc was in the mouse hole and not in their possession when the instance closed, then Brother would be left behind in this instance.

Chu Changge refuted Fatty's assumption. "Not long ago, this disc absorbed a monster. If a ghost can enter and exit this disc, then the 'Believer' presumably can too."

The Fortune-teller understood. "You mean, throw the disc into the mouse hole and then release the monster? To make it break through the ground? But won't the monster get crushed to a pulp in the hole?"

"There's no other way now. In the character excerpts from Exile World, this Believer has immense destructive power and won't die easily," Chu Changge said, adjusting his glasses. "We can only gamble now—gamble that the Believer can break through the ground here. We're out of time."

"But whether the disc can even release the monster is another question," the Fortune-teller said, her eyes wide.

Just then, they heard some commotion in the distance. "They should be this way..." The NPCs were approaching.

Fatty grew agitated. "In that case, let's grab Brother first and ask him!"

007 looked at Fatty. "What are you expecting? Can he say anything other than those two words?"

Both of them spoke rapidly, barely pausing for breath, giving the Fortune-teller a headache.

She shook her head and took out a bundle of red thread—a tool she used for fortune-telling. "If that monster can really break through the ground, we'll use this to tie the disc. After the monster is released, we'll immediately pull the disc back up."

The disc had a hole in the center, perfect for tying a string. The Fortune-teller's suggestion was feasible.

Brother had already been summoned by Fatty. 007 saw Fatty whisper a few words to Brother. Then, Fatty turned and announced to the others, "He says the monster can be released!"

007 had a strange expression. To be fair, the man who had crawled out of the disc earlier had only shouted "Sister" a few times. She had no idea how Fatty had managed to interpret those shouts as an affirmative answer.

"Anyway, let's hurry!" The Fortune-teller could already hear footsteps. She knew the NPCs would see them in just a few more steps.

She quickly tied the red string to the disc and, after getting Brother's consent, tossed the disc with the string attached into the mouse hole.

Just as she finished, the Fortune-teller heard shouts from behind. "I see them! They're here!"

These NPCs had no idea that as soon as they arrived, they would see a female player toss something into a hole the size of a watermelon.

Soon after, the NPCs began to realize something wasn't right.

The vast ground was slightly bulging, like the lid of an old, swollen can.

Considering the ground at the recycling station was usually quite flat, this irregularity quickly attracted everyone's attention.

Then, right before the stunned NPCs, the grey surface began to bulge rapidly. The bulge instantly grew as tall as a person.

Even the ground beneath their feet started to rise slightly.

A patrol officer, dumbfounded, stared at the swelling ground. A bad feeling rose within him. "What did you throw in there!"

Even though he was addressing Fatty and the others, the officer couldn't take his eyes off the swelling ground. He watched it grow higher and higher. He felt the ground rising, and when he looked down, his own position had already risen half a meter.

He glanced around at everyone else.

All of the passionate voters from just moments ago now had ghostly white faces, some with jaws dropped in surprise as if dislocated.

They all realized this instance was likely doomed.

The rising ground caused the trash heap to tilt, sending debris sliding down the slope. The NPCs descended into chaos, and an uproar began.

Amidst the confusion, the officer faintly heard someone shouting, "I told you we should have gotten rid of them earlier!"

But before those words could even fade, a louder noise drowned out the shouting.

With a BANG, the bulging ground exploded right in front of them, blasting a huge hole from which a massive monster emerged.

A few unlucky NPCs were hit by debris from the explosion and writhed on the ground, clutching their injuries.

The moment the beast emerged, it rushed towards the high platform.

These NPCs had just come from that direction, effectively becoming an obstacle in the beast's path.

The dutiful patrol officer remembered his responsibilities. He rushed toward Chu Changge and the others, who were just peeking out from behind the trash heap, all the while yelling to the surrounding NPCs, "First, get them under control!"

But just as he finished speaking, the oncoming beast knocked him over, and he couldn't get back up.

Chu Changge, meanwhile, was lying prone beside the newly blasted crater, looking down. He noted that the rats had done a surprisingly good job of sorting the trash; similar special items were all placed together.

He scanned the area and quickly found several colorful masks with eerie smiles in a distant corner of the deep pit.

"Over there!"

Just as Chu Changge found the masks, a game panel popped up in front of everyone.

[Warning! Significant damage detected in this instance. The instance will be terminated early. All players will be kicked out in ten seconds.]

[10, 9...]

"Damn it!" the Fortune-teller cried out, looking at the panel. She had just expended a good deal of stamina and couldn't run now, let alone jump into the pit to retrieve items.

Chu Changge was too far from the masks, and with his lack of athleticism, there was no way he could get them in ten seconds.

Meanwhile, Fatty was frantically trying to reach the Human CD just below him.

Xiao Qiao, on the other hand, was quite energetic. She dove headfirst into the newly formed crater but ran in the wrong direction.

The Fortune-teller almost cursed aloud as she watched Xiao Qiao run farther and farther away.

But, as the timer on the panel counted down to five seconds, someone suddenly rolled down the edge of the large crater, landing beside the pile of masks—it was 007!

She had rolled quite a distance, unable to control her speed as she went down.

But she immediately scrambled up, quickly got her bearings, and locked onto the location of the clown masks.

007 sprinted to the pile of masks and crouched down. The countdown had already reached "4."

She grabbed two masks, stood up, and forcefully tossed them towards Chu Changge.

007 had good aim. Chu Changge caught the masks she tossed up without much effort. After he caught them, two more were tossed up, and Chu Changge caught each one.

At this point, 007 had already tossed up four masks.

Just as she crouched for another mask and was about to toss it up, the countdown hit "0."

「The instance was over.」

The group felt the world spin as, amidst the enraged shouts of the NPCs and the sounds of the giant beast running, they were ejected from the instance.

When they looked around again, they were greeted by a familiar sight.

Familiar room, familiar coffee table, familiar lychee soda.

The familiar Xiao Hong was, at this moment, bored and bizarrely perched on the windowsill, staging a ghostly horror scene.

And of course, the familiar Mr. Green.

He sat on the ground, his head hanging low, his face ashen—just like those NPCs in the instance moments before.

But nobody paid him any attention.

Fatty, who had just exited, was carefully blowing dust off the Human CD he held. "Good thing I was quick..."

Chu Changge, on the other hand, held four brightly colored masks with eerie smiles. As soon as he exited the instance, he lowered his head to study the items in his hand.

The Fortune-teller first glanced at the masks in Chu Changge's hand, then turned her attention to the game announcement.

「It read—」

[Announcement (August 1, 12:51 PM)]

[The 'Princess Mianmian and Her Seven Loyal Knights' instance has suffered massive damage and will be shut down for repairs. The instance will be temporarily unavailable to players. We apologize for the inconvenience...]

Of course, the initial part was useless information; the Fortune-teller went straight to the compensation details.

Seeing 1,000 Game Coins, she broke into a satisfied smile.

Ever since I met Gu Mian, I've started earning more Game Coins, she thought happily.

Gu Mian looked at Chu Changge, who was deep in thought, staring at the masks in his hand. "I was too far away. What did you guys do at the end to blast such a huge hole in the ground?"

Chu Changge finally looked up, adjusting his glasses. "For that, we have the Goddess to thank. We figured out the clown masks were likely dragged into a rat's den by the rats. But no one could squeeze in to check. So, we thought we could try sending the beast in to test the waters. Of course, at the time, it was just an idea to try. We didn't expect it to work so well."

Fatty, beside them, put his palms together. "Thank the Goddess."

"But now we have a big problem," Chu Changge said, laying out the collected clown masks on the coffee table one by one. "The explosion at the end of the instance affected these masks. Out of these four, only one is intact."

Hearing this, Gu Mian also turned his attention to the clown masks on the table.

Three of them were labeled [Clown Mask (Broken)].

[Description: A crushed mask. It once served as a Dungeon Entry Ticket, but now it can only be worn on the face to scare people.]

Gu Mian: "..."

He hadn't expected these things to be so intelligent, with descriptions that could update at any time.

As he thought this, he looked at the last, intact mask.

[Clown Mask]

[Description: A Dungeon Entry Ticket to the special instance 'Love and Justice Circus'. This instance is a class-specific instance.]

[Function: Wearing it on your face will grant direct entry into the 'Love and Justice Circus' instance.]

Chapter 606 Damn it! The Recent Teammates Are Always Carrying Me to Victory_1

Although it wasn't mentioned in the introduction, Mr. Green had mentioned that this instance was a special one for the "Beast Tamer" class.

Gu Mian stroked his chin. Only one of the four masks is left usable, huh...

This meant that only one of them could enter the 'Circus of Love and Justice' instance.

Previously, many people would have wanted to enter a class instance. But now, with the death protection mechanism deactivated, the number of those willing to enter instances has significantly decreased.

Now that only one usable mask remained, it was undoubtedly for Gu Mian.

However, with only one person entering an instance, what they could accomplish would be greatly limited...

As Gu Mian stared at the single intact mask, lost in thought, Fatty suddenly exclaimed, "Doctor! Miss 007 says she also has a usable mask!"

Hearing this, Chu Changge pushed up his glasses. "Indeed, she had two masks she didn't manage to toss us when the instance ended."

It seemed one of the two masks she possessed was usable.

"Ask her where she is now." Chu Changge looked at Fatty. "With 007's mask, two of them could enter the instance."

Fatty had already been typing to ask this question, and soon he got the answer.

"Miss 007 says she's in the South Sea..."

The South Sea? Chu Changge's hand, mid-adjustment of his glasses, paused. "That's quite far."

Gu Mian was also very puzzled. "I remember she just left here in June, right? How did she get to the South Sea in two months? Even a tadpole searching for its mother wouldn't have gone that far."

However, Chu Changge had already started calculating. "To get to the South Sea from here, considering the current traffic, even if we drive, it would take half a month."

Upon hearing this, Fatty also became curious. "It will take us half a month to drive there. How did Miss 007 get from here to the South Sea in two months? She doesn't have a Spirit Car, does she?"

Even if she had a Spirit Car, she wouldn't have a license, so she couldn't drive it.

How 007 had managed to cover such a distance in two months wasn't what they wanted to discuss right now. Chu Changge turned to Gu Mian. "We have two choices now. First, find 007 and get her mask, allowing two of us to enter the Circus Instance. Second, you enter the instance alone."

Pausing here, Chu Changge continued, "There is, of course, a third option: to let 007 enter the instance with you directly. However, most players don't want to enter instances after the death protection mechanism has been turned off, especially high-risk, special instances."

Gu Mian stroked his chin. "There's no need to find 007. Special instances are highly risky, and this one is a class instance... I remember Fatty's first death was in a Doctor class instance, wasn't it?"

Fatty, who was referred to, craned his neck. "That was an accident!"

"I was planning to enter the Circus Instance alone to begin with, and it's convenient now that only one mask is left. As for 007, ask her if she's willing to enter the Beast Tamer class instance. If she is, we'll find a time to put on the masks together. If not, she can just throw her mask away."

Hearing this, Fatty immediately began typing the question in the chat.

007 replied quickly, and Fatty immediately read out her message: "She said she's out of Game Coins recently and is planning to enter an instance."

Entering an instance with Gu Mian could indeed earn a lot of Game Coins. The Fortune-teller nodded to herself at the side.

Gu Mian calculated the time. "Today is August 1st. Let's give her a few days to prepare. We'll put on our masks at seven o'clock on the morning of the fifth."

"Alright." Fatty agreed, quickly typing in the input box.

It was at this point that someone finally noticed Mr. Green, who looked utterly grief-stricken, off to one side.

Looking curiously at the desolate green figure, the Fortune-teller asked, "What's wrong with him? He's had this expression on his face ever since we came out of the instance."

The Fortune-teller only knew that this little green dwarf wasn't a player. He was probably an NPC. However, she had no idea why this NPC was following Gu Mian or why he had appeared in the real world.

Gu Mian glanced at Mr. Green. "He probably saw something heartbreaking in the recycling instance."

Mr. Green had been carried out of the instance directly by Gu Mian.

When Gu Mian left, other than the host being absent, everything else in the Crazy Guessing Words instance was still intact.

So, Mr. Green dreamed every day of going back to the instance to continue being Host Green. He never imagined he would see the cages from his instance in the recycling center today. This made him realize his instance might have been abandoned or possibly remodeled into a new one.

Fatty also looked at Mr. Green, and as he recalled the other's tragic experience, he shook his head and sighed, "How tragic."

It was clear that the former host was incredibly sad.

He didn't even bother to question the collapse of the recycling instance this time. Instead, he sat there pale-faced, his head down, his expression deeply sorrowful.

He was too preoccupied with his own problems to care about other instance matters.

Fatty kindly went over to pat his shoulder in consolation.

But Fatty was the only one so considerate. Chu Changge merely glanced at Mr. Green and returned to his own conversation.

Addressing Gu Mian, Chu Changge said, "You should also prepare for the next few days. The class special instance is highly dangerous. Furthermore, it seems the NPCs in the Circus Instance don't want players entering, so I think this instance might be extremely dangerous."

"Speaking of the Circus Instance..." Gu Mian recalled, "When I was sitting on the high stage, a group of NPCs came over, right? I heard them discussing below. They said there was a hot show in the world of the Circus Instance. I went in, and then the show was gone."

"A hot show?" This caught Fatty's attention. "That should be similar to a variety-show instance, right? We've been to quite a few of those. If we're talking about hot ones throughout the world... Metamorphosis?"

The style of the Circus Instance does indeed resemble the Old World greatly.

Upon hearing this, everyone looked at Liu Ruyan.

Although Liu Ruyan entered the recycling center along with Gu Mian and the rest, she was almost invisible. The others barely noticed her presence.

Gu Mian hadn't expected her to find anything in the first place; it was good enough if she didn't cause trouble.

Liu Ruyan came from the Old World. Metamorphosis was the most popular variety show in the Old World, but then it was gone. Indeed, everything matched up.

Liu Ruyan's expression was somewhat strange. "The Old World? It suffered quite a lot of damage last time, right? It's only been such a short time. I guess that world hasn't fully recovered yet, so it's unlikely

it would want to let players in... But then again, the Circus Instance indeed doesn't want players entering to begin with."

That's why all the clown masks had been thrown into the recycling center.

If they don't want players to enter, then it might indeed be the Old World.

Hearing this, Gu Mian continued, "I remember the NPCs saying that the circus and the gone variety show were the two most popular events in that world. Were there any variety shows in the Old World that could rival Metamorphosis?"

Liu Ruyan shook her head. "When I left that world, Metamorphosis didn't even exist, let alone anything else. I wouldn't know."

Chapter 607 Today is Another Day Without Interruption_1

"Ah," Fatty pondered, "when Miss Liu left the Old World, the variety show Metamorphosis didn't exist yet... So which world does this circus come from?"

Gu Mian thought back to a game instance from a long time ago. "A very popular variety show. Come to think of it, the last occupational instance we faced, which was called Slaughter, was also a variety show, wasn't it?"

When Fatty thought about that instance, he felt a pain in his butt. "Right, Slaughter seemed to be a real hit. I still remember the host's appearance—his face as white as if it were covered in flour, and wearing such flashy clothes. His name was something like..."

Fatty temporarily forgot the name of the host in that instance.

Chu Changge, who was beside him, reminded him, "Teacher Slaughter."

"Right, Teacher Slaughter!" Fatty slapped his thigh in realization.

Gu Mian remembered the worldview of that instance. When they entered it, the worldview was directly written in the instance's description. It originally stated:

"This world is highly industrialized, but its medical conditions are relatively backward. It is a world where the line dividing Upper Class People and Lower Class People is distinct, and the class system is extremely strict. According to the 'Upper Class Protection Convention,' all Lower Class People who provoke, insult, or ridicule Upper Class People will be detained and thrown into the 'Restricted Area' in batches."

The "Restricted Area" referred to the Slaughter instance. Monsters ran rampant inside, and humans couldn't resist them. The NPCs relied on the Evil God Statue to envelop the entire Restricted Area, preventing the monsters from leaving. But the good days didn't last. Later, Gu Mian entered the Restricted Area, and now it has collapsed.

Gu Mian remembered that the ending of Slaughter was the shattering of the Restricted Area's barrier, allowing the monsters inside to surge into the world of the Upper Class People.

Since then, he had never been matched into an instance under that worldview again.

"According to what those NPCs said, it's highly likely that the circus belongs to the world of the Slaughter instance... Speaking of Slaughter, I remember the monsters from inside escaped the Restricted Area. That must be giving the NPCs of that world a real headache," Gu Mian said, touching his chin.

"Furthermore, as you've said," Gu Mian looked at Chu Changge, "the world of the Slaughter instance even sent a Guardian, Jiang Yang."

Of course, that person was no longer called Jiang Yang.

The man in the cloak on the fourth floor, originally named Jiang Yang, whose formal name was 'Anonymous,' also called himself Xie Bi'an.

Gu Mian still remembered his game nickname was 'Anonymous,' written in red.

Chu Changge nodded slightly. "Perhaps we can learn something by asking him."

But now there was a problem.

Xie Bi'an had gone missing after emerging from the solo hide-and-seek instance, and Gu Mian hadn't seen him for a long time.

It was the same last time they tried to find him. After great difficulty cornering him, they were pulled into a special instance again.

Fatty was a bit vexed. "Does this guy know we're looking for him? He's been missing for days, like he's deliberately avoiding us."

He had even gone to the fourth floor to ask. Accompany me next year and the others there said Xie Bi'an had left on business and they didn't know when he would return.

"Even if we have no clues, we still have to enter the instance. We'll just assume that the 'Circus of Love and Righteousness' instance is set against the backdrop of the Slaughter instance." Gu Mian walked to the sofa and sat down.

Fatty frowned. "The world of the Slaughter instance is extremely dangerous... We don't even know what that world is called, or what its current situation is. Could it be overrun with monsters right now?"

That's possible.

"I remember when we entered the Slaughter instance, my electric saw was confiscated." Gu Mian fished out a piece of paper from somewhere, wrote "electric saw" on it, and then crossed it out.

"If the Circus Dungeon is indeed in the same world as Slaughter, Lower Class People aren't allowed to bring tools inside."

This is going to be tricky.

The Circus Dungeon sounded like it would have a lot of people, and Gu Mian wouldn't be able to beat a group without a weapon.

And his item bank couldn't store anything.

Fatty suggested, "How about we ask Miss 007 to put some weapons in her item bank? When we enter the instance, we can give the prepared weapons to Doctor. She just got a compensation of one thousand Game Coins, so she can afford good weapons... Huh? Wait, didn't Miss 007 just get compensation? Why would she be short of Game Coins?"

A thousand Game Coins should last an ordinary player for quite a while, right?

Chu Changge adjusted his glasses. "Her shortage of Game Coins might be related to her traveling a thousand miles a day."

Chu Changge guessed that 007's two-month journey to the South Sea might have yielded some kind of special transportation item. The fuel for this item was likely Game Coins, similar to the Fortune-teller's 'Money Can Make Ghosts Grind.' That would explain why 007 was short on Game Coins.

Fatty was already typing, apparently discussing the weapon situation with 007.

Gu Mian interjected, "Maybe we can bring some bombs or something."

Of course, that kind of stuff isn't easy to come by; supermarkets don't sell it.

However, Fatty took Gu Mian's suggestion very seriously and typed into the input box, "Doctor suggested bringing some bombs..."

"Assuming the Circus is in the same world as Slaughter, Gu Mian, when you enter the instance, you'll definitely be classified as 'Lower Class People.' We can now boldly speculate on this instance's content: it's likely 'Lower Class People' playing clowns in the circus to entertain the 'Upper Class People'," Chu Changge began his analysis.

Gu Mian nodded. "Speaking of which, the world of Slaughter seems a bit similar to the Old World. Both are pretty perverted."

Liu Ruyan, at the side, chuckled softly but expressed no opinion.

Gu Mian continued,

"However, the world of Slaughter is more overtly bloody and direct. People can see how their lives will end from the very start; their race determines their fate, and the chasm between upper and lower classes is insurmountable. The Upper Class People here seek bloody pleasure; one could say they are amused to death.

"Meanwhile, in the Old World, everyone was equal at the beginning—or at least, it appeared that way. However, everyone had to follow the so-called Law Code. Consequently, everyone spied on others—relatives, friends, and lovers—attempting to find 'rule-breakers' to execute. They, too, crazily pursued pleasure, enjoying torture, devastation, and the sight of others' suffering. This world, at least initially, maintained a facade of peace, and people's twisted desires could only be realized through the rule-breakers.

"The Old World might seem more peaceful, but the fundamental nature of its inhabitants is the same as those in the world of Slaughter. People in the Old World also yearn for the thrill of blood and killing, but they can only unleash these emotions when a rule-breaker appears. In other words, from the very beginning, they anticipated the emergence of rule-breakers. In contrast, the world of Slaughter directly sets up targets: Upper Class People can trample Lower Class People at will, without needing any reason.

"According to the commonalities in human nature between the two worlds, if the Old World's worldview continues to develop over a long period, it will most likely evolve into something like the world of Slaughter."

As Gu Mian spoke, he looked at Liu Ruyan. "There might be some connection between these two worlds."

Chapter 608 What Happened?_1

Liu Ruyan blinked in surprise before saying, "I don't know what the relationship between the worlds is. What I do know is that the higher-ups from the Old World use death games to filter out people, all for the purpose of sending those selected to the real world to protect you from dying."

I don't see how you've protected me in any way, Gu Mian silently muttered to himself.

"As far as I know, there should only be one Guardian in each world because a Low-Dimensional World doesn't have the capability to transmit more people to reality," Liu Ruyan continued. "If you want to know whether the Old World and the Slaughter Game World are connected, you won't get answers from me. You can only ask Jiang Yang."

When Liu Ruyan said "Jiang Yang," her tone was incredibly familiar, as if she had uttered the name countless times before.

On the school bus, Gu Mian had learned that Chu Changge and his friends had known Xie Bi'an, also known as "Jiang Yang," for a long time.

Chu Changge had mentioned Xie Bi'an to Gu Mian not long ago.

Apparently, Xie Bi'an had suffered an accident in the past, and everyone had assumed he was dead. They were surprised to see him again after the global game began.

This plotline could easily be expanded into a revenge novel on Qidian's website, Gu Mian mused.

The synopsis would be—

"He, the favored son of heavens, extraordinary from birth, was the object of everyone's admiration.

"Unexpectedly, a miscalculation led him into an enemy's trap. This ambush claimed the lives of all his loved ones. Just as the villains celebrated, thinking they had eliminated their thorn in the side, a nightmare game suddenly descended...

"At this moment, the man everyone believed dead was reborn from the ashes. When all had sunk into despair, he suddenly appeared, rescuing everyone from peril.

"No one knew that a campaign of revenge was slowly unfolding..."

The rest would be filled with phrases like, 'This child must not be allowed to live!' and 'How terrifyingly powerful!'

Chu Changge was unaware of the novel Gu Mian was mentally composing. Pushing up his glasses, he said, "Xie Bi'an disappeared a few days ago, and I'm afraid he won't let us find him. For now, we can only explore the situation of the Slaughter Game World on our own... As for whether there's any connection between the two worlds, I'm afraid we'll only find out within the instances."

While speaking, he turned his gaze to the Fortune-teller and his companions. "Have any of you entered an instance from the Slaughter Game World's worldview? I mean, the one we just discussed that clearly distinguishes between Upper Class People and Lower Class People, has a distinct caste system, and where the Upper Class People take pleasure in slaughter."

The Fortune-teller shook his head slightly. "The instances I've entered weren't that twisted..."

Liu Ruyan also stated that she had never encountered an instance with that worldview.

Gu Mian began writing on the white paper again: "We've only experienced the Slaughter Game worldview once, and the Old World once. It seems instances from these two worlds aren't easily matched with players, probably because there are fewer instances in these two worlds."

Now that I think about it, the instances we matched with most frequently were from normal worldviews, most likely originating from the Second World.

At this point, Gu Mian knew of the existence of four worlds: the Second World, the Old World, the Slaughter Game World, and Xiao Qiao's Twilight Gods World.

There were a few others that remained uncertain. This included the "Escape World" that Coach Che and player 845 had mentioned in the hide-and-seek instance. This "Escape World" was most likely another major world.

And then there was...

Gu Mian looked at Chu Changge. "You said you saw a book titled 'Selected Characters of the Exile World' in the instance with the save point, right?"

Chu Changge was momentarily confused by the mention of the "save point instance" but understood when he heard the book's title that Gu Mian was referring to the Angel Redemption instance.

He nodded. "Yes. I guess the Exile World is also a Low-Dimensional World."

The Angel Redemption instance belongs to the Exile World.

Four known worlds, plus two uncertain ones, made a total of six. Most of the instances they were currently experiencing seemed to hail from the other five worlds, excluding the Twilight Gods World. If the Circus wasn't in the Slaughter Game World, it probably belonged to one of these remaining five.

"Speaking of which," Gu Mian pondered, looking at Mr. Green, "which world does your instance belong to?"

Mr. Green, looking listless, glanced up at Gu Mian, seemingly unwilling to answer.

Seeing his state, Gu Mian didn't feel right pressing him. However, Xiao Hong readily stepped forward, looking ready to interrogate him fiercely.

Although he sympathized with Mr. Green, Gu Mian couldn't bring himself to refuse Xiao Hong's initiative and didn't try to stop her.

Seeing Xiao Hong approach, Mr. Green deflated, accusing Gu Mian of playing dirty.

A nervous expression appeared on his unhappy face as he stammered, "Ex... Exile World! My instance belongs to the Exile World!"

The Exile World? That's the world I just mentioned! Gu Mian realized. This meant Mr. Green and he were, in a sense, from the same place. Unfortunately, Gu Mian showed no mercy when it came to tormenting his "compatriots."

After stating which world he belonged to, Mr. Green continued, "Don't ask me which world the Circus is in. I really don't know. I've never heard of an instance called the 'Circus of Love and Justice' in our world."

Fatty, who at some point had also grabbed a piece of paper with a neatly written list of items, said, "Hey, regardless of which world it is, the Doctor still needs to be prepared. I'll go to the supermarket to buy some small items to put in the Doctor's pocket. If something unexpected happens, they could be used as hidden weapons or something. These professional instances are really dangerous!"

With that, Fatty took his shopping list and left. No one knew what he had written on it.

It was early August, and the weather was already very hot. This year's weather was somewhat unusual, much hotter than in previous years. The temperature had skyrocketed in recent days, and just a few steps outside would leave one drenched in sweat.

Fortunately, Gu Mian's home had air conditioning. Fatty had set it to twenty degrees Celsius and was wearing long sleeves indoors.

Now, less than half a minute after stepping outside in long sleeves, he hurried back in, quickly changed into a short-sleeved shirt, and went out again—a clear indication of how hot it was.

On a previous trip to the supermarket, Fatty had bought various miscellaneous items, including a thermometer. This thermometer was now placed by the window, where the temperature was even higher.

Seeing Fatty rush back to change his shirt, Gu Mian glanced at the thermometer by the window. Good heavens, thirty-nine degrees Celsius!

Chu Changge had no interest in the abnormal weather. He continued his analysis, "There's a problem. If the Circus Dungeon really belongs to the Slaughter Game World, then everyone in that world would recognize you."

He paused, feeling his wording wasn't precise enough, and then corrected himself, "At least, all the Upper Class People would recognize you."

The Slaughter Game was the most popular variety show in that world. Its audience consisted of Upper Class People who enjoyed watching the slaughter. Lower Class People generally didn't have the opportunity to watch television.

"We all know that instances don't reset," Chu Changge continued. "So, all the Upper Class People in that world have seen your... performance... in the Slaughter Game. I don't think they would forget your face."

True, Gu Mian thought. He vaguely remembered it was a variety show for the Upper Class People's amusement. But he hadn't played by their rules: he'd thrashed monsters, detonated explosives targeting the Order Guard, and finally even destroyed the barrier confining the main monster. Even though a long time had passed, the people in that world couldn't possibly have forgotten his face.

"This poses a problem," Gu Mian said, grabbing the mirror from Xiao Hong's hand beside him and looking at his own face. "Perhaps I should disguise myself?"

This time, their goal in entering the Circus Dungeon was to catch an NPC off guard, perhaps abduct them, and then question them about a few things.

If I'm recognized the moment I enter the instance, I probably won't even be able to get close to that high-ranking NPC, he figured.

Chapter 609 You Have Lost Another Three Chapters of Precious Spiritual Wealth!_1

"You need to wear the clown mask on your face to enter the Circus Dungeon. I assume you also wore a mask when you entered the Circus," Chu Changge adjusted his glasses. "As far as I know, there are many performers in the Circus who play clowns. I guess you might have to go through the instance wearing this mask."

If Chu Changge's speculation is correct, Gu Mian would face no risk of exposure.

No one could identify him with a mask on.

Even if Teacher Slaughter from the Slaughter Game got up close, it would be difficult to recognize that this was the guy who ruined his program.

"Of course, these are just my guesses," Chu Changge said. "Your mask may disappear after entering the instance, or you may be ordered to remove it by the NPCs. Anyway, we have to be fully prepared."

"Perhaps we can have Fatty buy some stockings that could be taken into the instance. If the mask disappears, I can pull the stockings over my head." Gu Mian remembered his encounter with a bank robber who wore stockings over his head back in the day.

Some items sold in the supermarket can be brought into the instance, but most of them are things like weapons and flashlights.

If you asked the cashier, "Do you have stockings that can be taken into the instance?" the answer would probably be "no."

The Fortune-teller was watching the two talking.

She had seen the announcement of Gu Mian destroying the Doctor's instance even before she became a Fortune-teller.

At this moment, she also understood what the two were worried about.

The fear was obviously that they would be recognized as soon as they entered the instance, and they would not be able to have any contact with the high-level NPCs Gu Mian wanted to meet.

After a moment of thought, the Fortune-teller spoke, "I heard from other players that there is a profession called 'Makeup Artist'. I heard it has the skill of Disguise, which can transform a person into another appearance. But I only heard about it, and I don't know where to find the Makeup Artist."

"There's no need to specifically look for a Makeup Artist." Gu Mian remembered that Chu Changge's school badge could temporarily change a person's face, but it could only last for a while. He said to Chu Changge, "You could lend me your school badge, and after the Disguise wears off, I will smear some dirt or something else on my face in the instance."

Chu Changge silently took off his school badge and handed it to Gu Mian. "You can also use this to disguise yourself as an Upper Class Person, which might make things easier..."

Just as Chu Changge handed his badge to Gu Mian, the living room door was suddenly pushed open.

They looked towards the door and saw Fatty standing there, sweating profusely and holding large and small shopping bags.

"It's a disaster!" Gu Mian heard him exclaim from the doorway.

"A disaster!" Fatty repeated, then began to describe what happened. "I was just walking towards the supermarket when I saw a mess ahead. It wasn't crowded with people, just a chaotic mess of trash scattered on the road, and a lot of plastic bags flying wildly in the sky!"

"When I got to the supermarket entrance, I saw a pile of colorful stuff dumped by the door. On closer inspection, it was milk powder cans, makeup boxes, torn clothes, and so on—all rubbish. The funniest part was a big iron cage lying next to the rubbish. It looked familiar... let me think..."

"Right! It looked exactly like the iron cages in the 'Guess the Words' instance. When I got there, a bunch of cashiers and sales assistants were sweeping up the trash at the entrance..."

It seemed the Recycling Station instance had collapsed, causing the trash inside to explode outward.

But it exploded all the way to the supermarket entrance?

It exploded a bit too far, Gu Mian mused, unable to figure it out.

Upon hearing this, Mr. Green immediately darted out, probably rushing to the supermarket to mourn its loss.

"It's ridiculous that garbage from the Low-Dimensional World can fly over here." Gu Mian glanced out the window and saw a plastic bag drifting in the sky. Looks like he made a great contribution to environmental protection, eh?

Chu Changge pushed up his glasses. "This means the Low-Dimensional World has started transmitting matter to the real world, and that's not a good thing."

Gu Mian was puzzled. "Aren't the game supermarkets and ticket booths on Earth now all from the Low-Dimensional World? Moreover, the food processing plants in the instances can even deliver goods to the real world. The Low-Dimensional World should have been able to send large amounts of goods to Earth a long time ago."

Chu Changge shook his head slightly. "Mr. Green also said that the ticket booths and supermarkets were established at Earth's behest. If Earth doesn't open dimensional gaps, these things can't reach Earth at all. It's difficult for the Low-Dimensional World to transmit matter here without Earth's consent. Before the global game started, only a few of us were transported out from the Low-Dimensional World.

"But now... trash from the Recycling Station has exploded into the real world without Earth's approval. This means the Low-Dimensional World has begun to encroach upon this world. Perhaps soon, it won't just be trash from the Low-Dimension arriving in the real world."

Color drained from Fatty's face. "I don't want a world like the Old World to just drop into reality! That would be the death of me!"

Fatty had a strong reaction. Gu Mian, on the other hand, wasn't particularly concerned. He didn't care what the world looked like; if Earth exploded, it would be exactly what he wished for.

After his initial shock, Fatty became puzzled. "Special items should also be things Earth allows to be brought out from the Low-Dimensional World, but Mr. Green..."

Earth probably wouldn't like NPCs from the Low-Dimension parachuting into the real world, right?

But Gu Mian managed to carry him out of the instance single-handedly.

"Could it be that the Doctor is a special channel connecting the Low and High Dimensions, which is why he could carry Mr. Green out so easily?" The more Fatty thought about it, the more convinced he became of his guess. "No wonder you've been targeted since you were young! It's not unreasonable for Earth to want to kill you. If I were Earth, I'd try to kill you every day too!"

Gu Mian: "..."

If he was such a special channel, why didn't the Low-Dimensional World treat him well?

As soon as they saw him, it was like villagers spotting bandits. They'd even put up signs saying, 'Gu Mian and dogs are not allowed.'

Recently, that Goose Factory was even researching something called a 'Gu Mian Detector.'

After analyzing for a while, Fatty realized he hadn't put down his shopping bags.

He quickly placed the two full shopping bags on the coffee table and began to pull out the items one by one. "I bought some food when I was getting hidden weapons for the Doctor. Gotta make sure the Doctor is well-fed... for the send-off..."

Something about that sentence felt off. Gu Mian remained silent.

Fatty took out a large bottle of chilled cola from a shopping bag. "It's gotten hot lately. The supermarket is quite considerate; the cola is chilled."

He continued to dig into the bags, pulling out strawberry yogurt, yellow peach jelly, hot pot seasoning, several rolls of meat, and cucumber-flavored potato chips...

Once he had taken almost everything out of the two bags, Gu Mian finally saw the hidden weapons Fatty had bought.

"A multifunctional tactical pen!" Fatty pulled out a pen that looked quite heavy. "This end writes, but turn it around, pull it open, and it's a small knife! The pen also has little gadgets like a lighter, a whistle, a screwdriver..."

"Dragon Scale Flying Needles! Throw them hard enough, and they might hit an enemy's vital points. The salesperson told me that if Nanny Rong had used these to prick Ziwei, My Fair Princess would have ended right there..."

Gu Mian: "..."

He took a few steps back and then slipped out of the room amidst Fatty's boisterous descriptions.

Meanwhile, Fatty was still admiring the hidden weapons in his hands, completely oblivious to Gu Mian's departure.

Chapter 610 Can I be a human this year?_1

"By the way," Fatty pulled out another curious little gadget from the plastic bag. It looked like the kind of makeup girls often used before the global game started. "I spent some extra time in the makeup area and found that the supermarket actually sells makeup that can be brought into an instance."

Gu Mian looked at what Fatty was holding; it was a bottle of something similar to foundation.

Then, Fatty pulled out items that looked like eyeshadow, lipstick, blush, and makeup brushes.

Before the global game started, Gu Mian had no exposure to the realm of beauty makeup, and Chu Changge and Fatty were even less interested in such things. Therefore, today was the first time they learned that there was a beauty makeup section in the supermarket.

Fatty murmured to himself, "But there were no customers at the makeup counter. Which makes sense, no one would bring a bunch of bottles and jars into an instance to do makeup."

Chu Changge glanced at the makeup scattered across the table and adjusted his glasses. "Soon, there will be."

Hearing this, Gu Mian had a bad premonition. "You don't expect me to bring these things into an instance and then masterfully apply delicate and exquisite makeup to myself, do you?"

Fatty's face clearly read, "That's exactly the idea."

"If the Circus Dungeon really is in the world of the Slaughter game, then all the Upper Class People over there know you, Doctor," he said, waving the mascara excitedly as if he wanted to slather it on Gu Mian's face right then. "It would be dangerous if you were recognized, so you have to disguise yourself. It doesn't have to look perfect, just different from your original appearance."

Upon saying this, Fatty suddenly had a daring idea. "Doctor, if you smear your face pure white and then use other things to draw features, could you impersonate an Upper Class Person?"

Gu Mian recalled the skin of the Upper Class People in the world of the Slaughter game, which looked as if it was smeared with flour. "I'm afraid foundation can't create that effect, and I can't even tell what those things you're holding are..."

So, in the following days, Fatty specifically invited Xiao Qiao to help them distinguish the types of makeup.

But he hadn't considered Xiao Qiao's intellectual disability.

When Xiao Qiao smeared lipstick on Gu Mian's cheek, mistaking it for eyeshadow for the third time, Gu Mian finally couldn't suppress his frustration and kicked her out the door.

The study of makeup eventually ended in failure.

「The day to enter the Circus Dungeon came soon.」

After coming to an agreement with 007, Gu Mian held a bottle of foundation in one hand and a mask in the other, then placed the mask on his face.

Although the study of makeup ended in failure, Gu Mian was at least able to apply the foundation evenly.

After putting on the mask, a game panel appeared in front of him.

[Detecting that you have triggered the special instance 'Circus of Love and Justice']

[Searching for matching players, please wait...]

To trigger the "Circus of Love and Justice" instance, one needed to wear a clown mask. At this moment, the only people likely wearing clown masks were Gu Mian and 007, so the result was obvious.

[Other players detected. Number of players triggering this instance: 2]

As expected, it was only him and 007.

Of course, special circumstances couldn't be ruled out. For example, if 007 were suddenly killed and looted, the curious robber might happen to put the mask on his face...

Just as Gu Mian's imagination was running wild, almost to the point of mourning for 007, the instance introduction appeared on the panel.

As expected, it had the same worldview as the Slaughter game instance.

[Background: This is a world with highly developed industry, but relatively backward medical conditions...]

Fatty had just recently recalled the worldview of the Slaughter game world, and it was practically indistinguishable from this background.

The background introduction of this instance was similar to that of the Slaughter game instance. It likely described a world with developed industry, backward medical care, and a clear divide between Upper Class People and Lower Class People. However, the latter part of the background content was different from the Slaughter game.

Gu Mian remembered that the Slaughter game had players thrown into the Prohibited Area, and the background of that instance mentioned the Prohibited Area.

He remembered the original text went something like this: "According to the 'Upper Class Protection Treaty,' all Lower Class People who provoke, insult, or satirize Upper Class People will be detained and sent to 'the Prohibited Area' in batches."

Unfortunately, he had later ripped this 'Prohibited Area' apart, and it could no longer be used.

However, from the background introduction before him, it seemed the Upper Class People in the world of the Slaughter game had found a new pastime.

The second half of the instance's background introduction read as follows:

[According to the 'Upper Class Protection Treaty (Second Edition),' all Lower Class People who provoke, insult, or satirize Upper Class People will be detained and sent to the 'Circus of Love and Justice' in batches.]

"Back to this world again..." Gu Mian mused, looking at the background introduction. "It seems the destruction of the Prohibited Area didn't cause much damage to the Upper Class People; they're still here watching the Circus."

The Circus Dungeon shouldn't be much different from the Slaughter game instance, Gu Mian thought, rubbing his chin. This instance is likely just Lower Class People performing shows while Upper Class People watch and cheer.

It felt somewhat similar to the Metamorphosis in the Old World.

There was more text underneath the background introduction.

[Instance task: Obtain 'Lu Yi's Recognition']

Gu Mian remembered that the task in the Slaughter game instance was 'Obtain Jin Hu's Redemption,' while the task for this instance was 'Obtain Lu Yi's Recognition.'

No wonder it's an instance from the same world; even the task format is the same.

Then came the instance reward.

[Instance Reward: Grants the 'Beast Tamer' profession to the clearer.]

This instance wasn't hiding anything; it directly stated what profession it was for. Of course, just by looking at the instance's name, it was easy to guess the profession anyway.

[You will soon enter the 'Circus of Love and Justice' instance, please wait...]

After Gu Mian scanned through all the words, the semi-transparent panel gradually dimmed and then disappeared, leaving only a dim gray void before his eyes.

DRIP.

Only when a drop of water fell on Gu Mian's face did he realize that the surroundings had changed.

More dripping sounds reached his ears. Listening carefully, he could also hear a slight rustling, like dense raindrops striking a barrier.

The surroundings were dim. Several strong beams of light pierced the darkness, striking puddles on the ground and reflecting a shimmering glow.

The atmosphere was filled with the scent of fresh soil.

A chilling wind blew frequently; the air was damp and cold.

Gu Mian raised his head and looked around. Rusty iron bars came into view; he was enclosed by them on all four sides, and even overhead. They were all covered in brownish-red rust.

Rainwater struck the rusty cage, forming dark red rivulets that flowed down the iron bars and into the muddy ground at his feet.

He was sitting in a cage less than 1.5 meters in height.

Dark red droplets, dripping from the iron bars overhead, landed on his coat, staining his originally clean white lab coat and lending it a somewhat grim aura.

It was difficult for an adult to stand up in the cage.

Gu Mian peered through the dense curtain of rain at the surroundings. All around him were low, rusted cages. Inside each, individuals were curled into balls, seemingly trying to ward off the cold by huddling.