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Chapter 63: Thanks to Cola2525 for the Reward_1

[Pitch-Black Curtain]

[Introduction: A pitch-black curtain left on stage after a performance. Other than providing cover, it has no other significant use.]

[Function: Can freely cover any object. If you urgently need to relieve yourself and can't find a public toilet, this curtain is your ideal choice.]

After Qi Tian loudly called out "Pitch-Black Curtain," Gu Mian saw Fatty's face, about five meters away, turn green. His expression was like someone who'd just eaten shit.

At this moment, the host on the high platform wasn't in a rush to announce the start. "Our Contestant Number Four—I Desire to Rule the World—has used a special item before the start of the second round, blocking the word-guessing board of Contestant Number Five, Gu Mian!"

"It seems the players from Group Five are in some danger now..." he mused.

"However, I'm very happy about it!" The host's oily green face was wreathed in a smile. "Now, finally, a player has realized that this isn't just a word-guessing game."

"Correct. The key to this game isn't just guessing words; it's also about the strategies players use. For instance, using special items to hinder other groups from guessing the words..."

"Obviously, the player I Desire to Rule the World has realized this unspoken rule, while some of the slower players from Group Five seem to have fallen into a predicament..."

Gu Mian reached up to touch the board above his head and felt the texture of flannel; it was indeed covered.

This pitch-black curtain seemed to have fused to the board and couldn't be lifted.

After fumbling with it for a while, Gu Mian realized there was no way to remove it.

Qi Tian turned his head to look at him. "Don't waste your effort. You can't uncover it. In the second round, your group will undoubtedly lose."

Fatty was glaring angrily at Qi Tian, as if he wanted to bore holes into him with his gaze.

Qi Tian laughed. "Your friend looks rather angry. I'm truly sorry. Once your group is eliminated, could you please apologize to them on my behalf?"

At this time, the host on the high platform spoke again, "I was just interrupted, so let me start over..."

As he spoke, he reached for the electronic timer on the table, his voice lilting, "Round two, timing—"

Amidst the host's drawn-out announcement, Gu Mian shook his head. "There's no need to apologize—"

"What?"

Before Qi Tian could react, the Doctor in the adjacent cage—Gu Mian—suddenly reached out his hand.

Qi Tian instinctively jumped back. "What are you trying to—"

But before he could finish his sentence, his voice caught in his throat.

The others were also stunned.

They watched, astounded, as Gu Mian directly reached out, pulled down the board in Qi Tian's cage, and casually slipped it into his white coat.

What the hell? Everyone was gobsmacked.

By the time they had processed what had happened, Qi Tian's board was gone.

Gu Mian secured the board and then looked at the slightly agape Qi Tian with a smile. "What's that saying? Oh right, 'Turnabout is fair play.'"

Qi Tian's breathing quickened. "You! How could you... Give me back my board! That's against the rules!"

How could someone just snatch another person's board and stuff it in their pocket?

"Boards in cages are obviously meant to be yanked off. Why else hang them there?" Gu Mian said, as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

Qi Tian looked imploringly at the host.

The host retracted his hand from the timer. He had been interrupted twice, and the second round still hadn't successfully started.

"Ah, it seems our player Gu Mian has gained a very deep understanding of this game," the host said, looking up at the two. "However, the boards hanging in the cages do have other purposes... Ahem. Theoretically speaking, player Gu Mian hasn't broken any rules. The game can proceed as normal."

Qi Tian wanted to protest further, but the host cut him off.

"And so, we have the ultimate showdown between the two groups! A battle where neither side has a board. Honestly, this is the first time I've witnessed such a scene... From here on, it all comes down to luck and character. By the way, the probability of guessing the word purely by luck is probably similar to the national football team winning the World Cup."

"Enough chatter. The second round is really about to begin now. I hope it can start smoothly this time..."

"Alright then," the host reached for the electronic timer again. "Timing... starts!"

This time, finally, no one interrupted him.

The host visibly sighed in relief after uttering the word "starts!"

He then turned his gaze to the two players in their cages. "This is truly a suspenseful round. Even I, the host, have no idea what's on either of your boards."

The four remaining players outside the cages could do nothing. They weren't allowed to speak, so they could only stare wide-eyed at each other.

Inside the cage, Qi Tian turned and stared intently at Gu Mian. "What do you want?"

Gu Mian didn't speak.

Now, neither group could see their board. It was highly probable they would both be eliminated simultaneously, with neither side benefiting.

"How about this," Qi Tian said, his tone shifting to one of negotiation. "I'll remove the curtain, you give me back my board, and we compete fair and square. Okay?"

Gu Mian touched his chin and answered bluntly, "Not okay."

Qi Tian was taken aback but then tried to reason patiently, "This is a lose-lose situation; neither of us gains anything. It's better to compete fairly. That way, we'll at least have a chance to win. If your group wins, you'll get two special items. Giving that up out of spite would be a huge loss."

The host continued his lively commentary from above, "It seems Contestant Number Four wants to reconcile. However, I don't think the chances of them reaching a consensus are very high."

Perhaps because the game was nearing its end, the host's pace quickened. "There are only five minutes left! Our two contestants still haven't reached an agreement. I'm afraid this will be another game without a winner."

Qi Tian kept trying to persuade Gu Mian until his mouth was dry, but Gu Mian remained completely unmoved.

Finally, Qi Tian couldn't bear it any longer and raised his voice, "What on earth do you want?!"

Although dying in the instance didn't mean real death, no one knew what happened after being caught by a ghost—they'd likely be tortured for a while before actually dying.

That wasn't the main point. The point was that dying in the instance meant losing attributes or dropping equipment, which would have a huge impact on a player.

The host's voice from above became pressing, "Contestants, please note, there's less than a minute left!"

To be precise, just over fifty seconds remained.

Seeing the time on the electronic timer counting down by the second, Qi Tian finally gave up.

"Anyway, even if we reveal our boards now, it's too late to guess. I'm done arguing with you," Qi Tian stared at Gu Mian. "Actually, if I die once, it doesn't matter much. At most, I'll lose some items, and it'll sting for a bit..."

"But if you lose something, that's different. Whether it's attributes or special items, it would be a devastating blow to you. You know your name is on the wanted list. I don't need to spell out what a decrease in strength means for you."

"Thinking about it that way, even if we both die, I'm not the one who truly loses out. Heh." A smirk touched Qi Tian's lips.

Gu Mian finally glanced at him. "Who said anything about dying with you?"