

Collapse 71

Chapter 71: Gu Bengbeng_1

Even with the current global mutation, actual Evil Ghosts hadn't started appearing in the real world—at least, Gu Mian hadn't encountered any.

Fatty was a bit curious. "What's there to be scared of?" Could they be afraid because they knew Tiansha Lonely Star was coming, so they all hid?

Chu Changge began, "At first, I thought this small town might have formed a brutal player organization, and other players were afraid of that organization, so they didn't dare to come out..."

"However, after observing carefully, it doesn't seem to be the case. If the players were afraid of a brutal organization, then this organization should have done something to make other players scared, right? Like robbery or murder, for example."

"But since we arrived, I haven't seen any traces of fights, no bodies, not even a bloodstain. It's as if all the players are voluntarily choosing not to come out."

Gu Mian also looked around.

The small county town seemed to have maintained some order after the game started. He saw that some cars on the road had been pushed to the side, clearing a somewhat narrow pathway. It wasn't spacious, but it was more than enough for vehicles to pass.

They hadn't been walking long along the cleared street when they saw a ticket booth standing by the roadside.

And at this moment, they finally saw the first person—or more accurately, the first group of people—in this small county town.

There were about a dozen of them.

They were dressed in police uniforms and seemed to have just come out of the ticket booth, each person's face etched with fatigue.

Gu Mian noticed a youngster among them, perhaps seventeen or eighteen years old. He wore an ill-fitting police uniform and trailed behind the group. His oversized sleeves were rolled up, transforming the proper uniform into something resembling lantern sleeves.

The young man's energy was palpable, a stark contrast to the weary, middle-aged men ahead of him.

As soon as he came out, he glanced around and immediately spotted Gu Mian's group nearby.

"Hey!" the young man yelled.

Gu Mian took several steps back, putting considerable distance between himself and them.

This game, covering the entire globe, was designed very sensibly. You could only view other players' information if you were close enough, the specific distance being around three meters.

A situation where you could see other players' information from miles away was impossible.

Although player information only displayed nicknames and game IDs, this was still potentially disastrous for Gu Mian.

After all, the name "Gu Mian" was on the wanted list.

He actually really wanted a special item that could hide his nickname, but he guessed such an item probably didn't exist in this frustrating game.

At this point, the others in the uniformed group also turned their heads to look in their direction.

Leading them was a strong man. If a description was necessary, he resembled the kind of rugged man celebrated in songs about the wild frontier—brawny, imposing, and dark-complexioned.

Gu Mian reckoned that if this man grew a beard, directors would probably pick him on the spot to play Zhong Kui.

Fatty, being closer, specifically checked the leader's player information and found his nickname was "Dominate the World."

Now that's an over-the-top nickname, Fatty thought.

Dominate the World seemed surprised to see anyone here. He stared over and demanded, "Haven't we broadcast throughout the city that no one should go out without good reason? How did you lot end up out here?"

They broadcast a warning not to go out? Could that be why the players in this small county town weren't showing themselves?

Clearly, this man had mistaken them for locals.

But Dominate the World quickly realized his mistake. He saw the giant travel bag on Fatty's back and the large pot. That wasn't the gear of local residents. "Are you from outside?" he asked.

As he spoke, he subconsciously stepped forward, intending to open their player information to check their names.

However, Chu Changge spoke up before he could: "My name is Chu Qi, this is Wang Panzi, and the doctor behind us... let's call him Gu... Clatter..."

Gu Mian was speechless. Why is he just handing out nicknames like that?

Knowing they were from outside, the expression on Dominate the World's face eased. It didn't last long, though. He quickly said, "You shouldn't stay here too long. It's quite dangerous. Hurry up and leave."

"What's going on?" Fatty asked curiously. "Don't tell me there are monsters or something here?" Such things shouldn't appear in reality.

Dominate the World's expression flickered. He hesitated for a moment before explaining, "No monsters, exactly. It's just that a while ago, someone here drew a pretty rare special item..."

That's a good thing, isn't it? Fatty looked puzzled.

Dominate the World continued, "But this special item is a bit... unique. It's a curse."

Hearing this, Gu Mian recalled a line from the lottery system he had seen before—

[Everything you can imagine is in the prize pool. Please draw carefully.]

He had originally thought the live groundhog Fatty had drawn was bizarre enough, but he hadn't expected someone could actually draw a curse. This was truly remarkable.

Considering that, his own draw of a roll of toilet paper seemed pretty lucky by comparison, he mused.

Dominate the World said, "That thing is called 'doctor's resentment.'"

Gu Mian asked curiously, "'doctor's resentment?'"

"The curse doesn't kill or sicken anyone. It's not directly harmful to people. However, it significantly increases the chance of a special instance appearing in open areas—and it's always the *same* special instance!"

"Only when someone in this area successfully clears that instance will the curse disappear. But as you can see, no one has cleared it yet, and we have no idea when the instance will pop up again."

Fatty looked confused. "So, it's just this one instance that has everyone too scared to go outside?"

"You simply can't imagine the content of that instance. Let me put it this way: imagine you're being cut open alive, your stomach and chest exposed. Someone is taking a scalpel to your lungs, right there in the open air, scraping at them while countless people watch you being disemboweled. And all this time, you're still alive, feeling every single thing with perfect clarity..."

Fatty shivered. "That... that's insane!"

"Yes," Dominate the World nodded, his face pale. "It's practically a guaranteed-death instance. It's filled with countless lunatics who treat us like ants, toying with us and making casual conversation out of our suffering."

"It's a double trauma, physical and psychological. Entering that instance just once means days of nightmares. You keep dreaming you're back in that horrific place, hearing their laughter..."

He shivered as he spoke. "We were lucky today and didn't run into that instance. You lot should leave, quickly. Go while you still can. If you delay, you'll definitely regret it. Those... people... they'll drive you mad!"

Having said his piece, Dominate the World took a step back, clearly anxious to leave.

But at that very moment, Gu Mian suddenly spoke up, "Speaking of luck..."

Both Chu Changge and Fatty felt their hearts drop.

Sure enough, a mere second after Gu Mian spoke, a notification flashed onto everyone's player panel.