

Collapse 691

Chapter 691

Gu Mian was very familiar with this voice.

Xiao Qiao wasn't good at much, but incessant chattering was undoubtedly her forte.

She would often mindlessly repeat words she had read or heard from somewhere, and Gu Mian was frequently tormented by her emotionless recitations.

The more he heard it, the more deeply ingrained the voice became.

Therefore, Gu Mian recognized Xiao Qiao's voice almost instantaneously.

However, Xiao Qiao wasn't known for speaking so intelligently.

"Who are you?" Gu Mian asked after a pause of several seconds.

Calling someone only to ask who they are is truly idiotic behavior.

The person on the other end seemed befuddled by his audacious question. After a moment of silence, she responded, "I'm the only person in this world. In your terms, I'm the most important NPC here. Since you've called me, you should already know my identity."

Indeed.

Mr. Green had already informed Gu Mian about this person's existence.

But Gu Mian hadn't expected this NPC to have such a close connection with Xiao Qiao.

Since their voices were identical, Gu Mian reasonably suspected Xiao Qiao was an avatar forcefully split from this NPC's body. Perhaps the NPC made some errors during the creation process, resulting in a less intelligent individual.

Gu Mian didn't ask about her connection to Xiao Qiao; finding his four lost companions was his top priority.

He asked directly, "Are they still alive?"

Given her status as the most important NPC in this world, she likely knew the situation of Chu Changge and the others.

Even if she didn't know about the others, she should at least be able to sense Xiao Qiao, right?

"Alive," the NPC from the Low-Dimensional World replied. She was unusually cooperative, even proactively providing more information. "But one of them doesn't seem to be doing too well."

Gu Mian didn't ask who wasn't doing well. "Are they still together?"

"Three of them are together. Another one is looking for you and is not far from you."

"In what direction?"

"Straight ahead. All four of them are straight ahead. Follow this road, and you'll find them soon."

Gu Mian immediately instructed Coach Che to drive forward.

This high-level NPC was like a kind old man from a Novice Village in a game, answering whatever he was asked.

It seemed her sole purpose in appearing was to answer Gu Mian's questions.

Meanwhile, the ghost being dragged behind the car continued to shriek. Gu Mian glanced at the rugged road ahead. "I have a question. This world continuously reincarnates to prevent its own destruction, right? The cycle begins a few minutes after the alarm sounds. Do you know how much time is left before the next alarm?"

He had to find everyone before the cycle began.

The person on the other end of the phone wasn't surprised Gu Mian had figured out the secret of the world's cycle. She replied, "Less than ten minutes."

Gu Mian hadn't expected it to be so soon.

Time was extremely tight.

"At your current speed, it will take at least ten minutes to meet the other three. You don't have enough time." The NPC kindly calculated for him.

Gu Mian reached out and grabbed Coach Che by the throat, trying to instill a sense of urgency in him.

Coach Che, flooring the gas pedal, shouted, "It's flooded! It's flooded!"

A car on the verge of taking flight sped down the dark narrow road, dragging an underage loudspeaker behind it.

The scene was rather eerie.

Fatty shouted from behind Gu Mian's head, "Doctor, if this world cycles before we find Brother Chu and the others, does that mean we'll have to face the Brother Chu from the next cycle? Will the Brother Chu from the next cycle still be our Brother Chu?"

Just as Fatty was shouting, a voice came from the phone, "Haven't you noticed?"

What?

The voice, identical to Xiao Qiao's, continued from the receiver, "The moment you entered this world, the cycle of reincarnation had already stopped."

Gu Mian was stunned.

The cycle of reincarnation had stopped?

This meant no new people would appear in this world. The world would return to a normal timeline, facing its own destruction.

Is the Seventh World going to perish like this?

"Because the cycle of reincarnation in this world can't interfere with your existence, the moment you entered here, its reincarnation program had already ceased functioning," the person on the phone continued, not giving Gu Mian a chance to interject. "In fact, I was the one who initiated the cycle of reincarnation in this world to prevent its destruction. But do you know why my world has become like this? It's because we are under a curse from a higher dimension.

"This used to be a world just as normal as Earth. But under the impact of the curse, countless negative elements appeared in this world.

"People became irritable and easily angered. Minor provocations could incite fights. Gradually, conflicts and contradictions grew more numerous. Evil began to fester in every corner of the world, and crime became an everyday occurrence. Very quickly, this world was inundated with negativity.

"The population plummeted daily. Eventually, this world became a container filled with negative factors. Within these intense negative factors, all living beings were contaminated and subsequently died, finding no peace even after death.

"This is a Low-Dimensional World, a world born from people's aspirations or creations. Likewise, sustaining such a world requires emotional support. When a Low-Dimensional World no longer possesses what it needs to sustain itself, it means that world is dying.

"But I was fortunate. Before this world perished, I found a way to preserve it—reincarnation."

Gu Mian listened to the other party's lengthy explanation, his eyes fixed on the road ahead.

"The process is very complicated; a detailed explanation would take more than an hour. You can understand it as me setting up a program, one that makes this world constantly repeat a short period before its destruction. This way, it never actually reaches that point of destruction.

"But I didn't expect Earth to throw people in. This time, even you came in. You should be aware of your own uniqueness. To me, you are a BUG. The reincarnation program I established is completely useless against you. Your arrival caused the program I set up to crash directly, and this world's time has begun to move forward linearly..."

"This time, even I came in." Gu Mian seized on the key point. "According to what you're saying, I didn't participate in the previous cycles, correct? This is my first time entering this world."

"That's correct."

Strange. Gu Mian frowned.

Did the Chu Changge who entered this world previously not have the Dungeon Entry Tickets?

"This time, Chu Changge from the First World used a special item to pull you in, right?" the person on the phone said. "The Chu Changge who came to this world before didn't possess such an item."

So he really didn't have one.

Where did things go wrong?

Why does the Chu Changge in his timeline possess a Dungeon Entry Ticket, while the previous ones didn't?

Just then, Fatty suddenly yelled from the back seat, "Doctor! I think I see Miss 007 up ahead! And a dog..."

Gu Mian also looked up.

The car's headlights illuminated the distance. Gu Mian saw a spirited large dog dragging what looked like a corpse towards them at a sprint.

Judging by the clothes, it was undoubtedly 007.

Coach Che braked the car at the right moment.

Although 007 was being dragged like a corpse, she stubbornly kept her head raised. Gu Mian saw her lips move as if saying something, and the dog obediently stopped beside the car.

Gu Mian quickly pulled 007 and the dog into the car, then went back to pressuring Coach Che.

Pale-faced, Coach Che immediately slammed the accelerator, and the car sped forward with everyone.

"The direction I came from... they're all in that direction..." 007 managed to gasp out.

She hadn't slept for days and had just been dragged by the dog; 007 felt like she could pass out on the spot.

But she dutifully informed Gu Mian of Chu Changge and the others' direction before collapsing.

Fatty looked at 007 lying in the car, her arms scraped raw. "Now I understand how that ghost felt, being hung from the back of the car by Doctor."

The person on the other end of the line was still speaking to Gu Mian. "The one I said was dying isn't her."

Someone in worse condition than 007?

Gu Mian frowned, looking at the unconscious 007.

Chapter 692 There is actually a new book in the world with 500,000 words a month!_1

007 was already in a terrible state. Anyone worse off than her was likely already on the brink of death.

"There are only five minutes left before the world collapses; there might not be enough time." The voice on the other end of the phone continued, "If they die and the world doesn't cycle again, you will never see them again."

"Actually, I still have the ability to restart the cycle, as long as you lend me one thing. With your help, I can reopen it. You won't be affected by the cycle, so even if the current them die, you can still meet them in the next one."

"You've come this far, and you have a vehicle. Therefore, you'll have plenty of time in the next cycle. It won't take long for you to find them and leave with them."

Gu Mian said nothing.

"As long as you lend me your luck, combined with my life, the cycle can be restarted..." the person on the other end muttered.

"But will they still be *them* in the next cycle?" Gu Mian suddenly spoke. "If I agree to your request, it means abandoning the current them."

"They've struggled to survive until now, never giving up even in this situation. But then, to tell them, 'You've been abandoned. Gu Mian chose the versions of you in the next cycle.' Isn't that ridiculous?"

"So, because I'm afraid they'll die, I should just abandon them and choose people in the next cycle who are less likely to die? Do you think I would accept such a thing?"

Gu Mian looked ahead, directly rejecting the proposal from the person on the phone.

"No, I do not accept."

"Although they might die, might perish in this cycle, and even if we can never meet again alive, I won't abandon the current them for the sake of some happy reunion."

"No one deserves to be abandoned. That is my choice."

The voice on the phone was silent for a long time before responding, "That's just like you. Even knowing the ending might be a tragedy, you still make such a choice without hesitation. If it were anyone else, their choice would likely be different."

"Your friends and family are about to die, and it's difficult to save them. If you agree to restart the cycle, you can save them in the next one, avoiding the risk of losing your friends. However, if you don't agree, you'll most likely be separated by death, never to meet again. I think most people in such circumstances would choose to restart the cycle."

This was indeed the way to minimize loss.

Nevertheless, Gu Mian would not choose this easy, risk-free path.

Because he knew that on another, more arduous path, people were waiting for him.

"Since you've made your choice, I won't insist any further," the voice on the other end of the phone said. "From this point on, this world will head towards destruction. Fortunately, I've been here for so

long that I have ample experience. I will do my best to slow down the world's collapse. If you manage to save anyone, you must leave before the world completely disintegrates."

"If this world collapses, will it affect Earth?"

"Yes. The collapse of this world will make Earth very happy."

Gu Mian asked, "...If this world collapsed, would Xiao Qiao be affected?"

"Of course, she would. When a Low-Dimensional World is completely annihilated, any life born from it will also perish. But Xiao Qiao was created by me. I am not a derivative of the Seventh World, so as long as I am alive, she won't die; she'll only be injured."

"But you should be aware that the Guardians of the other worlds are different from Xiao Qiao. Their lives are intrinsically linked to their own worlds. If their respective worlds collapse, they will die too."

Gu Mian clutched his phone. "If you're not a life form born of this world, then why have you invested so much effort into it?"

He's even risking his own life to prevent the world's collapse.

The person on the other end laughed. "Perhaps it's because I've developed feelings for this place. Besides, if the Seventh World is completely destroyed, it will deal a devastating blow to other worlds; its collapse here will spread to them. I will stay here to stop the collapse from spreading."

The destruction of the Seventh World could actually have such a huge impact on other worlds?

"Why would it affect other worlds?" Gu Mian asked.

"Have you heard the expression 'follow the vine to find the melon'? Earth has always wanted to eliminate the Low-Dimensional Worlds, but it can't find their source. It has only managed to grasp the tail end of these worlds—and this place *is* the tail end of all Low-Dimensional Worlds."

"Our worlds are like a long vine, coexisting symbiotically. To eradicate them, the most straightforward way is to pull out the vine by its root."

"But Earth can't find the root; it has only found the tail. Even so, even if it can't find the root of the Low-Dimensional Worlds, as long as it sets the tail of the vine on fire, the fire will keep spreading, all the way to the source, until the entire vine is burned."

"Although this method isn't as effective as uprooting it directly, it can still achieve the goal. The curse Earth placed on this world is precisely that fire. This curse will burn along the vine until it destroys all worlds."

"And I am the impediment to this fire's spread. Originally, I relied on the cycle to stop this fire's spread, but I can't do that anymore. I can no longer stop the collapse of the Seventh World; I can only do my best to prevent this curse from spreading further up the vine."

At this point, the voice paused for a few seconds before continuing, "There's less than two minutes left. You're not close to them; you won't make it in two minutes."

Just then, 007, who was beside him, opened her eyes.

The poor Beast Tamer, who had only been unconscious for a few minutes, struggled to open her eyes and pointed. "They're ahead."

She had said this once before.

But 007's mind was already somewhat muddled. She probably worried she hadn't said it, so she anxiously woke up and repeated it.

Gu Mian looked at 007, who had just awakened.

Yet, the person on the phone couldn't help but ask again, "Are you sure you don't want to restart the cycle? If this continues, the only one likely to survive might just be the young girl beside you."

Gu Mian looked into the darkness ahead. "I won't give up on them, whatever the outcome."

"Good. I, too, hope you can stop this cycle, stop them from heading towards death. I've seen them countless times wanting to live, only to be ultimately extinguished in this world's darkness."

"I've seen them try countless methods to leave this world, but they were never successful."

"After countless explorations, they discovered a new path: self-destruction... After realizing there was no hope of survival, they would imprison themselves and await death's arrival."

"Your friends are very clever. Each time, they managed to discover the secrets of the cycle and also learned that their deceased selves would turn into monsters in the next cycle."

"To give their future selves in the next cycle a better chance, they not only confined themselves but some even broke their own legs, rendering themselves immobile. That way, when they turned into monsters, it would be difficult for them to harm people in the next cycle."

Chapter 693 I've time-traveled back!_1

"They've been struggling in the cycle of reincarnation. I hope you can change their fate. Since it's determined that they will no longer reincarnate, this is the last hope."

The car cruised through the deserted city. Coach Che, in the driver's seat, was sweating bullets, fearing Gu Mian would add to his sense of pressure.

Gu Mian, however, was not in the mood to pay attention to Coach Che. His mind was filled with the numerous people he had seen die in this world.

Those people had already died, permanently, in the past.

What about this time, then? Can he change their fate this time?

"Soon," the voice from the other end spoke again. "You're not far from them. Only a few minutes away."

Then her tone changed, becoming anxious. "But..."

As everyone knows, the word "but" never foretells anything good once it's spoken.

Almost as if to prove this point, Gu Mian heard an abrasive, piercing alarm that immediately drowned out the howl of the ghost hanging from the rear of the car.

It was a warning siren.

The world had begun to crumble.

There was no more time.

At the same time, Chu Changge, Xiao Qiao, and the Fortune-teller, who were not far from Gu Mian, also heard the sound of the world shattering.

The massive alarm sounded like the world's death wail, and the earth trembled in response.

The Evil Ghosts in the city began to seethe. The Animal Protection Act's power had dwindled to almost nothing, completely unable to stop the frenzied ghosts. Chu Changge saw countless pairs of ferocious hands reaching out from the roadside bushes.

"Run!" He held a watch-like object in one hand and pulled Xiao Qiao along with the other as he broke into a run.

The Fortune-teller lay unconscious on Xiao Qiao's back, exhausted.

They ran in a world on the brink of death. On this dark road, they were alone—no one else, no light, no hope.

No matter how desperately a person might run, they couldn't outrun crazed ghosts.

Soon, Chu Changge felt a numbness in his waist.

He looked down to see two blue-purple arms reaching from behind and wrapping around his waist.

Simultaneously, he felt a cold body pressing against his back. The chilling body restrained him, making it impossible for him to move forward.

Xiao Qiao, carrying the unconscious Fortune-teller, clearly noticed Chu Changge's predicament.

She reached out to grab Chu Changge's arm, attempting to pull him from his bonds.

"Don't come over," Chu Changge knew such attempts were futile and shoved Xiao Qiao away. "Run!"

Xiao Qiao stumbled a few steps from Chu Changge's push. Then she felt a ghostly hand grab the Fortune-teller on her back.

"No!" With one hand tightly gripping the Fortune-teller, she reached out to Chu Changge with the other.

She struggled with the ghosts, trying to tear her two companions from their grasp.

But it was useless.

The encircling ghosts grew in number.

She, too, was being choked. Breathing became increasingly difficult, and the scene before her began to blur.

Xiao Qiao, dazed, stared into the distance. She thought she saw fissures appearing on the far-off ground, then a ghostly hand covered her eyes, plunging her world into absolute darkness.

Her consciousness began to fade.

Is she going to die?

In that moment, she felt a tinge of sadness.

Are they going to die here together...?

But then, she heard the barking of a dog, the sound going from distant to near within an instant.

Then, she heard someone's grumbling voice.

Followed by the roaring of a motorcycle.

Listening to the noises, Xiao Qiao suddenly felt lighter, as if the ghost on her had been removed.

She heard a familiar voice overhead. "Xiao Qiao."

She tried to lift her head and caught sight of Gu Mian's injured chin.

"Damn it." She heard Gu Mian curse again. Then he raised his shiny chainsaw and ran somewhere out of her sight.

Xiao Qiao tried to look, but she no longer had the energy to turn her head.

All she heard were ghostly screams coming from an unseen direction, a sound even louder than the siren.

By the time Fatty and Coach Che arrived, the scene was one of absolute chaos—

Ghosts lay strewn across the ground, a scene that resonated strongly with the terrifying alarm; it was clear they had suffered inhuman devastation before dying.

The instigator stood atop a pile of corpses, carrying the unconscious Fortune-teller on his back, and dragging the barely conscious Xiao Qiao.

Nearby, Chu Changge seemed in better condition; at least he could stand on his own. However, a large bite mark was visible on his forehead, as if some behemoth had clamped its jaws on his head. Fresh blood was gushing from the wound.

Gu Mian rushed to the car, placed the Fortune-teller and Xiao Qiao inside, then hauled Chu Changge, who was slowly walking behind, and stuffed him in as well.

He then opened the passenger-side door, sat in the passenger seat, and instructed Coach Che, "Drive! Drive fast! Head to the station."

Fatty had initially planned to ask what had happened, but as soon as he arrived, he heard Gu Mian ordering them to flee.

"Doctor, are there many ghosts following us... HOLY SHIT!" He was halfway through his sentence when he finally understood why Gu Mian was urging them to flee so quickly.

Not far ahead, the earth had shattered, revealing a pitch-black abyss below. Pieces of the ground, like scraps of paper, fell into the abyss. The crack was now spreading in their direction.

So this is what a world collapsing looks like.

Fatty had been fortunate enough to see a fake world collapse in the Old World, but now he was seeing a real one.

Coach Che was clearly scared too.

He had only ever seen Gu Mian collapse instances; he had never witnessed a spectacle like this.

With trembling legs, he executed a drift and sped the car back in the direction they came from at full speed.

"Holy shit, Doctor," Fatty said while supporting the women and watching the scene unfolding behind them, "Is that thing going to swallow us whole?"

"I'm afraid so." Gu Mian gave an objective answer. A world collapsing was different from an instance collapsing.

When an instance collapsed, it was because an important character had died or a key building was destroyed, and the officials, unable to tolerate your continued troublemaking, would seize the opportunity to kick you out.

But there were no officials here to regulate things; staying in the collapsing world meant being annihilated along with it.

There was no need for Gu Mian to pressure him; Coach Che was already driving as fast as he could towards the station, terrified of being swallowed if he was too slow.

Fortunately, the person on the other end of the phone had slowed down the world's collapse, meaning the speed of the world shattering wasn't fast enough to engulf them all.

Since he didn't have to drive, Gu Mian went to check on Xiao Qiao and the other two in the back.

They had been perfectly fine when they arrived, but now they all looked terrible.

They were all lying neatly in the Spirit Car; to an outsider, it would look like it was carrying three corpses.

007 was not in serious danger; having gone without sleep for days and then being dragged by a mad dog had merely caused her to faint for a short while before she woke up.

Xiao Qiao's breathing was steady. The ghosts hadn't had a chance to harm her. Gu Mian guessed her unconsciousness was related to the world collapsing.

Currently, the Fortune-teller was in the worst condition.

She had nearly died from sudden cardiac arrest.

The Fortune-teller's dog had not only carried 007 the whole way but also Gu Mian. Her dog's speed was incredible, faster than any car. When the alarm sounded, Gu Mian had immediately abandoned their vehicle, having 007 command the dog to carry him straight ahead at full speed.

Thanks to this dog, he had been able to arrive in time.

However, this had only worsened the condition of the Fortune-teller, who was already on the brink.

Fortunately, Chu Changge had used the Archive Device on the Fortune-teller earlier, restoring some of her condition; otherwise, Gu Mian feared he might have found her corpse.

He had immediately performed emergency treatment for sudden cardiac arrest on her, and she was now breathing normally. Although still unconscious, she wasn't in immediate danger of dying.

Gu Mian was a professional Doctor; his treatments were several times more effective.

His CPR was as effective as connecting someone to a CPR machine, making it very difficult for the person to die.

Among the four of them, Chu Changge had suffered the most harm from the ghosts.

When Gu Mian found him, his head was in the cavernous, bloody maw of a ghost.

As a result, Chu Changge's head was still covered in saliva.

Chapter 694

It was worth mentioning that Chu Changge's fragile skull should have been ruptured by the bite. However, with his foresight, he had quickly activated the [Supernatural Editor Simulator], which had already defined that ghost with the word "frail." This had lessened the impact of the bite on his head. Nevertheless, even a "frail" ghost had left a row of teeth marks on Chu Changge's head, and those marks were still bleeding.

Fatty was stretching out his hand to poke Chu Changge's bitten head. "Does it hurt, Brother Chu?"

Chu Changge emotionlessly pushed up his glasses. They had also been cracked by the bite and now hung askew on the bridge of his nose, looking somewhat comical.

Besides Chu Changge, Gu Mian's face was also injured. The Fortune-teller's dog ran much faster than the car. Gu Mian, having no experience riding a dog, had pitched face-first and been dragged for dozens of meters. As a result, half of his face had received an enthusiastic kiss from the ground.

Fatty moved over from Chu Changge's side and began to encourage the disfigured Gu Mian, "Doctor, although the abrasions on your face are severe, these scars add a touch of untamable, roguish charm. You look even more handsome than before."

Gu Mian completely ignored Fatty's barefaced lies.

Their injuries would heal after returning to Earth anyway. Well... others would recover, but his recovery wasn't guaranteed. Gu Mian seemed to have never been injured in an instance before, so he couldn't verify this theory.

After pondering for a moment, he took out a roll of bandages and meticulously wrapped the injured half of his face. Such a handsome face couldn't be disfigured.

Fatty started complimenting the bandage, "Oh, look, this bandage truly complements your temperament, Doctor! It makes you look even gentler and kinder..."

Gu Mian turned to look at the others in the car. 007's condition had improved; she could already sit up, supporting herself. The Fortune-teller was still half-dead, but it didn't matter; she would be lively and energetic after returning to Earth. Xiao Qiao was unconscious due to the collapse of the Seventh World.

Gu Mian figured that even after returning to Earth, Xiao Qiao wouldn't wake up for a while. But the current situation was already pretty good. At least it was much better than for those who remained in this world.

After the world collapsed, those who remained would also be swallowed by the world's collapse. This was probably a good ending for them.

Gu Mian looked towards the rear of the car. Ignoring the wailing ghost at the back of the car, the scene behind them was still quite shocking. He had seen the world shatter in the Old World, but the sheer scale of that event was ultimately no match for this vast catastrophe. He saw the sky and the ground in the distance shatter into fragments, like a painting burned to cinders. The ashes scattered and fell, revealing the endless void behind. Gu Mian saw several familiar figures being swallowed by the collapsing world, disappearing without a trace.

"You've also discovered this world's reincarnation, haven't you?" Chu Changge said, evidently having also seen those individuals being consumed.

"Mhm," Gu Mian acknowledged, looking in the direction where those people had vanished.

One thing still puzzled him. "Those Chu Changges... they didn't have replica tickets."

Chu Changge adjusted his precarious glasses with one hand. "I see. Because you didn't participate in those reincarnations, they died here."

But why would that happen? Was the appearance of the replica ticket due to an error at some point in time? The previous Chu Changges might not have even seen replica tickets. The replica ticket was

something Gu Mian got from Lu Yi. The mistake was very likely on Lu Yi's part. Connecting this to the worldview of Paradise World, Gu Mian formed a conclusion.

He voiced his thoughts, "Perhaps in the past, Lu Yi didn't have the replica ticket at all. But Paradise is a world that can roll back; it can create variables on its own. I think Paradise rolled back time not long ago. After that rollback, Lu Yi, who shouldn't have possessed it, obtained the replica ticket and gave it to me. That's why I was able to enter this world this time."

Gu Mian had speculated that Paradise hadn't undergone a large-scale rollback for a long time. Lu Yi must have obtained the replica ticket after a small-scale rollback. Actually, even without the replica ticket, I could have used a Dungeon Entry Ticket to enter the train instance, and then enter this world through the train instance. But that would introduce many variables. I obtained a passive state, "Train Assassin" in the train instance. With this state, whenever I ride a train, the accident rate increases by 50%. I originally hadn't taken this passive state seriously at all; after all, it was the apocalypse, who would still ride a train? But now that I think about it, if Chu Changge hadn't had the replica ticket to pull me into the Seventh World, I would have had to enter via the train. And when I ride a train, the probability of an accident is quite high. Coupled with this fifty percent passive state, the train absolutely couldn't have transported me smoothly to the Seventh World. The train would most likely break down midway. By the time it was repaired and reached here, it would be too late. "Train Assassin" was my only passive state. When I received this during the instance settlement, I had felt a sense of incongruity because such a thing had never appeared in instance settlements before. Now it seemed all incongruities were premeditated.

Thinking of this, Gu Mian suddenly reached out and tapped Coach Che on the driving seat.

Coach Che, who was nervously driving, jolted at the tap. "What is it?"

"Can you see my passive state?" Gu Mian asked, pointing to the top of his head.

Coach Che glanced at Gu Mian. "You mean 'Train Assassin'?"

"Exactly," Gu Mian nodded. "This was a reward I got from the train instance... It could be considered a reward, for now. This wasn't issued by your Low-Dimensional World, was it?" This global game had two organizers: the Low-Dimensional World and Earth. The instance rewards were likely jointly decided by both.

"Anyone can tell it's not," Coach Che said, turning his head back to concentrate on driving. "It's the apocalypse; there are no functional trains left on Earth. You can only ride them in instances. Why would we give you this passive state to destroy our own trains? Who would be so idle as to give players something like this to wreck their own trains?"

Then it could only have been issued by Earth.

Coach Che continued, "I guess Earth gave it to you. Our game system doesn't have 'passive states.' Earth must have gone to great lengths and expended considerable effort to add this for you. It's no wonder that shortly after the train broke down, we heard about plagues and severe cold on Earth's side. Turns out they drained their vitality dealing with you!"

His tone strongly implied, 'You're truly a good person, having made significant contributions to the Low-Dimensional World.'

It was more than just that. Gu Mian remembered that after the train instance ended, Earth had immediately experienced a massive typhoon, followed by a global blackout. He had originally thought Earth wanted to force humans to develop their potential through harsh environments; he hadn't expected this layer of connection. To give me this passive state, Earth had sacrificed a lot. Presumably, at that time, Earth had already begun plotting to throw Chu Changge and the others into the Seventh World.

Chu Changge also thought of this point, adjusting his glasses. "From Earth's years-long attempts to assassinate you, it's clear it cannot kill you directly. So, it consumed an enormous amount of energy in the train instance to saddle you with a seemingly reasonable debuff. And this negative state, aside from making you seem unlucky, had no other harm."

Indeed, very reasonable. In the train instance, they gave me the "Train Assassin" debuff. At the time, I only felt it was a bit odd and didn't think much of it.

"Earth used this seemingly harmless debuff to make me lower my guard, then waited for me here," Gu Mian laughed. If I hadn't gotten the replica ticket and hadn't been pulled directly into this world by Chu Changge, I'd probably still be on that malfunctioning train right now. By the time I arrived here, everyone would be dead. If the timing was calculated just right, I might have arrived just as this world was collapsing. At that point, I would have been hundreds of thousands of miles away from Chu Changge and the other three, and with my intervention, the world couldn't reincarnate normally. The end result would be the Seventh World completely collapsing. I would have just arrived, poking my head

in as the world disintegrated, and returned empty-handed. I wouldn't even be able to retrieve their corpses.

Chapter 695 Happy Yuan Festival to everyone_1

Why?

Why was Earth so hostile to him? This was what Gu Mian had always wanted to figure out. And now, it seemed like he had found some clues.

As Gu Mian thought, he took out a stack of photos from his pocket. Fatty was the first to exclaim in astonishment. He looked at the thick stack of photos; each of them showed people who resembled Gu Mian.

"So many Doctors," Fatty said, seeming a little dazed. "Is this heaven?"

"I found these in a photo studio in this world," Gu Mian said, arranging the photos on the car. "A Chu Changge led me there."

Not long after entering this place, Gu Mian had encountered a ghostly figure resembling Chu Changge. With that figure's guidance, he found these photos in the photo studio and somewhat uncovered the secret of the world's reincarnation.

"It must have been that version of me who found the photos in the studio and led you there," Chu Changge said, wiping the blood trickling down his temple. "Did he attack you?"

Gu Mian looked up and thought for a moment. "No."

"Theoretically, we should lose all reason after turning into monsters, even attacking ourselves." Chu Changge thought of the ghostly version of himself that had first emerged from the dense forest. That version of him was undoubtedly devoid of any sanity.

"In fact, even Xiao Qiao didn't attack me. I've seen another Xiao Qiao in this world too." Gu Mian thought of the figure below the restaurant building. "At first, she just watched me secretly from the

bottom of a building. When I discovered her, she panicked and hid in a closet. She didn't show any aggressive behavior from beginning to end."

The other ghosts in this world, however, were different. Gu Mian's lethal power against ghosts was widely acknowledged, yet those ghosts fearlessly swarmed him upon sight. From this, it was clear they truly had no cognitive functions.

"Maybe Guardians are truly different," Chu Changge said, looking at the array of photos before him. "Even if they become monsters, they might still recognize the ones they're meant to protect."

Fatty wiped the corner of his eye. "Why the sudden poetry? What you said actually kind of touched me."

As he spoke, he reached out to touch the photos. "So, are these the messages that the previous Brother Chu wanted to pass on to us? What do these photos represent? Do they mean that in the Low-Dimensional World there are many Doctors? But these people look slightly different from the Doctor."

"The ghost from the Death Scene Instance also mentioned seeing the Doctor at the crematorium, right? Could it have been these people it saw?" Fatty was confused.

To understand matters of the Low-Dimensional World, of course, they had to ask an NPC from that world. Gu Mian looked at Coach Che, who was currently driving.

Feeling Gu Mian's gaze, Coach Che shuddered. "Don't look at me! I don't know anything! I didn't even know this world was like this before. If I had known, I wouldn't have come for anything. I didn't benefit from it, and I almost got swallowed. Now, I just want to hurry to the bus station and escape from this godforsaken place!

"I'm just a poor NPC who only wanted to earn money to repair cars! Please spare me!"

Seeing Coach Che almost on the brink of tears, Gu Mian shifted his gaze. He wasn't some vile villain who would threaten a pitiful NPC with a chainsaw.

It was alright; even if Coach Che didn't know, there was another NPC here.

Gu Mian picked up the cellphone from beside the car seat. He hadn't hung up when he got out of the car, to avoid having to redial. The person on the other end of the phone apparently had the same idea, as neither side had hung up, allowing the call to continue.

"I didn't expect you to actually save all of them. I suppose this counts as a good ending." Clever Xiao Qiao, who apparently knew Gu Mian had picked up the phone, spoke, her voice emanating from the receiver.

As Gu Mian listened to the voice on the phone, he glanced at the unconscious Xiao Qiao lying on the ground. The voice sounds like the same person, but how can their actual states be so different?

"Indeed, it's a good ending," Gu Mian replied perfunctorily, then continued, "We're investigating a group of people who look very similar to me. Do you know about their existence?"

This NPC seemed to be a key figure in the Seventh World. She should know what these individuals who resembled Gu Mian were.

But she fell silent.

After a long while, Gu Mian heard the NPC's voice again.

"I've heard they are 'vessels.'"

Vessels? Humans as vessels? Gu Mian frowned. "Vessels for what?"

"I'm not too sure. I've only heard that there are quite a number of these individuals in other worlds too, and it likely has something to do with you."

So even the only NPC in the Seventh World doesn't know what these people are for?

Looking at these people who shared his likeness, Gu Mian asked, "Could I be one of them?"

Coach Che had previously proposed the "dimensional replacement" theory in the Courtroom Instance. The theory stated that the Low-Dimensional World knew of a magical secret and was able to evenly replace the higher and lower dimensional worlds.

These people could very likely be the 'vessels' meant to contain this 'secret.' And I might be the only successful product among all these vessels, created by the Low-Dimensional World and thrown like a bomb to Earth. As a result, Earth has been attempting to assassinate me for twenty years.

The more Gu Mian thought about it, the more reasonable this hypothesis seemed.

"You certainly have a vivid imagination," the person on the other end of the call replied. "You're not one of them. As far as I know, they were created in an attempt to imitate you, so you have no connection with the 'vessels' whatsoever."

So, it seems I am still different, Gu Mian thought, touching the bandage on his head. With such a unique origin story, I could be the protagonist of a novel on Qidian.

"Why are they trying to imitate me?" Gu Mian threw out another question.

This seemed to stump the person on the other end of the line.

"Perhaps it has to do with your uniqueness. Maybe your existence poses a threat to Earth, so the Low-Dimensional World wants to replicate a few more of you. But this is purely my speculation... To be honest, compared to others, I don't know much because I was created very late. For some matters, you'd get more accurate answers if you ask NPCs from other Higher worlds."

After thinking for a few seconds, Gu Mian asked, "Other people? Could you recommend a few?"

Nearby, Coach Che pricked up his ears, wanting to hear which unlucky soul would be recommended.

Clever Xiao Qiao, showing no awareness that she might be selling out her 'teammates,' calmly stated, "In each of our worlds, there's a crucial figure. Some proclaim themselves gods, while others blend into

the crowd, hidden in some corner of the world. I haven't had much interaction with them, so I don't know their exact locations.

"However, I do know the names of key figures in two of these worlds. They might be able to answer your questions."

Gu Mian excitedly fished a pen out of Fatty's inventory. "Quick, tell me."

After a few seconds of silence, the voice on the other end said, "One is the key figure in the First World, named 'No. 1'—a very fitting name.

"The other is the key figure in the Fourth World. I've heard other NPCs call him the Evil God, but I know his original name: 'Slaughter.'"

Evil God, Slaughter... I've already had significant interaction with this 'big brother.' Quite an intimate interaction, in fact. I single-handedly destroyed several of his statues, yet this Evil God generously gifted me a leaf brooch. Oh, and a spray bottle, but I used that up long ago. I never thought this Evil God's name would be so melodramatic.

"And what about you?" Gu Mian asked, still holding his pen. "After all this time, I still don't know your name."

Silence again from the other end. This time, she was silent for several minutes. Just as Gu Mian was about to ask if she was still listening, the person on the other end finally spoke in a peculiar tone.

"Xingyun. My name is Xingyun."

Chapter 696 The Ghost Runs Amok in the Middle of July, Gugu Truly Does Not Deceive Me_1

It would take Gu Mian and the others two hours to drive to the train station from their current location. Joyful times always seem to pass exceptionally quickly.

Soon enough, two hours had passed.

The car smoothly rolled to a stop in front of the train station entrance.

Coach Che was the first to jump out of the car, "Hurry, quickly board the train and leave this world!"

Thanks to Xingyun's efforts, the speed of the world's collapse had somewhat slowed down. It would take a bit more time before their area would disintegrate.

Gu Mian was holding his mobile phone, mumbling to someone on the other end in a corner behind the car.

He had been mumbling for two hours now.

Fatty wanted to eavesdrop, but Gu Mian shooed him away.

Fatty sidled up to Chu Changge, eyeing Gu Mian suspiciously. "Brother Chu, what do you think the Doctor is discussing with that person behind our backs? It seems like they're planning something clandestine."

He faintly heard Gu Mian discussing something about luck with the other person.

Chu Changge did not speak.

Gu Mian did not delay much longer.

Soon after, he ended the call, helped Xiao Qiao up, and moved towards the train station.

Fatty quickly followed suit, carrying the Fortune-teller on his back.

"Doctor," Fatty curiously inched closer to Gu Mian, "what were you discussing with that NPC?"

"Discussing how to blow up Earth."

After receiving such an absurd answer, Fatty simply shut his mouth and refrained from asking any further questions.

Shortly, they entered the train station and reached the platform.

The train seemed to have been waiting here all along, never departing.

Coach Che had already hopped onto the train, waving at them from inside, "Come on board."

Gu Mian, however, did not move. He stared at the train for quite some time. "Does the rule about two players not being allowed in the same train car still apply?"

When this train was still an instance, such a rule existed: if two players were in the same car, one of them would be randomly eliminated.

Only Gu Mian had entered this instance before, so both Chu Changge and Fatty were unaware of this rule.

Considering this place was no longer an instance, it was highly likely that the rule no longer applied. To err on the side of caution, though, Gu Mian still asked.

It would be disastrous to have brought everyone back from the Seventh World successfully, only for them all to die on this train.

Fatty's mouth fell open. "Ah, there was such a rule? Lucky I was alone when I boarded."

Strictly speaking, Coach Che wasn't really a person.

"Are you kidding? Would we try to trick you here? This isn't an instance anymore; that rule doesn't exist." Coach Che looked awkward. "We're nothing like Earth; we don't engage in such underhanded tactics. Besides, the conductor is still on the train. Unless he has a death wish, he wouldn't pull any stunts like that."

His tone was surprisingly righteous.

Only then did Gu Mian lead the others onto the train.

Before boarding, he specifically looked at the name of this station: Twilight Gods World. It directly shared its name with the Seventh World.

The conductor seemed to know their situation. A few seconds after Gu Mian and the others boarded, all the doors closed, and the train began to move slowly forward into the darkness.

Gu Mian watched the platform sign reading "Twilight Gods World Station" gradually recede until it finally disappeared from sight.

Coach Che had said that this train didn't belong to any world; once they were on board, they would be safe.

The collapse of Twilight Gods World would not affect this train.

Contrary to the darkness outside, the inside of the train was very bright. Fatty settled the Fortune-teller onto a train seat and turned back to speak to Gu Mian. "Doctor, you entered this instance before, so you must have come to this Twilight Gods World Station back then, right? If so, Doctor, does that mean you visited this world a long time ago?"

"Are you joking?" Coach Che interjected opportunely. "With your Doctor on board, do you really think this train could safely reach its final destination?"

Fatty thought this made a lot of sense. "You're right, that's definitely how it is."

So, Twilight Gods World was this train's final stop.

Gu Mian remembered that the last time, in the instance, this train indeed hadn't reached the final station; it had unfortunately stopped at the fifth station. The conductor had even suffered a heart attack, unable to show him the magnificent sights of the subsequent stations.

"Also, the Twilight Gods World station wasn't open before. When this train was an instance, it only went to the first nine stations. Twilight Gods World is the tenth station. Even if your Doctor hadn't stirred up trouble, he wouldn't have been able to reach the Twilight Gods World station," Coach Che continued. "This time was a special case, so the train brought us to the tenth station."

That was right. When this train was still an instance, it only passed through nine stations. The entire journey was 34 minutes long, according to the instance description.

Back then, Gu Mian had only passed through the first five stations and didn't know the names of the ones that followed. He watched the scenery retreating outside the train window. "What are the names of the other stations?"

"I'm familiar with this!" Fatty, who had just experienced this train ride, piped up. "Starting from the first station, they are Shicha Sea, Qianying City, Rongcheng City, Sweet Manor, Crazy Game City..."

Gu Mian knew all of these.

Last time, the train had unfortunately stopped operating at the Crazy Game City station.

Fatty continued, "White Bone Church..."

The sixth stop was White Bone Church.

"The Ruins of the Village of Terror Curse."

The name of the seventh stop was indeed quite terrifying.

"Sandbox Game Planning Department."

Gu Mian suspected this eighth stop might be related to the global game.

"The ninth stop is Haicheng City Film City, and then the final station, Twilight Gods World." Fatty looked up. "I feel like the journey from the Film City station to the Twilight Gods World station took a long time, probably about twenty minutes or so."

The other stops were roughly five minutes apart, but the journey between the ninth stop and Twilight Gods World was over twenty minutes.

Fatty frowned worriedly. "I'm a bit concerned..."

Just as he opened his mouth to voice his concerns, before he could even speak, something happened.

The few people in the car heard a piercing screech, and then they noticed the train's speed began to decrease.

They had only been on the train for a short while; there was no way they could have reached the ninth stop yet.

The train wasn't slowing down because it was approaching a station.

Coach Che opened his mouth, feeling the train gradually grind to a halt. Finally, he spat out, "Damn it..."

The effect of the "Train Assassin" was truly terrifying.

It had only been a few minutes since they boarded, and the train had already broken down.

Fortunately, although the train had stopped, the power supply hadn't been cut, so the carriage was still very bright.

Now, the few of them sat in the brightly lit carriage, staring at each other in dismay.

Fatty was on the verge of tears. "Doctor, why do I feel like you're even unluckier than before?"

Gu Mian casually touched the bandage on his face. "This is definitely a problem with the train's quality. Its stopping has nothing to do with me."

Fatty silently looked towards Miss Fortune-teller. "I hope Miss Fortune-teller can hold on until we get back."

"Actually, it doesn't have to be this troublesome," Gu Mian suddenly stood up from his seat. "Isn't the most convenient way to return to the real world right now to just blow up this train?"

The train would be completely wrecked, and the furious Low-Dimensional World would kick them back to Earth.

Although it seemed a bit like repaying kindness with ingratitude, this was indeed the fastest way to save the Fortune-teller.

"Don't you dare do anything rash!" Coach Che shrieked in terror. "This place isn't an instance anymore! It's not connected to the real world! Even if you actually blow up this train, you won't be able to get back! You need to find an instance and blow that up!"

The frantic Coach Che no longer knew what he was saying.

Oh, right. Mr. Green had also said that players could only travel between the Low-Dimensional and High-Dimensional Worlds through instances.

This train was no longer an instance, so blowing it up would be useless.

"Which instance is nearest to here?" Gu Mian frowned.

Desperate to save the train, Coach Che quickly offered a plan, "You don't need to stay on the train for too long. There are usually instances near the station areas. You can get off directly at the ninth stop. Just wander around the vicinity, and you'll eventually run into an instance. You'll get a prompt when you enter it. Then, just go all out! Find the NPCs in that instance, important items, or whatever—give it all a good thrashing, and you'll be kicked out."

Fatty stared at the overly eager Coach Che, a horrified expression on his chubby face.

Had Coach Che been driven mad by the Doctor's pressure?

He was actually giving them a step-by-step guide on how to break an instance!

This world was truly insane!

"According to the rules, we need conditions to kick players out of an instance. We can't just arbitrarily kick someone out. You have to destroy facilities, threaten NPCs, and cause major losses to the instance. Only then can the instance logically kick people out..."

Watching the increasingly unhinged Coach Che, Fatty couldn't bear it and turned his head away.

Just as Coach Che was getting into the swing of his explanation, Gu Mian suddenly grabbed him by the collar. "You seem quite familiar with where the nearby instances are. How about this: when we reach the ninth stop, you get off with us and help us find one."

Coach Che: "?"

"Also," Gu Mian added, remembering that the conductor here was an NPC who had researched all the worlds, "to express my apologies for the trouble I caused the conductor last time, I brought him a gift. Let's go find him together."

Train Conductor: "?"

Chapter 697 False Ending_1

In the train control room, Gu Mian had a friendly exchange with the train conductor. He received a thin book titled "History of the Seven Worlds" from him, which was, of course, written on the spot. To express his gratitude, Gu Mian drew a perfect door on the wall outside the train control room. The conductor was moved to tears by the sight.

About half an hour later, thanks to the combined efforts of the conductor and Coach Che, the train's malfunction was finally fixed. With everyone's effort, the train finally made it to the ninth stop, "Haicheng City Film City."

When Gu Mian and his companions left, the conductor chased them to the platform, waved goodbye with tears in his eyes, and said, "I was delighted to have you as my guests. Please, don't come again."

Gu Mian nodded gratefully, responding, "Definitely next time," as he left the station.

Outside the station was a sunny landscape. In stark contrast to the gloomy Seventh World, the warm sunshine bathed them, making them feel warm and comfortable.

007 had finally snapped back to reality. She looked up at the clear sky, in a bit of a daze. Only now did she feel the sensation of having escaped death. It was somewhat unbelievable that they had really escaped from that deadly predicament. Although a few people were not in good shape, she glanced at the Fortune-teller and Xiao Qiao with slight concern.

Fatty, also rather anxious, said, "Doctor, we need to find an instance quickly."

They had to find an instance to enter as soon as possible, then swiftly disintegrate it. Gu Mian's goal in entering instances was to quickly leave the Low-Dimensional World, not to actually clear them.

With Coach Che, Gu Mian felt like he had divine assistance. Under his guidance, Gu Mian and his team easily entered an instance named "Crazy Director Showdown."

The name sounded quite artistic, but in reality, it was about filming a horror movie—with actual ghosts as cast members.

There were already four players in this instance. Not long after they started, they were shocked to find a man, dressed like a mummy in a white coat with bandages around his head, barging onto the set. At first, they thought he was an Evil Ghost actor from the set.

Until this mummy pulled a shining chainsaw from the guitar case behind him and brandished it at the other Evil Ghosts on set. The glimmering chainsaw almost blinded their eyes.

"What the fuck!" one player exclaimed, looking at the suddenly intruding mummy. "I remember our theme wasn't **Saw**. Where did this guy come from? Could he be an actor provided by the instance?"

Another player who seemed slightly more rational said, "Did we inadvertently trigger a death path, so the instance introduced a ghost that was completely unrelated to the script to kill us?"

"Stop talking and run!" The other two players had already bolted.

"Wait a minute!" the rational player said. "I can open his player panel, he's a player!"

"How is that possible? The intro clearly stated there are only four players... Fuck, this is real! What's going on?"

Then they discovered that the mummy player seemed unsatisfied with merely terrorizing the other extras. He shifted his gaze towards the trembling director not far away. The mummy reached out his sinister hands towards the director.

The stagehands and cameramen had long since fled, leaving cameras scattered on the ground. Only the lighting technician stubbornly kept the lights on, the eerie illumination perfectly complementing the current scene. Under the strange lighting, a man with half his face bandaged was grinning malevolently while strangling the helpless middle-aged director. The strangled man's face was ghastly pale, and he couldn't even cry for help.

This was indeed a horror movie in the making. The scene was quite harmonious, almost joyful. The outcome was predictable.

Unfortunately, Gu Mian was once again kicked out of the instance, along with his companions and four confused, innocent bystanders.

When Gu Mian returned to the real world, he found himself sitting on a sofa. He glanced around, seeing only Mr. Green crouched in a corner and Fatty looking around anxiously.

Fatty anxiously scanned every room. "What's going on? Have Brother Chu and the others not returned yet?"

Gu Mian rubbed his chin. "They entered the Seventh World from outside, so they should return the same way. They're probably near the supermarket now. Let's head that way and see."

Sure enough, Gu Mian and Fatty encountered the returning group of four on their way to the supermarket. The Fortune-teller was hopping around cheerfully, the tooth marks on Chu Changge's head had disappeared, and only Xiao Qiao remained as she was.

"Affected by the collapse of the Seventh World, she can't wake up for now," Gu Mian said, looking at the unconscious Xiao Qiao.

When they returned to the motel, they found Liu Ruyan was missing, with no idea where she had gone.

"Weird," Fatty said, scratching his head as he stared at Liu Ruyan's closed door. "Miss Liu Ruyan was still here when I entered the train instance. How come she's gone now?"

Gu Mian frowned. "She hasn't been dragged into some special instance too, has she?"

Fatty's mouth hung open. "Again?"

Gu Mian felt a sense of hopelessness. If Earth kept this up, wouldn't he be exhausted to death, saving people from different instances every day? Moreover, his Dungeon Entry Tickets were all used up, so he couldn't enter designated instances anymore. The fact that he could no longer threaten NPCs also made his heart ache.

"No need to worry," Chu Changge said. "The Seventh World has already collapsed. As long as we're not dragged into a place like that, we can survive with our abilities."

Indeed, the Seventh World was truly special; it had been clear from the start that there was no way out. Surviving in such a world was a miracle.

With Liu Ruyan missing, Gu Mian had no choice but to saw open the door to the room next to his own and move Xiao Qiao inside to prevent any accidents.

After settling Xiao Qiao, Gu Mian and the others began discussing the Seventh World.

"This time, you were all pulled into the Seventh World without warning. I'm worried this will happen again," Gu Mian said, looking at the swinging ceiling lamp. "I really don't want to wake up every morning to Fatty saying, 'Doctor, Brother Chu and the others have been pulled into an instance again!'"

Fatty chuckled awkwardly. That was indeed something he would say.

Mr. Green, who was languishing in the corner, suddenly spoke up, "This time, Earth broke the rule of not opening instances in the Seventh World. Its control over this game has substantially decreased as a result, so you don't have to worry about *that* happening again..."

"Rules," Gu Mian repeated. "Who set these rules? Were they established jointly by the Low-Dimensional World and Earth?"

Mr. Green nodded. "Yes. Breaking the rules results in penalties."

This was strange. "And who enforces these penalties?" Gu Mian asked the question that had been on his mind.

It was like the law: if someone broke it, a more powerful enforcer was needed to administer penalties. But what if the lawbreaker was the most powerful existence in the world? Who could enforce the penalties? Neither Earth nor the Low-Dimensional World were pushovers. Whichever one violated the rules, it would be difficult to penalize them, as it would be hard to find an enforcer more powerful than either.

"That's not something a mere NPC like me would know," Mr. Green pursed his lips. "Anyway, the rule is very effective. Earth can't cause such mischief anymore."

Although Earth's control had significantly decreased, Mr. Green's expression showed little joy. He said gloomily, "I heard the Seventh World has completely collapsed. I'm terrified it will affect other places..."

Gu Mian recalled Xingyun's words, "I'm afraid your nightmare will come true soon."

Previously, Xingyun had been preventing the Seventh World's collapse through repeating cycles. But now the cycles had stopped, and the curse Earth had left in the Seventh World began to spread. Xingyun had said she would try her best to stop the curse from affecting other worlds, but who knew how long she could hold out? Maybe half a year, maybe half a month. Or perhaps, the moment he opened his eyes tomorrow, he would see Fatty weeping by his bedside, crying, 'Doctor, the Low-Dimensional World is all gone! Brother Chu and Miss Xiao Qiao... they're all dead!'

Chapter 698 What Was the Name I Thought Of _1

After hearing Gu Mian's pessimistic remarks, Mr. Green looked even more despondent. "Although our Low-Dimensional World has fairly decent self-repair abilities, we have no idea how long it would take us to recover if we are truly affected..."

Gu Mian glanced at Mr. Green. The chubby little green man seemed oblivious to the potential consequences of being implicated by the Seventh World.

According to Xingyun, once she fails to contain the spread of the curse, other worlds would collapse just like the Seventh World.

Mr. Green, however, assumed that the other worlds would only be damaged and could recover with some repairs.

"Do you have any idea what kind of damage your world would suffer if it were to be affected by the Seventh World?" Gu Mian asked.

Mr. Green pondered this. "Actually, I'm not quite sure. Maybe similar to what happened to the Old World?"

He was referring to the time when Gu Mian tore up the Law Code.

While speaking, he lifted his head to look at Gu Mian. Seeing his contemplative expression, Mr. Green suddenly panicked. "Could it be even worse than what happened to the Old World?"

Gu Mian looked at the alarmed Mr. Green and decided to hide this unfortunate news from him.

Xingyun had mentioned on the phone that she might not hold out much longer.

Which meant that poor Mr. Green's days were numbered.

Concealing this news would allow him to live more happily before his death.

Perfunctorily, Gu Mian ushered the soon-to-die Mr. Green out of the room, then turned to inform the other doomed person of the unfortunate news.

"Your days are also numbered," Gu Mian said to Chu Changge, pushing aside Xiao Hong's head as it leaned over curiously.

"The Seventh World has been cursed by Earth. If the Seventh World ends, it will bring about the end of the other worlds as well. All Low-Dimensional Worlds will collapse, and all of you from Low-Dimensional Worlds will die. Right now, an NPC named Xingyun is working to contain the spread of Earth's curse."

Xingyun was consuming her own life to stop the curse from spreading. If she died, not only would Chu Changge not survive for much longer, but everyone else from the Low-Dimensional World, including Xiao Qiao, Liu Ruyan, and Xie Bi'an, would also perish.

Besides humans, Xiao Hong and the older brother, who originated from an instance, would also likely perish.

This time, when Earth sent Chu Changge and the others into the Seventh World, even though it didn't manage to kill them outright, it succeeded in its insidious plan.

All Low-Dimensional Worlds would eventually be destroyed by the spreading curse.

Chu Changge seemed to have anticipated this. "I suspected as much. By sending us into the Seventh World, Earth intended to use that world to kill us. Even though it didn't succeed, it managed to use you to break the Seventh World's cycle. Regardless of the outcome, Earth wasn't the losing party."

Fatty suddenly raised his hand. "I have a question. For Earth, destroying the Low-Dimensional Worlds is likely a higher priority than killing Brother Chu and the rest, right? If they just threw you, Doctor, into the Seventh World, the cycle would stop, and the curse would spread. After a while, all Low-Dimensional Worlds, along with Brother Chu and the others, would be finished. That would be much simpler."

"But Earth didn't seem to want you to go to the Seventh World, Doctor. They even specifically gave you that 'Train Killer' negative status. Why wouldn't Earth want you to go to the Seventh World?"

This was indeed a question worth discussing.

"Earth gave me the 'Train Killer' negative status a long time ago," Gu Mian guessed. "It seems to be afraid of me going to the Seventh World."

Fatty was somewhat puzzled. "Doctor, you went to the Seventh World, and it doesn't seem to have affected Earth at all."

On the contrary, it was the Low-Dimensional Worlds that had begun a countdown to extinction due to Gu Mian's influence.

"Perhaps my trip to the Seventh World has already planted a latent threat for Earth, one that simply hasn't surfaced yet," Gu Mian mused. Even as he said this, he couldn't imagine what kind of threat he might have posed.

Just then, a knocking sound came from the door, accompanied by Mr. Green's shouting.

Fatty hurried over to open it.

Mr. Green stood at the door, holding something that looked like a walkie-talkie. "What did you people do on the train? The conductor called me! Not long after you left, the train broke down again. This time, it seems completely irreparable. We need a new train!"

He hadn't expected that not only was there distressing news from the Seventh World, but even the train that had given Gu Mian a ride had broken down.

The effect of the Train Killer was truly terrifying.

Gu Mian mused, "If I had taken that train to the Seventh World, I probably wouldn't have arrived for several years."

Muttering to himself, he walked to the door and forcibly snatched the walkie-talkie from Mr. Green. "I forgot to grab this goodie earlier."

After snatching the device, Gu Mian slammed the door, leaving a dumbfounded Mr. Green outside.

He glanced at the walkie-talkie a few times. It was a nifty device, allowing Mr. Green to communicate with people in the Low-Dimensional World. However, its buttons were strange, and Gu Mian couldn't figure them out for the time being, so he set it aside.

"So, our mission has now become stopping the Seventh World's curse from spreading?" Gu Mian sat back down in his original spot.

Originally, he had just wanted to muddle through life; if he could blow up Earth along the way, that would be nice too.

But that was no longer an option.

If he continued to be a "salted fish," he'd soon be digging graves for Chu Changge and the others.

"But this kind of thing is hard to stop, isn't it?" Fatty frowned. "At best, it can only be delayed..."

As he was speaking, something fell from above, almost grazing his face before smashing onto the floor.

The thud of a heavy object landing and the sound of shattering glass rang out simultaneously, startling Fatty so much that he fell back onto the sofa. He remained stunned for a few seconds before looking down at the floor.

The chandelier above Gu Mian's head had fallen.

The glass lampshade, dusty from years of neglect, had shattered into countless pieces on the floor.

The chandelier that he had worried about for years had finally fallen today. He had always feared this chandelier would stage a sudden assassination, and now his dream had come true.

Fortunately, Gu Mian reacted very quickly.

He had already moved to the other side of the sofa, pushing Chu Changge, who had been sitting there, onto the floor.

Chu Changge pushed his crooked glasses back onto the bridge of his nose. "Has your luck gotten even worse?"

"Yes," Fatty said, still shaken and clutching his chest. "I noticed it on the train. Doctor, it seems your luck has gotten even worse."

Gu Mian glanced up at the ceiling, making sure it wasn't about to fall, before speaking. "Before bed tonight, I need to check if the bed is sturdy. Don't want it collapsing in the middle of the night and crushing Xiao Hong underneath."

Fatty looked at Xiao Hong, who was sitting nearby with a silly expression, and thought that unlikely.

"Alright, let's not discuss such unfortunate matters anymore," Gu Mian said, pulling a small booklet from his pocket. "This is a work by the Trainmaster. It documents the local customs and conditions of the seven worlds. Let's study this first."

"Doctor, your way of changing the subject is pretty clumsy," Fatty quipped from the side. Though he was scoffing, curiosity made him lean over for a look.

Gu Mian flipped open the first page.

Since the "Record of the History of Seven Major Worlds" was written on the spot by the Trainmaster, the handwriting was somewhat sloppy.

Fatty struggled to read the first line: "The First World, name unknown. The corresponding station for this world is the starting station, Shicha Sea. It's an unremarkable world, much like Earth, nothing special to mention. Very few NPCs board the train from this world; most are ignorant, ordinary people."

Further down, the text directly addressed the Second World.

Fatty couldn't help but ask, "Is this an abridged version of the 'Record of the History of Seven Major Worlds'? It doesn't even list the world's name."

"The Trainmaster said he only knows so much," Gu Mian said, looking at the first line. "He mentioned he never leaves the station, and all his knowledge of the seven worlds comes from NPC passengers from each world."

Anyway, Gu Mian had known the name of the First World for a long time, so it didn't matter that the Trainmaster couldn't provide it.

The group continued to read.

"The Second World, name unknown. Corresponding stations are the second station, Qianying City, and the third station, Rongcheng City. One can reach the Second World by alighting at these two stations. The Second World is also a relatively normal world, without many anomalies. Most NPCs from this world who take the train are related to games. It's said this world has many game instances."

Gu Mian had previously made a table, which Fatty now held. "The Second World is called the Exile World... What did the Trainmaster mean by 'not many anomalies'?"

"Perhaps referring to differences from Earth?" Gu Mian said, looking at the text below. "After all, the Trainmaster's evaluation of the Old World was 'full of weirdos'."

Fatty lowered his head to read the Trainmaster's writing: "The Third World, I know its name, the famous Old World. Its corresponding station is the third station, Sweet Manor..."

Gu Mian had previously entered an instance called "Sweet Lovers," but it had no connection to Sweet Manor.

"The Old World is a world full of weirdos. There aren't many NPCs you can communicate with; most are muddle-headed, ignorant natives. The instances in this world primarily inflict mental pressure on players, but as long as you're weirder than them, you won't go mad."

"It suffered a major setback once, an incident the NPCs of that world later called the 'Metamorphosis Accident.' Since that event, the Old World has been severely weakened and has yet to recover. It even affected other worlds."

The Metamorphosis Accident.

Thinking of Gu Mian's actions in Metamorphosis, Fatty found the name quite fitting.

The Trainmaster's description of the Third World was quite detailed, and there was more:

"It is said that this world was originally intended to be a civilized society without crime, where citizens abided by the law and lived in harmony and love. But now, it seems this world has gone completely off the rails."

Chapter 699 The Escaping World and the Crumbling Journey_1

Fatty recalled his experiences in the Old World, feeling somewhat emotional. "It's hard to believe that the prototype of that world used to be a just, loving, and harmonious society."

"There's always a big gap between ideals and reality," Gu Mian said. "When I was little, my wish was to be a fortunate person."

"It's obvious your wish was shattered, Doc," remarked Fatty, then continued reading the train conductor's simple notes.

"A person known as 'The Divergent' often took the train in the Old World. He was mysterious and not much of a talker. The main reason I'm describing him in detail is because this NPC seems like a powerful figure. You should spend more time exploring the Old World to find this NPC, instead of constantly thinking about how to hijack my train."

The "you" in the conductor's description referred to Gu Mian.

When the conductor was writing the "Record of the History of Seven Major Worlds," Gu Mian momentarily let his guard down, allowing the conductor to sneak in some personal remarks.

Next was the introduction to the Fourth World.

"The Fourth World; its name is unclear. The corresponding stations are the Fifth Station, Crazy Game City, and the Sixth Station, White Bone Church..."

Coach Che didn't know the name, but Gu Mian did. The name of the Fourth World was Paradise, a very apt name indeed.

"This world is adjacent to the Old World, with a similar level of perversion. It's said to have a very distinct social hierarchy, dividing people into Upper-Class People and Lower-Class People. I can't shake the feeling that there's some connection between the Fourth World and the Old World. To a certain extent, their natures are similar. If the Old World continues to develop, it might also form a complete class division system."

"There's a famous NPC in the Fourth World whom everyone calls the Evil God. He often takes my train and likes to actively shuttle between other worlds, often stirring things up. The Evil God was apparently hunted by the Upper-Class People of the Fourth World years ago, but no one can kill him now."

"According to him, this world was initially designed for absolute power, oppression, and hedonism—far worse than the Old World, which at least once aspired to improve."

"Additionally, this Evil God fellow has a penchant for creating special items born from a twisted sense of humor and scattering his own statues everywhere. It's said that he has thrown at least eight hundred, if not a thousand, statues into various worlds."

Gu Mian knew all too well about the Evil God's habit of throwing statues; he had seen the Evil God Statue in more than one instance.

Fatty looked at the conductor's descriptions of the first four worlds and commented, "How come these worlds seem to get more perverse the further down the list they are?"

Indeed, that appeared to be the case now. The First World resembled Earth and was fairly mundane. The Second World also had a low degree of distortion. But starting from the Third World, the Old World, the plot took a drastic turn for the worse.

The Old World initially aimed to construct an ideal world. However, something went wrong along the way, causing the entire world to shift in the opposite direction. Under this world's influence, everyone was pushed to extremes.

The Fourth World was even worse. Its initial setup was all about oppression and absolute power. Judging from its name, "Paradise," the people in this world reveled in this.

Following this pattern, the subsequent worlds should exhibit an even higher degree of distortion.

However, this trend took a turn with the Fifth World.

"The Fifth World—I know its name. It's referred to as the Escape World. The corresponding station is the Seventh Stop, the Ruins of the Village of Terror Curse. Despite this world's bizarre name, I'd still call it the most normal world, where high-ranking NPCs are kind-hearted, amiable, and helpful."

"Even though it borders the Fourth World, it hasn't been contaminated at all. The people in this world are all normal. The only drawback is that this world is rather dangerous, as it's teeming with ghosts."

"As for why this world is called the Escape World, I've asked its NPCs but received no answer. They seem somewhat dissatisfied with their own world, though."

Just from the name of the Escape World's station, "the Ruins of the Village of Terror Curse," it's clear this isn't a safe world. However, it at least has a normal worldview, uncontaminated by the Old World and Paradise.

"The Sixth World, name unknown, corresponds to the Eighth Station, the Sandbox Game Planning Department, and the Ninth Station, Haicheng City Film City. It's said this world is quite fragmented. It has every conceivable instance, ranging from transforming into Snow White to fight monsters, to sitting in an examination hall solving advanced math problems."

"There's a lot of fun to be had here, and it's relatively safer than other worlds. Many easy, unchallenging instances originate from this world, making it a haven for casual players. Of course, casual players aren't guaranteed to be matched with this world's instances."

"This world has a strong sense of fragmentation. It lacks a unified worldview, like an unfinished, substandard product."

Gu Mian didn't know the name of the Sixth World either; it seemed he would have to ask other NPCs.

Next was the introduction to the Seventh World.

"The Seventh World, the Twilight Gods World. A fairly famous world. It was originally said to be a perfect place and wasn't even called by this name. But for some unknown reason, this world began to change, bringing it to the brink of collapse. I heard long ago that the Seventh World couldn't hold on much longer, but I don't know why it only collapsed today..."

The train conductor didn't know about Earth's curse or about Xingyun's series of actions in the Seventh World. Gu Mian had asked him and found out that he didn't even know there was an NPC named Xingyun in the Seventh World.

"My train never used to go to the Tenth Station. This was a directive from the higher-ups. They said the Seventh World was fragile and any variable could cause it to collapse, so they forbade anyone from entering... I don't know what that little green midget was thinking, asking me to take you to the Seventh World."

Gu Mian silently read the words on the pamphlet, thinking that the train conductor had slipped in quite a lot of his personal opinions, all written when he wasn't paying attention.

"I don't know what the game's higher-ups were thinking, actually reopening the train instance just to take you to the Seventh World. And now look! Thanks to your help, the Seventh World has reached a wonderful conclusion."

These words were all very hastily scrawled, showing the conductor was extremely flustered when writing them.

Gu Mian also found it odd. If the Low-Dimensional World knew he posed a threat to the Twilight Gods World, why would they allow him to enter?

Could it be that the game's higher-ups had a sudden attack of conscience and couldn't bear to see Chu Changge and the others die there?

Gu Mian thought this was highly unlikely.

Normally, to prevent a chain reaction of collapsing worlds, the Low-Dimensionals should have desperately tried to stop him from entering the Seventh World. And Earth, to make the worlds collapse together, should have desperately tried to send him into the Seventh World.

But the reality was the exact opposite: Earth didn't want him to enter the Seventh World, and the Low-Dimensionals didn't prevent him from entering it. This was a suspicious point.

Gu Mian continued to read, only to find a single sentence remaining.

"That's the end of the introduction. This is everything I know; I haven't hidden a thing. Don't come looking for me again."

Even at the end, the train conductor didn't forget to state his humble wish.

Fatty looked at the conductor's creation and said, "This is like a reading comprehension passage. My eyes are starting to hurt. Let's have spinach and tofu stew for dinner tonight!"

Gu Mian didn't know how Fatty had made the connection between reading comprehension and spinach and tofu stew. He rubbed the pages in his hand. "The train conductor has outlined the general worldviews of the seven worlds. Have you noticed anything from this?"

Of course, he wasn't asking Fatty, whose head was filled with nothing but food.

Chu Changge had already taken a seat on the adjacent sofa. "A few things. I feel that these seven worlds are interconnected and not entirely independent."

Correct, Gu Mian nodded.

This was especially true for the Old World and Paradise; the natures of these two worlds were highly similar.

Just as the train conductor said, if the Old World continued to develop, it might become just like Paradise.

Furthermore, Xingyun in the Seventh World had also said that the seven worlds were like a string, inseparable.

"From the First World to the Fourth World, the degree of distortion progressively increased. But starting with the Fifth World, this trend was abruptly halted, and the worlds began to develop in a positive direction."

"This is like a history of development. In the first half of this history, people chose the wrong path. They forged ahead on this path, developing from the Old World to Paradise and forming an extreme society."

"Until someone realized there was something wrong with this path and bravely departed... I think this might be the origin of the name Escape World. This world, perhaps, is one that escaped from Paradise."

Chapter 700 Kidney Deficiency Always After Typing_1

"Because they recognize that Paradise's extreme worldview is flawed, the Escape World won't tread the same path. They will pursue development and reform, making their worldview relatively normal."

"As for the worlds below, they should also be part of this history of development, and the Seventh World is the culmination of that history."

The conductor said the Seventh World was once a perfect world; this history of development had been a success.

But under Earth's curse, the Seventh World changed, even meeting a destructive end.

"These are just my speculations," Gu Mian said, lowering the handbook. "The connections between these worlds are too obvious; I couldn't help but speculate."

Fatty, sweeping up glass shards with a broom, asked, "If all these worlds are connected as part of a history of development, then is it possible that these seven worlds are the same world, just at different points in time? A single world that developed from the Second World to the Old World, then Paradise, then underwent a turning point, and eventually developed into the Seventh World. Could these seven different times have become seven distinct worlds?"

Gu Mian shook his head. "That's unlikely. Time is irreversible. If they were different times of the same world, the Seventh World's collapse wouldn't affect the other worlds. Since the Seventh World is at the end of this timeline, it can't affect earlier times."

To ensure Fatty understood, Gu Mian thoughtfully added an example, "For instance, if Xiao Hong ate you tomorrow, the 'you' of right now wouldn't be affected by that event."

Such an easy-to-understand and immersive example, Fatty thought, silently inching away from Xiao Hong.

"Although these worlds are connected, they are not the same world at different times," Gu Mian speculated. "They might have a derivative relationship."

As he spoke, he turned to Chu Changge. "As someone from a Low-Dimensional World, do you have any insights into these worlds?"

Chu Changge shook his head slightly. "I don't know much about these worlds; I barely know my own."

That was understandable, given he spent most of his time in a laboratory and rarely went outside.

"Although I have no clues about these worlds, I do recognize someone from the conductor's manual," Chu Changge suddenly said.

Fatty was immediately intrigued. He clutched his broom, his face alight with curiosity.

"I encountered the Evil God in the previous instance," Chu Changge said, pushing up his glasses.

Fatty recalled the manual's contents. "Is that the high-level NPC the conductor mentioned, the one darting all over the place?"

Gu Mian's focus was different. "In the Judge instance?"

He had only heard the Evil God's name from Lu Yi; he never expected Chu Changge to have actually met him.

Chu Changge nodded. "Yes."

"Well, damn," Fatty exclaimed, waving his broom slightly. "I didn't expect you, Brother Chu, to know this person... Wait, why didn't you tell us? Doctor, you didn't know either, did you?"

Gu Mian raised his hand. "I didn't know."

Chu Changge was always like a closed book; he wouldn't reveal anything unless asked directly.

Chu Changge, however, appeared unperturbed as he continued, "He is the top NPC of Paradise and knows everything about that world."

Yes, that's what Xingyun had told me too, Gu Mian recalled.

The Evil God was a key figure in the Fourth World, Paradise, and knew many secrets. He most likely knew what was happening with those people similar to Gu Mian.

As a top NPC, he might also know how to delay Earth's curse.

"He's looking for you," Chu Changge said, looking at Gu Mian, "but I don't know why."

Fatty pondered. "Doctor, you really are a special existence. Even a top-tier NPC from the Low-Dimensional World is looking for you. I'm really curious about your true identity."

Gu Mian, however, had another question. "How did you meet him?"

"I saw him once when I was in the Second World," Chu Changge began slowly. "It was said he was looking for someone."

"This Evil God is always looking for someone," Fatty grumbled. "If it's not this person, it's that one. Seems like he has a lot of free time."

So the Evil God had been drifting between worlds even back then, Gu Mian mused.

Chu Changge continued, "Actually, you've all met him."

Gu Mian looked at Chu Changge. We have?

"Xu Xingcheng," Chu Changge said a name. "Xu Xingcheng is his alter ego."

Gu Mian, of course, remembered him. Xu Xingcheng had first appeared in the haunted school instance and then again in the Close Your Eyes instance.

He'd initially thought the instances were just reusing character assets, but it seemed that wasn't the case at all.

It was worth noting that this NPC, Xu Xingcheng, had been so cowardly in the Close Your Eyes instance that he didn't fit the 'Evil God' moniker in the slightest.

Fatty had died early in that instance, but he searched his limited memories and asked, "I remember that guy. He was even more cowardly than I am! Could he really be the Evil God?"

"It's an alter ego," Chu Changge corrected. "For some reason, that alter ego didn't have the Evil God's memories at the time."

So, Xu Xingcheng was basically an amnesiac Evil God back then? Gu Mian wondered.

Gu Mian pondered. Amnesia is when a person's true nature is revealed. I never expected the Evil God's true nature to be so... cowardly.

Then again, he was the one who invented the leaf brooch, so it figures.

"His alter ego might appear in various instances in the future," Chu Changge said, pausing. "You'd better be prepared."

Well, this saves me the trouble of looking for him, Gu Mian thought, quite pleased with this "home delivery" service.

Fatty tried to banish the image of the cowardly Xu Xingcheng from his mind. "Then, Brother Chu, what's the Evil God's personality like after he regains his memory? Is he ruthless? Does he kill people often?"

Chu Changge was silent for a moment. "No, the alter ego is weak. About as weak as you."

This time, it was Fatty who fell silent.

"Xingyun told me that every world has a core figure. The core figure of the Fourth World is the Evil God," Gu Mian said, looking at Chu Changge. "Besides the Fourth World, she also told me the core figure of the First World is named No. 1."

Chu Changge pondered for a moment before speaking. "I have no memory of this person, but I suspect the Evil God's visit to the Second World might be related to him."

In addition to the Evil God and No. 1, the conductor's manual also mentioned another NPC, named 'The Divergent'.

He was from the Third World, the Old World.

Gu Mian didn't know if this person, The Divergent, was the core figure of the Old World. However, based on the conductor's description, even if he wasn't the core figure, he was still an important NPC.

Unfortunately, the Old World had been closed since the Metamorphosis instance and had not yet reopened.

Gu Mian retrieved the world chart he'd made and wrote "No. 1" next to the Second World and "Evil God" next to Paradise.

Then, he wrote "The Divergent" next to the Old World and added a question mark.

With that, a simple chart was complete.

Gu Mian held the chart. "Our next goal is to identify the key figures of the other worlds and find them to discuss how to stop Earth's curse from spreading..."

He calculated that if the Low-Dimensional World were completely destroyed, he'd need to dig at least six graves. And if he generously included Mr. Green, that would be seven. Compared to digging graves, preventing the destruction of the Low-Dimensional World was definitely easier.

Fatty dumped the swept shards into the trash can. "Doctor, you're so diligent. Even Earth would weep with gratitude if it knew."

"But, Doctor, with your luck," Fatty said, squatting by the trash can and looking thoughtful, "it'll probably be hard for you to just stumble upon key figures from the Low-Dimensional World. I feel like your luck has gotten even worse since you came out of the Seventh World. It couldn't have been siphoned off by that Miss Xingyun, could it?"