

Collapse 831

Chapter 831: With a Thunderous Roar, King Nicholas Wang Er Makes a Dazzling Entrance

An arched stone gate, carved with intricate scenes, stood before Gu Mian.

It was nearly two stories tall, and wide enough for three cars to pass through side by side.

No one knew what material this arch was made of. Its whole body was milky white, shimmering with a holy radiance under the sunlight.

Fine human figures were carved on the stone arch, somewhat like murals in an ancient tomb.

Gu Mian lifted his head to look at the very top of the gate.

Theoretically, he shouldn't have been able to see the top clearly, because the gate was simply too high.

But right now Gu Mian felt as if this gate had some sort of connection with him, allowing him to see, at a glance, the carving at the very top of the stone arch.

Up there, two people were carved standing side by side.

Because the space was limited and there was too much to carve, the two figures were not very detailed. You could tell they were two people, but not who they were.

His gaze followed the stone arch downward and he realized that the carvings on this gate should be the life stories of the two people on top.

Their lives split at the peak of the gate, and their stories extended downward along two different stone pillars.

The person who stepped onto the left pillar led a group of Upper Class People to gradually rule the world and enslave the lower-class. At the height of his glory, he was surrounded in the center by a large

circle of Upper Class People, but that glory did not last long. In the scenes that followed, this person quietly moved away from the crowd; the final image was him frozen in front of a huge statue.

Gu Mian understood.

This was Slaughter's life.

In the Secret Forest, Slaughter had talked to Slaughter about his experience: the three of them came to this world wanting to stage a story of a Hero defeating Evil Dragons.

Slaughter and another person played the Evil Dragons, while Xu Xingcheng played the Hero.

The Evil Dragons divided the people of the world into noble and lowly, taking the noble ones under their command, hoping the Hero would lead the bottom-dwellers to defeat their evil.

But the Hero never arrived, and the world charged headlong toward the abyss until it became what it is today.

In the end Slaughter discovered the Evil God's statue at the bottom of the Secret Forest's underground cave and learned the truth about the world's rollback.

Unable to face this unexpected world, he chose to withdraw from the crowd of Upper Class People and stay alone in the Secret Forest, guarding the Evil God's statue.

After seeing the last scene of Slaughter at the bottom of the left pillar, Gu Mian already had a guess in his heart.

Since the person on the left was Slaughter, then the one on the right must be the companion who had played the role of "Evil Dragon" together with Slaughter back then.

This was probably a stone arch specially designed by the Upper Class People to commemorate the two "Paradise Creators", with their merits and virtues praised upon it.

Slaughter had told Gu Mian that his companion, due to an accident while making a wish, had his whole body massively burned by sulfuric acid, ending up unrecognizable.

The Hero never appeared, his own body suffered severe damage to the point of being unable to take care of himself. This caused a distortion in his psyche, and the scales in his heart slowly tilted toward the Upper Class People. By making a wish to the Evil God's statue, he caused a clear divide in appearance between Upper Class People and lower-class people.

The albinism of the Upper Class People was the result of his wish.

Gu Mian looked at the scenes along the right frame of the arch.

The upper half on the right was similar to Slaughter's, equally glorious, equally fawned upon.

In the middle section, the protagonist in the right pillar changed form, becoming a dried-up, frail little figure who could only sit in a wheelchair.

This period should be when he had his accident.

Gradually, the people who had once gathered around him and followed him drifted away, fewer and fewer, until in the end there was no one at his side.

In the end, he dragged his broken body and slowly walked toward a huge statue—the same statue as in Slaughter's final scene on the left.

The scene of him realizing his wish was not specifically carved out.

Gu Mian only saw that after the previous scene, the protagonist on the right regained a human form. No, not only did he regain a human form, even his entire coloring changed. Gu Mian didn't know what material the Upper Class People had used on the statue, but the protagonist on the right was coated with a layer of silvery-white pigment, indicating that he had been reborn, his appearance entirely different from that of the lower-class.

Flowers and followers began to gather around him again, and those who followed him also took on the same pale color as his.

His pallid glory flowed all the way down along the pillar, and even at the very bottom he was still surrounded in the center by a crowd of small figures in the same color.

It seemed that Slaughter's companion was still active among the Upper Class People now, only Gu Mian did not know the other's name, nor his appearance.

Because the story was too long, the figures carved here were very simplified—you could only see a human shape.

"What are you dazing out for, hurry up and go in." An impatient voice from the leading Upper Class Person came from the front of the line.

The one at the very front, Number 1000, had been intimidated by the sight before him and didn't dare step inside.

He stood at the front, seeing the ground within the arch paved with clean, reflective marble, and rows of luxurious villas neatly lined up not far inside the gate.

He also saw the refined bronze streetlamps on both sides, the flowerbeds overflowing with blossoms. Everything was so beautiful that even the trash cans by the roadside seemed perfect.

Number 1000 had never seen such clean ground. After being urged several times by the leading Upper Class Person, he wiped his hands on his tattered clothes, then carefully scraped the soles of his shoes on the ground outside the gate. Only after doing all this did he lift his chest slightly and walk in.

He felt that the sky here was so bright, and the air so sweet.

For the first time in his life, he straightened his back this much. It was as if, the moment he stepped in here, he too had become an Upper Class Person.

The lower-class people behind Number 1000 mostly had the same reaction. They were at a loss, afraid that their dirty shoe soles would soil this clean and tidy ground.

Groups of Upper Class People were passing along the street.

As soon as they saw the long queue of lower-class people entering the residential area, they all simultaneously backed away to keep their distance.

Of course, it was not out of polite courtesy, but out of the desire to stay away from filth.

"That variety show's organizers must be out of their minds, actually letting these things defile our place."

"It was the host's suggestion. Ever since that host's show got shut down, and then he smashed his head in the Circus variety show, his brain's not right anymore."

The Upper Class People whispered among themselves.

"If you ask me, there's nothing worth seeing about lower-class people canvassing for votes on-site. They might as well skip the first phase and go straight to us watching their performance from the audience seats in front of the stage."

The Upper Class People scanned the long line with malicious intent.

"Still, this phase is not entirely without highlights. There do seem to be a few amusements in there."

"See that short guy in green over there? Didn't think he'd be assigned to our Pleasure Heavenly City. I often see his comedy acts from the viewing platform."

"Oh, him. I've seen him too. Always jumping up and down in front of the camera, calling himself some kind of Advanced NPC. He's nothing but a clown wanting to attract our attention. And look, hasn't he now gotten himself an opportunity to join a variety show?"

The two Upper Class People were in the middle of a conversation about Mr. Green when a flash of white behind Mr. Green caught both their eyes at the same time.

"Who's that behind the clown? I keep feeling like I've seen him somewhere before."

"You noticed him too? Strange, it's like our eyes naturally land on that person."

"Not strange at all. Some people are just born to entertain us. I bet he's very gifted in that area."

"Yes, yes, I also think that person will bring a wonderful performance." A third voice suddenly cut in behind them.

The two Upper Class People jolted in surprise and turned around.

They saw a man with a hooked nose and short black hair standing behind them.

"And you are?" The two looked at him in confusion.

"King Nicholas Wang Er." 007 said solemnly.

Chapter 832: The Origin and Development of Pleasure Heavenly City

Nicholas Zhao Si and Nicholas Wang Er arrived early at Pleasure Heavenly City—thanks to the map given by the Crazy Tower Chief.

They found Gu Mian mingling among the lower-class people just as they entered Pleasure Heavenly City.

Upon entering, Chu Changge immediately began studying the terrain and the Upper Class People area.

Meanwhile, 007 was dedicated to making every Upper Class Person notice Gu Mian, as she believed this would greatly increase Gu Mian's support rate.

Thus, she wandered by the long line of lower-class people, making grand recommendations of Gu Mian to every observing Upper Class Person—

"Look at that lower-class person in white with a backpack. See the smug expression on his face? It's so irritating. We shouldn't eliminate him so easily; we should let him advance to the next stage to taste our cruel methods."

"Have you seen number 1118? There's a vibe about him that I dislike. I'd love to see him pitifully beg for mercy on the next stage."

"Why do I feel some déjà vu about that lower-class person behind the short guy? I want to see his next weak performance."

While heavily promoting Gu Mian, 007 didn't forget to mention Mr. Green at the front, a true strong support character.

Thanks to Gu Mian's special allure to Upper Class People, 007's recommendation efforts were highly efficient. Sometimes, even before she spoke, the observing Upper Class People would notice Gu Mian.

The feeling Gu Mian gave them was peculiar, a mix of anticipation and irritability.

With this complex feeling, the Upper Class People hoped Gu Mian could advance to the next stage; the longer one tortures an irritating person, the better.

While 007 was stirring up trouble everywhere, Chu Changge was wandering throughout the Upper Class People residential area.

He had arrived at the central square of Pleasure Heavenly City.

This square was huge, the size of a stadium.

At the center of the square was a massive electronic screen, seemingly recently erected, with ladders and wrenches placed around.

Every so often around the square, there was a half-person-high red box with a number code on it.

Chu Changge looked at the nearest red box, its code was 1066.

This was the first phase's ballot box.

Apart from the ballot boxes and the big screen, many Upper Class People carrying cameras roaming around, preparing to film the first phase of the live reality show.

Chu Changge opened the book in his hand, "The Birth and Development of Pleasure Heavenly City," which he found in the library of Crazy Game City.

Knowing that Gu Mian's first phase took place here, Chu Changge tried to find the internal plan of Pleasure Heavenly City.

Unexpectedly, he found a book specifically about this Upper Class People residential area.

Of course, ordinary Upper Class People residential areas don't have the honor to publish a book, but Pleasure Heavenly City is special.

"Pleasure Heavenly City is the hometown of two Upper Class People founders, who established the racial division system, leading the Upper Class People to victory." Chu Changge read from the book.

These two Upper Class People were named "Slaughter" and "Torture."

"This time, my idea is ingenious. I dare say the first phase activities in other residential areas can't compare to the excitement here."

A familiar voice came from behind.

Chu Changge turned around and saw an old acquaintance wearing a pink shirt.

Teacher Slaughter.

Not the Slaughter from the Secret Forest, but the host of the Slaughter Game, Teacher Slaughter.

He has always worn a pink shirt, standing less than 1.6 meters tall, and his face was as pale as though it had rolled in flour.

At that moment, he was speaking to a photographer following him, seemingly about the first phase's process of the reality show.

The last time Chu Changge saw him was in the Slaughter Game.

Teacher Slaughter looked much more haggard than during the Slaughter Game, but his face showed an undeniable smugness: "I'm hosting the first phase in the bustling Pleasure Heavenly City. As long as the most lower-class people advance from my area, I'll secure the host position for the second and third phases of the show."

It seemed this reality show not only selects lower-class people but also hosts.

Chu Changge learned from the Crazy Tower Chief that there were about two thousand lower-class participants in the first phase, distributed throughout different Upper Class People residential areas, and only the top fifty would proceed to the second phase.

According to Teacher Slaughter, each residential area had a host, and the area with the most lower-class people advancing to the top fifty would have its host move on to conduct the second and third phases.

Noticing someone watching him, Teacher Slaughter turned to trace the gaze's source.

He saw an Upper Class Person with long black hair and glasses standing in front of him, somewhat puzzled since he didn't recognize the person.

"I've seen your show, Teacher Slaughter," Chu Changge adjusted his glasses, "I really liked the Slaughter Game you hosted; it's a pity that the show was canceled later."

He didn't just watch the Slaughter Game; he personally experienced it.

But Chu Changge had changed his identity, so Teacher Slaughter couldn't recognize one of the culprits behind blowing up the restricted zone.

"Of course, of course, the Slaughter Game is the best reality show in this world; if not for that damned..." Teacher Slaughter didn't even know Gu Mian's name.

All he knew was that this unknown person once had a nefarious deal with Lu Yi.

The two of them caused a blast killing a bunch of Upper Class People in the Circus show. Lu Yi was caught, while that unknown despicable lower-class person was still at large.

Strangely, after the Circus incident, the Upper Class People used all their power to find that escaping lower-class person, but there was no result.

Some speculated he had hidden in the restricted zone.

Some said he was lurking in a lower-class residential area.

His warrant has seemingly spread worldwide, but no one has ever seen him.

For some reason, an ominous premonition had been lingering in Teacher Slaughter's heart since a few days ago.

The person from the Slaughter Game appeared.

The person from the Circus show appeared.

These two were the most significant reality shows in Paradise World.

That person always appeared at the most critical moments.

And now, the importance of this show was no less than the Slaughter Game and Circus show.

"Will he come again?" This question lingered in Teacher Slaughter's heart these days, causing his already thin frame to become even thinner.

Since the last time being kidnapped by that damned lower-class person and Lu Yi, Teacher Slaughter never ventured alone to secluded places.

He was accompanied by three photographers now, which gave him a slight sense of security.

"He definitely won't dare come again." Teacher Slaughter consoled himself, "With so many Upper Class People here, as soon as he shows up, he'll be caught immediately; he absolutely wouldn't dare..."

Chapter 833 The Short Lü'er and His Tall Ballot Box

"Nearly all the lower-class people are in position." At this moment, a photographer approached Teacher Slaughter and whispered in his ear.

Only then did Teacher Slaughter pull his mind out of his memories and look at the square.

This is the largest square at the center of Pleasure Heavenly City, and he was almost standing in the middle, so he had a full view of the entire square.

He saw that those lower-class people were already standing obediently in front of the voting boxes.

There were a total of two hundred lower-class people who had entered Pleasure Heavenly City. They stood with the voting boxes encircling the edge of the central square, each separated by a few meters. From above, these people formed a giant circle, surrounding the entire square.

At the center of the square were the Upper Class People who had come to watch the program. Around the large screen was a circular glass canopy, and underneath the canopy were the seats for the Upper Class People.

The program hadn't started yet, and most of the Upper Class People didn't abide by the rules to sit in the seating area. Instead, they roamed around, casting malicious glances at each of the standing lower-class people.

The lower-class people had already been stunned by the grandeur here; they stood cautiously and reservedly behind the voting boxes. Whenever an Upper Class Person passed by, their backs would involuntarily bend, heads lowered deeply, as if afraid to be seen, showing a cowardly, hopeless expression.

Teacher Slaughter raised his arm to glance at his watch: "Eight forty, there are still twenty minutes until the official start of the program. Tell the sound engineer to turn on the sound, the follow-cams can also be launched, and have the logistics prepare those things in the sky..."

Things in the sky.

Chu Changge raised his head to look at the sky.

It seemed Teacher Slaughter's program this time had something to do with the sky.

"Zhao Si..." At this moment, a hand patted the shoulder of the photographer who was talking to Teacher Slaughter.

Who was Zhao Si? The photographer had this question on his mind as he turned to look.

He saw standing behind him a man with a hooked nose and short black hair, but he did not recognize the man nor knew why the man called him "Zhao Si."

looked at the bow tie at the photographer's neckline, then saw the puzzled expression on his face; she realized she had probably mistaken him for someone else.

She didn't suffer from face blindness, but the exterior of Upper Class People all seemed as if they had rolled in a flour pile, unlike her kind.

If not for the color of their hair, all the Upper Class People looked nearly the same to her, making it difficult for her to spot Chu Changge within the crowd.

Hence, the two decided to tie a black bow tie with white dots at the neckline for distinction.

had initially thought this pattern wouldn't be hard to miss, but unexpectedly, she indeed ran into a matching outfit.

Awkwardly, she swept her eyes over the black bow tie with white dots at the photographer's neckline and then looked at another photographer beside him, whose neckline was donned with a tie.

She even lowered her head to check Teacher Slaughter's neckline, though she recalled Chu Changge's transformed height wasn't that short.

Teacher Slaughter's neckline also had a bow tie pinned, albeit in pink, which he particularly adored.

"I'm here." Just when 007 had lowered her head to look at Teacher Slaughter's pink bow tie, Chu Changge's voice came from behind her.

turned around, seeing Chu Changge standing right behind her.

She awkwardly added, "Oh, you're here; this person's clothing was too similar to yours, I didn't recognize you at first glance from behind."

Teacher Slaughter was clearly uninterested in dwelling over the intricate issue of "who Zhao Si is" with these strangers.

He raised his head to glance at the sky, noticing the follow-cams used for filming had already risen up, and the preparations he made in the air were gradually gathering over here.

007, seeing Teacher Slaughter's gaze, also followed and looked up.

At first, she noticed many follow-cams flying in the sky; these machines had a pair of wings and flew in the sky like flying insects, emitting a gentle buzzing sound.

But soon, she was attracted by something different—a large gray mass was gathering from the sky around the square.

As it approached, 007 finally saw clearly what they were.

"Balloons?"

And they were sizable balloons.

They varied in shape; some were blood-stained knives, others were skulls symbolizing death.

Of course, there were also more normal, sunny ones, as 007 saw a large sun balloon swaying towards them.

These were all hot air balloons.

Soon, they gathered above the central square, completely casting the square in shadows.

Meanwhile, high-deafening music suddenly resounded; it was the music of Paradise World, whose name 007 didn't know, only feeling a hint of madness and excitement within it.

"It's about time!" Teacher Slaughter beside her exclaimed with joy as he quickly moved to the center of the square, climbing onto the platform beneath the large screen using both hands and feet.

The platform under the screen wasn't big, flanked by two person-tall speakers on each side.

He saw Teacher Slaughter, not knowing from where, take out a microphone, clear his throat, and lift it to his mouth: "Ladies and gentlemen, please be quiet—"

Simultaneously, the photographers kept the camera trained on Teacher Slaughter's face, and the large screen on the platform also showed his pale face in real-time.

But as Teacher Slaughter was somewhat short, the photographer had to bend over when filming him.

"He's a host." Before, 007 didn't know Teacher Slaughter; this was their first encounter.

"In five minutes, our splendid program will begin; all audience members, please head to the audience section. As you can see, the round glass canopy around me is the seating area for everyone."

Quite a few Upper Class People had already arrived at the central square.

Other Upper Class People were now passing by 007 and Chu Changge, mumbling.

"What kind of show are they pulling."

"Isn't the first stage supposed to listen to those filthy lower-class people's speeches? Yet he erected a glass canopy and brought so many hot air balloons, no idea what he's planning."

"Though the first stage is about listening to lower-class people's speeches, just watching speeches isn't much fun, and each residential area has hundreds of lower-class people. Listening to each of them speak is really too tedious. I've heard even the hosts of other residential areas added their own programs at this stage; I'm guessing the balloons above are Teacher Slaughter's program."

"Hope it's an exciting program."

At this point, Chu Changge and 007 also arrived under the glass canopy. Here, many chairs were set up, as well as long tables filled with exquisite foods, allowing the Upper Class People to enjoy meals while watching the program.

Looking up was transparent glass, an unobstructed view of the scenes overhead, allowing a clear sight of the various balloons.

At this moment, a ghost-face balloon was hovering over the glass canopy. 007 watched the ghost-face balloon, feeling slightly anxious.

She looked toward Gu Mian's direction.

Gu Mian was grouped with other lower-class people encircling the square's perimeter, now standing in front of box 1118, studying the box before him.

And Mr. Green...

didn't see Mr. Green at first glance; he was really too short, entirely hidden by the voting boxes, with only a slight bit of scalp showing.

Chapter 834 The Heavenly Ladder Game Arrives with a Bang

But even just looking at the top of his head, she could tell Mr. Green's dejection.

"I wonder what kind of show that pink host planned." 007 glanced at the hot air balloons in the sky, then at the glass ceiling overhead, some speculation forming in his mind.

Chu Changge was focused on Teacher Slaughter on the high platform—probably noticing the audience's queries, he had already started to animatedly introduce the program he had planned.

A somewhat shrill voice played out from the large speakers on either side, and 007 saw the dust in the air trembling.

"I trust everyone here has seen the Slaughter Games, and knows my name, Teacher Slaughter, knowing I never create boring shows just to please the crowd."

As he spoke, a determined expression appeared on his face, suddenly stretching both arms wide open, as if preparing for an embrace.

The cameraman zoomed out with his movements, capturing Teacher Slaughter fully in the frame.

The large screen on the high platform provided a close-up of him opening his arms to embrace everyone.

But without the screen, just looking at the actual scene, Teacher Slaughter, barely 1.6 meters tall, doing this action was truly comical, causing a few Upper Class People in the audience area to laugh.

With his arms spread wide, Teacher Slaughter slowly rotated side to side, then pompously tilted his head upwards: "Today's program will definitely not disappoint! I'm delighted that all of you could join us today! Welcome to today's—Heavenly Ladder Game!"

As he finished speaking, his arms sank lower, attempting to open them wider.

At the same time, a "boom" sounded in the sky.

It came from those hot air balloons overhead.

He moved his gaze from Teacher Slaughter to the varied forms of hot air balloons in the sky.

Below the balloons, white smoke erupted, and then ropes of soft ladders fell from them, with one end attached to the baskets under the hot air balloons, and the other almost reaching the ground.

A few ladders fell striking the glass ceiling, making "pattering" sounds.

The music that had been playing also transitioned into its most jubilant, most exhilarating phase.

In the plaza filled with soft ladders, amidst the deafening music, Teacher Slaughter displayed a joyful expression: "The lower-class folks are so ignorant and shallow, letting them take turns giving speeches, listening to them say those dry and uninspiring things—what's the point of that? I, Teacher Slaughter, certainly won't let everyone down;

"Even for speeches, there should be some elements of competition, especially considering there are two hundred lower-class people present; if we proceed in sequence, letting them express their yearning for the Upper Class lifestyle, or deliver some flattering compliments, I'm afraid we wouldn't finish listening to their lengthy diatribes by tonight."

Laughter erupted from the audience.

"Opportunities must be seized by oneself, the Upper Class only listens to the voices of those who take initiative—do you see those hot air balloons in the sky? Climb up those ladders, and obtain the permit from the baskets of the balloons, you can then come to this much-anticipated stage and tell your story."

The lower-class people surrounding the plaza timidly gazed at the sky.

The hot air balloons were very high, in the eyes of the lower-class people, these balloons seemed almost as high as the clouds floating in the sky.

And the soft ladders hanging from the balloons appeared so delicate and fragile, lightly swaying with the wind, they seemed barely able to support the weight of even a dog. Of course, due to malnutrition, most of the lower-class people present weighed little more than a large dog.

Next to Chu Changge and 007 sat an Upper Class person who brought a large dog to watch the show.

didn't recognize the breed of dogs in Paradise, he could only tell it was a big yellow dog with enormous ears, its fur gleaming, obediently eating the treats its owner fetched from the table.

Perhaps because of the Beast Tamer's profession, the big yellow dog kept wagging its tail at 007, looking at him with its shiny eyes.

forced his gaze away from the dog to look at Gu Mian.

If she didn't look, she wouldn't know; once she did, she got a fright.

"Look what he's doing?" 007 leaned close to Chu Changge and whispered, trying not to let those around them hear their conversation.

The "he" referred to Gu Mian, both of them understood.

Chu Changge was originally focused on the hot air balloons in the sky, but upon hearing 007, he turned towards Gu Mian.

Gu Mian was still examining the 1118 voting box in front of him, with even greater "depth" than before—he had thrust his arm into the voting slot, seemingly attempting to dismantle the box.

The voting slot on the box was a rectangular opening, just enough to accommodate a person's arm.

Luckily, everyone's attention was currently on Teacher Slaughter and the balloons in the sky, so nobody noticed Gu Mian's misdeeds.

"What's he doing? Is he trying to dismantle the box?" 007 whispered her guess.

Chu Changge shook his head.

Gu Mian needs to qualify for the second and third stages to save Lu Yi, he shouldn't dismantle the voting box right from the start.

After all, there are two thousand lower-class people competing in the first stage, only the top fifty in votes can advance to the second stage. If Gu Mian dismantles the voting box right from the start, let alone making it into the top fifty, he wouldn't receive a single vote.

As expected, after fumbling around inside the box, Gu Mian withdrew his arm, not intending to destroy the voting box in front of him.

Seeing this, 007 finally breathed a sigh of relief. If Gu Mian had really destroyed the box, she wouldn't know where to cast her ballot shortly.

She then looked at Mr. Green beside Gu Mian, who was standing behind the 1117 voting box; earlier, she could only see the sadness at the top of his head, but now half of Mr. Green's body was visible to 007.

He shuffled a few steps toward Gu Mian, nodded his head as if saying something to him.

noticed his face full of worry as he pointed at the hot air balloons in the sky, then at the voting box in front, seemingly saying, "There's no way we can climb up there."

The expressions on the faces of the other lower-class folks were similar to Mr. Green's.

They exchanged perplexed looks, secretly communicating among themselves, the plaza filled with the murmurs of low-level discussions among the lower-class folks.

"Those ladders don't look very sturdy..."

"And they seem slippery, might slide down."

"No, no, it's simply too high, I don't dare to climb up."

Some even nervously retreated several steps, not daring to look up at those potentially deadly ladders.

Seeing the contestants backing out, Teacher Slaughter's face showed a mocking smile: "Look, lower-class folks are exactly that—lower-class, not even as good as circus dogs. Look at their timid expressions, they weren't like this when they first arrived;

"Back then, they wore smugness on their faces, probably thinking it was finally their chance to shine. I knew lower-class folks love to reap without sowing, but I didn't expect them to be so greedy, just a little obstacle and they wish to retreat;

"What, did lower-class folks fantasize that we would feed them with a big spoon when they arrived, thinking from now on they could live a carefree life without any effort?"

Chapter 835 Global Collapse—Gu Bengeng Pulls Out the Heavenly Ladder

"Pathetic, pathetic, to show such cowardice in the face of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. But it's not all lost, is it? At least they've witnessed a life they could never even dream of, providing ample material for future dreams."

Teacher Slaughter spoke with a look of compassion on his face: "Look, just look, this is the last time in your life you'll set foot in such a wonderful place. From now on, you won't have another chance to enter here; even a glance would be a luxury;

"You're still dreaming of staying here, but of course, some will stay, though surely not you bunch of cowardly trash."

At this moment, the large screen behind him changed, no longer showing Teacher Slaughter's close-up but transforming into a leaderboard.

However, this leaderboard had no names, just two columns of numbers.

Gu Mian had already fiddled with his ballot box and turned his gaze to the large screen behind Teacher Slaughter.

The screen bore two vertical columns of numbers, and aside from the numbers, there were some other decorations, but those were unimportant.

Above the column on the left was labeled "Name."

In fact, below "Name" weren't actual names, but codes for the lower-class contestants.

Mr. Green was 1117, Gu Mian was 1118.

Gu Mian couldn't find his number on the screen because the screen was limited and only displayed the rankings of the top one hundred.

Currently, first place was occupied by lower-class contestant number "0125."

The lower-class who entered Pleasure Heavenly City ranged from number 1000 to 1200, and this 0125 clearly was a contestant from another upper-class residential area.

Following 0125 was his vote count.

"113 votes, haven't we started yet? Other places have already begun voting? This doesn't align with the fairness of the show," Mr. Green called out softly.

Gu Mian then recalled he used to work on programs too, but they were harmless word-guessing games. Even the thugs hired were intimidating but brainless, like Xiao Hong.

It seems hosts in other residential areas aren't as varied as Teacher Slaughter, Gu Mian guessed that methodical hosts had already allowed lower-class individuals to speak one by one.

"Let's see the current top one hundred," Teacher Slaughter gestured to the screen, "participants who might emerge as upper-class people could come from these hundred individuals, while you all just wait and watch, hoping no one regrets not trying."

It was evident Teacher Slaughter was anxious.

Other areas already had contestants perform and receive upper-class votes, but in his area, no one had made the first move yet.

Even in haste, he didn't show it but rather added some taunting remarks, throwing in the reward bait of "victors can transform into upper-class people."

Sure enough, someone took the bait.

If they hadn't seen the upper-class lifestyle, the lower-class might still find their days tolerable.

But the scenes of upper-class residential areas were too overwhelming for them.

Watching upper-class individuals in the audience area eat desserts they've never seen before, the lower-class couldn't even begin to imagine how those foods tasted.

It was clean, warm, and fragrant here.

I have the opportunity to stay here forever.

If someone can eventually stay, why can't that person be me? This is my only chance.

Looking at the upper-class residential area they previously couldn't even dream of and hearing Teacher Slaughter's "encouragement" from atop the high platform, a contestant suddenly dashed out from behind the ballot box and charged toward the nearest ladder.

Gu Mian didn't even get a clear look at him before he was already scrambling up, using both hands and feet.

"I want to become an upper-class person! I want to be first!" he shouted loudly as he climbed, seemingly trying to motivate himself.

Watching the lower-class individual rushing out, a smile spread across Teacher Slaughter's face: "The first hero has appeared, so what's his name..."

At this moment, a tracking camera timely flew in front of the lower-class contestant, capturing his expression and his number plate in the lens.

It's number 1099.

His mouth and eyes widened, with his head raised, staring straight upward.

had climbed up to a height of three to four meters, and the soft ladder shook under his weight, yet he didn't look down, endlessly climbing upward like a maggot clinging to a tree trunk.

People inherently fear unknown difficulties.

When facing unknown challenges, most are reluctant to be the first to try.

But as soon as the first pioneer appears, the rest will follow suit in hordes.

One by one, lower-class people rushed toward those fragile, skyward ladders from all directions.

They pushed and shoved, with some even fighting over the same ladder.

The initially quiet central square quickly descended into chaos, with dozens of tracking cameras bustling through the crowd, capturing the ungainly scenes of lower-class individuals pushing each other and even fighting.

Several hot air balloons hovered above the glass canopy, with a group of upper-class people near the canopy jostling and arguing, while upper-class audience members excitedly observed the lower-class individuals' every move.

"See, just a moment ago they were reluctant to come up, and now they're showing their true colors, fighting each other."

Several upper-class people tisked at the distant scene—one lower-class individual pulling a companion off the ladder he'd climbed, then climbing himself, while his companion seemed to have broken a leg in the fall, curling up and rolling painfully on the ground.

Such scenes weren't uncommon.

Meanwhile, one lower-class person had climbed up to more than ten meters. The hot air balloons were about forty to fifty meters above ground, and he'd climbed a third of the way. At this moment, three tracking cameras were fully capturing him, but this wasn't the first to climb, 1099.

The first ladder climber, number 1099, appeared to have lost momentum, halting at about ten meters, clinging to the soft ladder and trembling.

Because he was the first to climb, Teacher Slaughter favored him, with a tracking camera always circling and filming him. Gu Mian saw his tears overflowing on the screen: "I don't want to climb anymore, I want to go down, waah waah waah waah..."

It seemed fear had finally taken over his psyche.

He could neither advance nor retreat.

On the ground below, another lower-class was impatiently shaking his ladder, trying to dislodge him to climb himself.

Many were like 1099, climbing to a certain height before losing heart, stuck in an impossible middle ground.

Yet more continued climbing desperately.

A small portion remained unmoved behind the ballot boxes.

"He's still at the ballot box, hasn't budged," 007 whispered to Chu Changge; the area was crowded and busy, so they used "he" when discussing Gu Mian.

"He trusts his luck too much," Chu Changge stared at the ladders above the glass canopy, "believing that once he climbs, the ladders will collapse."

Chapter 836 Happy Mid-Autumn Festival to Everyone

Just as Chu Changge said, Gu Mian is very confident in his own luck.

Originally, having bad luck was one thing, but now he also had an uncontrollable wish system installed on him by the Evil God, which might fulfill his heart's desire at any unexpected moment.

Who knows, maybe while he's halfway up the ladder, he slips and subconsciously thinks the ladder has broken, and the wish system hears his wish, understandingly helping him achieve it.

It's best to find a way to restrain this wish mechanism, although it has become more restrained since it came to Gu Mian. Previously, when this wish system was on the Evil God statue, it was completely uncontrollable; whatever you wanted, it brought. Now, at least it requires triggering "Strong Expectation" or "Subconscious Belief" for the wish to come true.

As he pondered, suddenly a "bang" echoed from the square.

The air fell silent for a moment, even the chatter ceased abruptly, leaving only the speakers on either side of the stage still playing cheerful music.

But soon, screams, noises, and cheers filled the entire square.

Perhaps due to lack of energy, or maybe a slip of the foot, a lower-class person fell from the high ladder, leaving only a scream as the final sound.

He fell right onto the glass canopy of the audience seating, face down, directly facing the audience below. The Upper Class People below just had to look up to see his tragic end.

He lay motionless; he was undoubtedly dead.

broke out in a cold sweat, silently watching the lower-class person who had fallen to his death on the glass canopy, his eyes wide open, seemingly locked in a stare with 007.

She forced herself to look away from the dead person's eyes, but not too far, to avoid revealing anything in front of the other Upper Class People.

Around them, the Upper Class audience was cheering for this tragic death.

forcibly focused her gaze on the dead person's chest, where his number plate hung.

"Look, number 1178 made a tremendous contribution, receiving the loudest applause since the start of today's game. Let's thank number 1178!" Teacher Slaughter's voice came just in time.

At this moment, several filming drones gathered around number 1178, capturing close-up shots of him. One even went under the glass canopy to shoot a close-up of his face from below.

pretended to dodge the drone overhead, tilting her head to divert her gaze.

Number 1178 was filmed from multiple angles, and the footage was displayed on the big screen.

The Upper Class people cheered, while some lower-class people screamed or remained stunned, seemingly not yet comprehending the situation.

The people on the ladder also stopped, cautiously looking down at the glass canopy tainted with the aura of death.

"Contestants, time is of the essence. The first place has already received two hundred fifty-two votes, but none of you have a single vote yet," Teacher Slaughter said, somewhat displeased as he looked at the halted lower-class individuals.

He urged the contestants on the field: "What are you waiting for? Climb up quickly. Don't you want to escape your lower-class identity and remember why you came here?"

Upon hearing this, the lower-class people on the ladder began to climb up desperately again. They dared not look at the corpse on the glass canopy again, fearing that another glance would strip them of the courage to climb.

turned her head and spoke to Chu Changge beside her: "Gu... he definitely can't climb the ladder. How will he get votes then?"

She and Chu Changge could only give Gu Mian four votes, and it was obvious that four votes would never make it into the top fifty.

Moreover, Gu Mian also had the ever-demanding Mr. Green beside him.

Chu Changge continued staring at the various balloons in the sky: "There's no direct connection."

"What?"

"Climbing the ladder and the number of votes, there's no direct connection," Chu Changge replied.

was somewhat puzzled, also looking up at those hot air balloons in the sky.

Though some hot air balloons were similar, each one looked quite different. In a short time, 007 spotted four eyeball-shaped hot air balloons, but each was distinct. One was slightly yellow, one had bloodshot sclera, and the other two each had different traits.

Ladders beneath the four eyeball hot air balloons were being climbed by lower-class people.

One of them had already climbed more than halfway; with a little more persistence, they could reach the top and obtain a Stage License from the hot air balloon basket. At this moment, they surpassed the previously tallest contestant, becoming the highest climber among them.

Teacher Slaughter also noticed this and shouted, "Look at the eyeball ladder on the south side of the square! Someone has reached an unprecedented height!"

A filming drone flew toward that hot air balloon, but halfway there, it got distracted by another bloodshot eyeball and veered off course.

"South side! South side! You idiot!" Teacher Slaughter cursed from the stage.

The drone circled around for a while, found its correct position, and buzzed towards the climber, concentrating on filming the lower-class individual on the ladder.

"It's number 1089. Now, among everyone, the highest climber is number 1089. Let's give him a round of applause!" Teacher Slaughter started clapping.

But not many people in the audience responded to him, and he awkwardly redirected his attention to the climbing lower-class individuals.

Just then, another "bang" sounded.

The crowd turned towards the noise, only to see another lower-class person fall, this one having climbed even higher than the previous, making their fall even more catastrophic.

This time, the person fell near the edge of the square and did not crash onto the glass canopy, saving 007 from having to witness it up close.

"Oh, it's the person who fell from our 'dead fish' hot air balloon," Teacher Slaughter narrated.

There was only one fish-shaped hot air balloon, and just the right two filming drones were focused on it, soon flying down to have a comprehensive shoot of the body on the ground.

Simultaneously, another series of "bang" sounds occurred.

The number of people falling was increasing.

watched from afar as the people fell. Most of those who fell lay still afterward, appearing dead, while a small number hadn't climbed too high and survived the fall with broken bones, rolling on the ground and screaming in agony.

The other lower-class people gradually became numb. Slowly, they stopped looking at the ones who fell with terror and hesitation in their eyes and just focused on climbing up.

In the fast-paced music and in the wails of the injured lower-class people, those on the ladder climbed up vigorously, as if they couldn't hear anything.

noticed that a lower-class person was about to reach the top.

He climbed a ladder hanging from a sheep-head-shaped hot air balloon, just four or five meters away from reaching the top.

Teacher Slaughter and the filming devices hadn't noticed him yet, so 007 could only watch his thin and hunched figure from afar.

At this moment, Teacher Slaughter onstage finally noticed over there.

He exclaimed, "Center of the square, someone is reaching the top at the sheep-head hot air balloon, the center one with the broken horn!"

There were two other sheep-head hot air balloons in the square, but one was a goat head, and the other was a black sheep head.

Not far from the sheep head, several filming devices were recording a ghost-face hot air balloon; one of them flew towards the sheep head and projected the recorded footage onto the central big screen.

As the filming device got closer, 007 finally saw what that person looked like.

His cheeks were sunken due to long-term malnutrition, with deep grey shadows under his eyes, as if he had never had a good night's sleep.

Judging by his build, he seemed to be a teenager, but his haggard appearance made him look like he was already in his thirties or forties.

Yet at this moment, his eyes were filled with intense yearning. He supported his head with his thin neck, looking upward on the swaying ladder.

"Just a bit more, just a bit more..." he murmured to himself.

Teacher Slaughter also kept a keen eye on the ladder under the sheep-head balloon, his face brimming with frenzy, "It's number 1133, just a few meters away! Just a few meters to successfully reach the top! But you know, the last few steps on the road to success are always the hardest. Can 1133 overcome the difficulties to become the first to reach the top?"

Teacher Slaughter wasn't wrong; climbing to this height had already consumed most of a person's strength. These lower-class people were constantly underfed and underdressed, with physical endurance less than that of normal people.

It was evident that number 1133 had already exhausted his strength, his arms and legs trembling, nearly out of power, climbing with bare instinct.

At this moment, all eyes were on him.

He panted heavily, shakily crawling up inch by inch, slowly but without stopping.

He knew that if he stopped, he'd have no strength to climb any further.

Climb! Climb! He silently encouraged himself, mouth open as he climbed like a caterpillar scaling an unreachable tall tree, like a seed burrowing through dry, barren soil.

Finally, he saw hope.

He finally climbed to the very top, grasping the edge of the balloon's basket with both hands and using his last ounce of strength to flip inside.

In the basket, which had room for just one person, he saw a neatly placed, white envelope in the center.

He reached for the envelope and sat down on the ground, filled with joy, crying.

"I did it, I really did it."

At this moment, filming devices flew in from all directions, surrounding and focusing on the envelope in his hands.

Teacher Slaughter had said that reaching the top of the Heavenly Ladder would earn one a Stage License, so presumably, the envelope held that license. Number 1133 was the first qualified to get on stage and draw votes, surely the number would be high. 007 thought to herself and then remembered Gu Mian. It was impossible for Gu Mian to climb the ladder, so how would he draw his votes?

turned her head to look for Gu Mian but noticed Chu Changge gazing intently at Teacher Slaughter on the edge of the high platform out of the corner of her eye.

Previously, Chu Changge had been staring at the hot air balloons and the filming devices flying around, and now he focused on Teacher Slaughter.

followed Chu Changge's gaze to Teacher Slaughter.

"So, number 1133, show everyone the fruits of your effort, display this honor to everyone," Teacher Slaughter's voice echoed from the speakers, reaching the high sky.

Number 1133 rested for a while, already capable of standing.

He wiped away his tears and stood up in the basket, excitedly presenting the envelope to the people below.

Several filming devices captured the envelope in his hands and projected it onto the large screen.

"Yes, that's it. Take out the license from the envelope, then come onto the stage," Teacher Slaughter intently watched the direction of the sheep-head balloon, revealing a smile full of intrigue.

Seeing his expression, 007 vaguely sensed something was wrong.

She immediately looked at number 1133.

He was already cautiously, gingerly opening the seal of the envelope, afraid of damaging the license inside.

It took him half a minute to finally open the seal, pulling out a palm-sized card.

Upon seeing the card, a look of deep confusion appeared on his face.

Before he could react further, the sheep-head balloon above him suddenly exploded. Without the hot air balloon, number 1133 and the basket plummeted from tens of meters high.

His face was etched with deep terror, but his hand still clutched tightly the hard-won "license" until he hit the ground with a thud, never letting go.

"What a pity," Teacher Slaughter's voice was laced with deep regret, "not all balloon baskets contain a license. Some contain a little 'surprise'. Sadly, our number 1133 got the surprise."

As Teacher Slaughter spoke, a filming device flew down from high above, capturing the "surprise" tightly clutched in number 1133's hand and projecting it onto the large screen.

It was a skull symbolizing death.

Chapter 837 Timid and Fearful Gu Bengbeng

The death of number 1133 momentarily froze the lower-class people in the square, but perhaps a continuous series of deaths had left them numb, or perhaps the long-standing autocratic rule of the Upper Class People had led them only to obey.

No one questioned this game that deliberately concealed key information.

They just thought 1133 was too unlucky and frantically prayed that their own luck wouldn't mirror his.

They still rushed to climb upward, as if eager to prove they would be the lucky ones to get the permit.

The sound of falling continuously resonated through the square, some fell accidentally while climbing the ladder, and others unfortunately drew a death-representing skull from the envelope.

Teacher Slaughter passionately hosted, and every time someone fell, he would make a false expression of regret.

"Ah, yet another Hero has departed from us, but this means there's one less competitor, and the chances for everyone present to get the permit have increased! The sacrifices of the sacrificial are not without gain, as you can see, there are more spectators here now."

turned to look at the outskirts of the square.

They saw sporadic Upper Class People gradually arriving, and the large screen on the platform was broadcasting live on television, showing that this show planned by Teacher Slaughter was very popular, and the Upper Class People who saw the broadcast couldn't wait to come to watch in person.

"I heard the programs hosted by Jile Island and Joyful City are the most boring, directly letting lower-class people go up one by one to give speeches. The audience over there heard our show is not only interesting but has intense competition, so they've all come here." One Upper Class Person next to 007 was talking to his fellow companion.

He mentioned that Jile Island and Joyful City are names of Upper Class People residential areas.

noticed the Upper Class Person talking was holding something similar to a mobile phone from Earth, suggesting they used these for communication.

"Sebastian, you're here." At this moment, a newly arrived Upper Class Person came to the audience and greeted with one seated in front of 007, seemingly old acquaintances.

"Ryan, weren't you watching the show at Upper Village, why did you come to Pleasure City?" The one called Sebastian greeted the new arrival and asked.

"Don't even start, they said there was some accident in an important place a few days ago, and the original host from Upper Village went to handle it. They replaced him with a rookie who hosted a show that makes you not want to watch at all. We've heard the show here is very passionate, so we came over to check it out."

He said, looking up at the glass shed overhead.

There were already quite a few bodies lying up there, which made him whistle joyfully: "Seems indeed quite passionate."

More and more new Upper Class People came, all drawn by the reputation.

Most of their tickets hadn't been cast yet, and at this moment a small group of them was circling around the ballot boxes, seemingly intending to vote.

"With more and more spectators, this means our contestants here can receive more votes than in other areas! Maybe our place can occupy most of the top fifty, it's the glory created by everyone together!" Teacher Slaughter's face was filled with an undeniable smile.

His words seemed like a stimulant, greatly boosting the morale of the contestants. They were eager to show themselves, to quickly obtain a permit to go up and give speeches, so that the Upper Class People would focus on them.

They climbed upwards, panting, almost forgetting fatigue, forgetting danger.

Forgetting about danger led to more and more accidents.

More people fell off the ladder, and at this moment there were only a small number of mobile lower-class people left.

saw an Upper Class Person standing in front of a ballot box, it was 1129's ballot box, and the Upper Class Person looked at it with great interest for a while, then cast two votes into it.

But 1129 was already dead, just a short time ago.

He was climbing a ladder hanging from a heart-shaped hot air balloon when he missed a step and fell. Several drones were filming him, capturing the grim scene of him hitting the ground first-hand.

Perhaps the two votes were that Upper Class Person's reward for his contribution of such an eye-catching corpse.

Gu Mian still stood behind the ballot box, not climbing the ladder.

But he was like a hook, and when the Upper Class People saw him, they couldn't help but be drawn in.

"Why don't you climb the ladder?" At this moment, an Upper Class Person stood in front of Gu Mian, asking him condescendingly.

"I'm afraid of dying." Gu Mian opened his eyes wide, with a fearful look.

The Upper Class Person snorted: "Truly cowardly."

He didn't like lower-class people, especially cowardly lower-class people. Normally, he would've lost all interest in the person in front of him, turned away, and continued watching the exciting performance in the square.

But now, he found the person in front of him more and more unpleasant, simultaneously sparking a malicious thought.

Really curious to see what a timid coward would be like if promoted to the second stage, probably so scared that he'd call for his mother on the spot.

Thinking of this, he showed a pleased smile and as if enchanted, cast both of his two votes into Gu Mian's ballot box.

"Alright, his allure seems quite strong for the Upper Class People." From the audience, 007 observed, noting that several passing Upper Class People have already voted for Gu Mian.

But all things considered, Gu Mian now had just over ten votes, at most twenty, which couldn't compare with the thousand votes of the first place on the screen.

"If he can't smoothly squeeze into the top fifty to enter the second stage of the variety show, should we come up with another plan to save him?" 007 had already begun considering what to do if Gu Mian failed to advance.

Although there were many spectators at Pleasure Heavenly City, most hadn't voted yet.

They were still watching the exciting Heavenly Ladder program, and so far, no one had successfully obtained a permit to go up and give a speech. Those who reached the top all drew skulls, then fell down with expressions of unwillingness and fear.

"Did the host really put a permit in the basket of the hot air balloon?" 007 couldn't help but ask.

Chapter 838 Living Fish Worry, Dead Fish at Peace

"Released." Chu Changge suddenly spoke from the side.

The number of lower-class people advancing in the competition is crucial for Teacher Slaughter to succeed in entering the second and third stages and continue hosting.

Only the first-placed host gets the chance to host the next two stages.

If all the contestants from Pleasure Heavenly City die, Teacher Slaughter will miss the next two stages, so he won't eliminate everyone.

turned his head to look at Chu Changge, only to see Chu Changge focusing on a hot air balloon shaped like a dead fish. 007 remembered that not long ago, someone had fallen from it.

"Did you notice? The category of hot air balloons in the square." He retracted his gaze and looked at 007.

"Category?" Hearing this, 007 looked at the hot air balloons in the sky, trying to comprehend what Chu Changge meant by "category."

Size, color, and life-death status can all divide them into categories, and some hot air balloons simultaneously possess several categorizing features.

Indeed, there are too many categories; she didn't know how to divide them.

"Two types," Chu Changge spoke beside her, "those with similarities and those without."

was suddenly enlightened.

These hot air balloons aren't entirely identical, but some belong to the same category.

Previously, a contestant fell from a hot air balloon shaped like a bloodshot eyeball. Teacher Slaughter instructed a filming device to shoot it, but it targeted the wrong one. There were four eyeball hot air balloons present, though subtly different. Yet it ended up filming another eyeball balloon.

"The host uses the Stage License as the focal point, ensuring they won't miss a single detail. Thus, he must know which hot air balloons contain the real license, so when someone is about to acquire the license, he can promptly discover it and send the filming device for live coverage."

There are dozens of lower-class people climbing ladders, while the overhead filming devices flutter about, outnumbering those climbing.

But there's only one large screen; Teacher Slaughter can't broadcast everyone's footage, only selecting those with show effects for play.

Acquiring the Stage License offers the best show effect, which he surely won't miss.

Listening to Chu Changge, 007 recalled the first person to reach the top. After he obtained the envelope, she noticed Teacher Slaughter's face revealing a curious smile, implying he knew that envelope contained not a license, but a death pass.

"Yet, these filming devices aren't particularly smart; similar hot air balloons confuse them, potentially filming the wrong target at crucial moments, missing key shots. Hence, the game designers likely made the balloons containing the 'focal point' clearer and less prone to error, ensuring the host doesn't make mistakes while switching scenes."

"So, I speculate the license is in those hot air balloons without similar objects, like that one shaped like a fish; there's only one fish-shaped balloon here."

glanced at the dead fish balloon, recalling the previously fallen hot air balloons.

Indeed, it matched what Chu Changge said.

The first to draw death climbed a sheep-head balloon, with four balloons of the same type present.

Subsequent climbers who drew death also climbed balloons with similar counterparts on site.

quickly scanned the hot air balloons over the entire square, discovering twenty balloons without similar counterparts.

"Watch those filming devices," Chu Changge continued, "I've observed for a long time, noticing certain hot air balloons are always surrounded by filming devices, regardless of whether someone is climbing their ladders or not."

Just then, a filming device hovered over 007's head, tiny—only the size of a ping-pong ball—and difficult to spot while flying in the sky.

And there are at least a hundred such devices across the square's sky, making it challenging to notice their pattern.

No wonder Chu Changge kept looking up earlier; he was observing these devices.

"And hot air balloons always surrounded by filming devices nearby also belong to those without similar objects, single-type balloons. I guess the host fears the filming devices won't arrive promptly, thus arranging several to circle each 'focal point,' ensuring they capture the 'focal point' scene anytime," Chu Changge further corroborated his theory from the direction of the filming devices.

Indeed, 007 noticed those single-pattern balloons frequently had nearby filming devices hovering, but their small size and constant motion gave the illusion of mere coincidence without careful observation to spot the peculiarity.

At this moment, several filming devices surrounded the dead fish balloon, with a contestant climbing the ladder beneath—currently, the highest among the twenty focal balloons.

observed Teacher Slaughter covertly glancing in that direction several times, waiting until the climber had ascended over halfway, nearly reaching the top before smoothly switching the focus to that side.

"Look, 1062 on the fish-shaped balloon is about to reach the pinnacle, just a few steps away."

Named 1062, he instantly felt motivated.

He climbed harder; as soon as Teacher Slaughter finished speaking, he had already reached the ladder's topmost point, leaping into the balloon basket.

He clutched his chest to calm his heartbeat, eyes fixed on the white envelope in the basket's center.

The contents of the envelope would dictate his future.

By now, a filming device stuck close, capturing a close-up of the envelope.

feared the device's wings might ruin his future; he cautiously bent down to pick up the envelope, tucking it into his chest.

Many before him had reached the top and acquired envelopes, all drawing a death outcome—repeated endings tiring the spectators.

"Then open it," Teacher Slaughter shouted on stage, "Open what you've painstakingly earned; let's see if it's worth all your endeavors."

Holding the envelope, 1062's hand trembled slightly, as he reached for the seal.

Perhaps the predecessors' successive deaths had eroded his courage; he tried multiple times without success in opening it.

Lacking the courage to face a potential tragic end, he finally closed his eyes, gritted his teeth, and tore open the envelope harshly.

A thin card fell out, swaying like a leaf before landing at the basket's bottom.

shivered all over, crouching down holding his head, thinking it might lessen the impact of landing.

But the anticipated feeling of weightlessness never came; he heard a commotion and cheers from below the balloon. Only then did he open a slit in his eyes, to view the card on the ground.

The card lay beside him, the upward side displaying three words, yet he couldn't recognize them.

The lower-class people hadn't been educated, almost none literate.

But Teacher Slaughter's voice revealed everything to him.

"Permit! Let's congratulate contestant number 1062 for successfully obtaining the permit, the first contestant this round to secure a necessary permit!"

Chapter 839 Sarcastic 007

At this point, everyone's attention was drawn in; the appearance of the first license seemed like a beacon of hope, bringing optimism to the struggling lower-class people.

At least it proved that the license truly existed, and their hard work was not in vain.

The previously gloomy and oppressive atmosphere on the square was swept away, with some contestants even quietly cheering as if they saw a bright future where they obtained the license.

felt as if he were dreaming; amidst the cheers of the crowd, he carefully and cautiously picked up the card at his feet.

Although he couldn't read the words on it, he felt a sense of familiarity towards them.

He held the card to his chest, uncertainly speaking, "Can I go on stage now?"

Not knowing whom to ask, he had no choice but to speak to the camera following him around.

"Of course," Teacher Slaughter's voice answered him, "I've always said that anyone holding a license can go on stage. Please, anyone with a license, come up on stage."

With that said, 1062's hot air balloon began to descend slowly. Naturally, Teacher Slaughter wouldn't have the license holders climb down themselves, as that would result in a contestant mortality rate of one hundred percent.

Excited, 1062 gripped the edge of the basket, watching the platform below drawing steadily closer, already pondering what he should say once on stage.

"I'm the first to go on stage; I'll definitely leave a deep impression and get many votes... surely I can easily rank among the top fifty to enter the next stage, maybe even become the champion of this show and become an Upper Class Person..."

1062's mind wandered in his beautiful fantasies.

Clutching the license in his hand, he continued to descend with the hot air balloon, gradually nearing the ground, approaching the other contestants below.

Gradually, the surrounding contestants stopped cheering, their eyes fixated on the license 1062 held against his chest, faces showing envy and greed.

was fully engrossed in marveling at his own luck and daydreaming of his bright future, not noticing the changes among the people below.

Soon, the dead fish hot air balloon landed completely; it did not land directly on the platform where Teacher Slaughter stood but was instead some distance away.

As soon as he landed, 1062 excitedly stepped out of the air balloon basket, jogging straight toward the platform.

But he hadn't run two meters before someone suddenly rushed up and tackled him to the ground.

He was knocked to the ground, feeling a bit dizzy.

What happened?

Soon he realized that someone was trying to steal his license!

The attacker straddled him and forcefully tried to pry his hands open to snatch the license away.

hurriedly clutched the license tightly, forcefully rolling over to protect the item under his body.

The person on him refused to give up, swinging a fist to harshly strike his back and shoulders.

felt as if two huge stones had slammed into him; the struck areas momentarily lost sensation.

He lay on the ground, attempting to guard his treasure, and shouted, "No! You're breaking the rules! Doing this is against the rules!"

As he spoke, he tried his best to lift his head to seek help from others, "He's breaking the rules! You see, he's breaking the rules!"

Yet, no one came to assist him.

He saw that several circles of people had surrounded him, their faces gaunt, pale, but their dark eyes emitted an eerie light, staring intently at him.

1062's face turned pale; he understood that these people wouldn't help him.

Hopelessly, he looked toward Teacher Slaughter, hoping the host would enforce justice and advocate for him as the first person to obtain the license.

Teacher Slaughter merely curled his lips, revealing a mocking smile, "Did someone finally realize it? What I said was, anyone holding the license can go on stage to speak, regardless of whether it was obtained by their own hands."

These words acted like a switch, or a spark, immediately igniting a raging fire.

The surrounding people, who had been hesitating, now rushed forward without reservation.

Poor 1062 didn't know who punched him twice in the back of the head, losing consciousness and passing out, the license he had protected under him was taken away by others in an instant.

The newcomer who snatched the license didn't hesitate, quickly turning and rushing toward the platform.

But was quickly tackled and fell, replaying the previous scene.

The ground contestants fought fiercely, while those on ladders weren't idle; some, already climbing high, couldn't come down to contend with the groups below, opting to keep climbing with all their might. Those close to the ground leapt down directly, charging into the melee for the license.

The scene was chaotic.

The Upper Class People laughed heartily amidst the chaotic noise; they loved watching such self-destructive narratives.

More and more spectators streamed into Pleasure Heavenly City, drawn by the thrilling spectacle the game offered, intrigued by its reputation.

The fighting scenes among the lower-class people greatly amused them, most of whom had started voting, some voting for the fiercest fighters, who struck harshly, others voting for the pitiful ones pinned down and beaten, while others cast votes for the deceased.

With the huge advantage in spectator numbers, Pleasure Heavenly City's contestants' votes skyrocketed.

In the top hundred rankings, about twenty were in the 1000 to 1200 range, with seven in the top fifty.

This meant that if this momentum continued, at least seven of Teacher Slaughter's two hundred participants would advance.

This outcome was likely already the best among hosts.

Moreover, Pleasure Heavenly City's contestants' votes continued to rise; if this keeps up, there could be a dozen or twenty participants advancing by the end of the first stage.

Teacher Slaughter's joyful expression didn't seem fake, his mouth nearly splitting from smiling too broadly.

Number 1119 had already grabbed first place, being the most ruthless, attracting many Upper Class People, who came to vote in favor of 1119.

This conveniently benefited Gu Mian, who was right next to number 1119.

Whenever people came to vote for number 1119, they'd unconsciously be drawn to the adjacent number 1118.

Number 1118, Gu Mian, and number 1117, Mr. Green, stood out clearly as if they were two advertisement boards, primarily because practically all of the lower-class people had rushed to the square center to climb the ladders, and those remaining on the ground had earlier joined the free-for-all over licenses.

Only the two of them stood conspicuously in place, resembling advertisement boards.

Passers-by from the Upper Class People were invariably deeply drawn to the mysterious aura emanating from Gu Mian, with some earmarking some of their tickets for him, making Gu Mian's vote count significant; nonetheless, he still hadn't entered the rankings.

At this point, Chu Changge and 007 also left the audience seats to vote for Gu Mian.

The two chose a moment when no one was near to come over, still able to chat with Gu Mian, even though other Upper Class People who came to vote for Gu Mian couldn't help but strike up a conversation, making the duo's actions seem unremarkable.

worryingly glanced at the leaderboard; although some Upper Class People had given votes to Gu Mian, his count was far from qualifying, not even making it into the top hundred.

Mr. Green nearby was worse off, his votes were significantly fewer than Gu Mian's, making advancement even more out of reach.

"Chu Changge deduced which hot air balloons contained stage licenses, but I suspect you wouldn't want to climb the ladder," 007 slowly inserted a ticket into Gu Mian's ballot box, wearing a mocking expression.

Although no one was nearby, the tracking camera was still hovering around, and even people at a distance could notice their expressions if they took a slight interest.

had no choice but to maintain a mocking expression on her face—she had observed most Upper Class People who spoke to Gu Mian had this expression.

Chapter 840 Gu Mian's 108 Ways to Die

Although 007 was now wearing the face of an Upper Class Person, the expression seemed somewhat out of place on her face.

At this moment, she had already slowly pushed the first ballot into Gu Mian's ballot box. There seemed to be an automatic scanning device at the voting slot, and the box emitted a "ding" sound—each time a ballot was cast it would produce this sound.

glanced at the number of ballots in Gu Mian's box through the palm-sized voting slot, estimating roughly three to four hundred ballots in there.

Only the top fifty could advance, and the lowest-ranked candidate currently advancing had eight hundred and twenty-three votes, with the count continuously rising.

Although Gu Mian was like a popular candidate among the Upper Class, with passersby instinctively voting for him, this number of votes was far from enough to secure his advancement. He had to do something to attract more attention from the Upper Class.

She pondered as she slowly pushed another ballot into the voting box before her, trying to prolong her time here to think of a strategy for Gu Mian.

"I can bet that if I were to climb the ladder, once I reach the exact height where I could fall to my death, the ladder would coincidentally break, or perhaps the hot air balloon above would explode due to quality issues." In that instant, Gu Mian had envisioned two possible causes of his demise.

Climbing the ladder was absolutely out of the question.

whispered, "I also think it's not a good idea to climb the ladder. Even if you don't make it to the top fifty, you can still enter the venue for the second and third stages. Crazy Tower Chief has extra Upper Class identity cards, and if you can't advance, you can directly masquerade as an Upper Class member to enter the audience seating."

007's suggestion was indeed the simplest and most convenient option, allowing Gu Mian to bypass the layers of "preliminary rounds" by using an Upper Class identity to proceed directly to the final stage.

However, using an Upper Class identity directly might introduce some uncertainties.

The audience seats for the final stage were still a distance away from the stage, and if the host decided to suspend Lu Yi far above, only the lower-class contestants might be able to approach closely. If Gu Mian were in the audience, when he attempted to use the [108th Key from the Mysterious World], he might be unable to take Lu Yi away due to the distance.

Participating in the contest as a lower-class identity was the safest option.

By this time, 007 had finished voting and stepped aside to let Chu Changge cast his vote.

Chu Changge moved slowly too, casting his vote with one hand and adjusting his glasses with the other: "The number of permits appearing is increasing."

Since 1062 started, the remaining permits emerged like bamboo shoots after a rain.

More and more contestants descended by hot air balloon, only to face the "physical challenge."

It's worth mentioning that, up until now, not a single person had succeeded in taking their permit onto the stage.

Some permits were even torn during the frenzied grabbing; contestants fought so recklessly that they seemed to forget their actual goal, focusing only on the act of snatching.

The scene was chaotic, with lower-class individuals banding together to fight among themselves, while the Upper Class weaved through and enjoyed watching the show put on by the lower-class.

Contestants lifted their fists to pummel their peers, yet none dared to strike the Upper Class. The Upper Class walked among the disorderly, tumultuous crowd with their heads held high, enjoying their special privileges, as if they were the purest lotuses emerging from the mud.

In the center of a square filled with lotuses and mud, someone finally resorted to deadly force—one lower-class participant drew a sharp, prepared wooden stick from their pocket and stabbed another.

The stabbed person let out a shrill cry, unwillingly falling to the ground with eyes wide open.

Among a group of unarmed contestants, there was someone, 1195, who had come prepared.

1195's physique was already taller than most of the lower class, and now armed, the others were no match.

Driven by self-preservation, the lower-class people avoided competing with 1195 and instead dived into the crowds struggling for permits.

The people around him scattered.

bent down to retrieve the tightly clutched permit from the corpse's hand.

While bending over, his spine let out a faint cracking sound—a lingering injury from previous food fights in the housing district. Whenever it rained or he bent over, severe pain gripped his waist, and even the slightest movement produced a faint sound.

This was a massive vulnerability.

If anyone discovered this weakness, he'd never ever manage to secure the food he needed to survive. Others would target his fragile waist when competing for food, and before long he would collapse from hunger.

So he was always cautious, guarding that secret without revealing it in front of others.

Even now.

The scuffle must have involved some bones cracking, as amidst the chaos, someone's random punch landed on his waist.

That punch made him feel as though his vertebrae had shifted, and he might have heard a crisp sound from his waist, but he wasn't certain it was genuinely coming from his body.

The pain, however, was definite.

The agony in his waist was severe, and bending down to pick up the permit had exacerbated the existing injury.

Yet, he didn't let it show one bit, only stiffly raising his leg, clutching the bloodied stick, and stepping towards the stage.

Other contestants, fearing the weapon in his hand, dared not cause trouble for him.

Thus, 1095 smoothly made it to the host's stage; before going up, he intentionally pocketed the stained stick, perhaps worried it might negatively impress the Upper Class.

The moment both his feet hit the platform, he sighed in relief.

Here, the danger was genuinely eliminated, and no one would rush up to snatch away the permit.

In thinking this, his perception of the aching in his waist lightened.

But what about 'speeches'? 1095 had a vague understanding—it involved addressing a crowd.

He didn't know how to begin or how long he should speak.

Afraid of displeasing the audience, he hesitated into a short-term bewilderment.

In reality, his worry was unnecessary. When he drove his carved stick into another contestant's body, the Upper Class had already noticed him.

He was the first to turn a killing tool against a peer, and to actually kill them.

Compared to him, the other contestants' struggles were mere squabbles.

1095's vote count had long started climbing sharply. The moment he stepped onto the stage, the screen showed his votes surpassing the previous first-placed contestant, although he remained unaware and concerned about his likability.

He hesitated a long while before barely crafting a suitable speech in his mind.

Both his hands tightly gripped the hems of his patched clothes, feeling the coarse friction against his palms.

He smoothed the edges of the patch repeatedly thrice before cautiously speaking: "I am 1095...I won't let you down, please...cast your vote for me, thank you..."

Never once did he raise his gaze toward the Upper Class below, not daring to meet their eyes, feeling unworthy.

This was 1095's first speech in his life, concluding in a concise sentence.

Upon his words' completion, Teacher Slaughter wore a slightly puzzled look, seemingly confused by why he didn't continue speaking.

Seeing the uneasy bow of 1095's head, Teacher Slaughter realized his "speech" had finished.

The lower-class speech indeed was uninteresting, luckily I prepared this ladder game, avoiding the naive approach of neighboring housing districts letting the lower-class queue up for speeches. Teacher Slaughter found it boring inside, but still led by clapping his hands.

After all, this was his event, though the lower-class speech was dull, he had to boost the atmosphere.

Fortunately, some audience members enjoyed seeing contestants' timid expressions—1095's speech didn't disenchant the audience, on the contrary, his votes continued climbing, almost reaching fifteen hundred, leaving the second-placed contestant behind.

Teacher Slaughter watched the rank on the screen with satisfaction, but soon realized something amiss—a different contestant's rank was suddenly surging upwards rapidly.

In a blink at rank 97, suddenly gaining over a hundred votes, he moved to rank 62!

With each audience member allowed only two votes, this scenario indicated over fifty people simultaneously cast into his ballot in that leap.

Teacher Slaughter thought his eyes were deceiving him.

But the next moment, he noticed it wasn't a mere optical illusion, as the contestant propelled once more, gaining over two hundred votes and advancing into the top fifty.