

Endless 192

Chapter 192: Delusional

The company has been cultivating the Great Rift for years, making the soil structure within the ravine fragile and unstable. After a stormy night, a large amount of accumulated water poured into the Great Rift, causing rocks to collapse under the rush of currents, mixing with muddy water as they crash down noisily.

People often say that the Great Rift is symbiotic with Opus, and as Opus expands, the Great Rift will also collapse and create new ravines, like festering sores rooted in the earth.

From this perspective, the saying holds some truth. Opus is like a giant beast, and the Great Rift is its offspring, yet in this deep smog and bottomless abyss, no one truly knows what is being nurtured beneath.

Along the inner edges of the Great Rift, corridors marked with rust were severely damaged, breaking apart with a fragile creaking sound and falling into the fog below. Workers carried new iron plates to set up new corridors at the collapsed sections. The mechanical arms moved back and forth ceaselessly, appearing unstoppable.

At such times, the wavering crossroads located in the Upper Section of the Great Rift seemingly face an apocalypse. Dampness and coldness fill every corner, and rainwater repeatedly pours down, relentlessly battering this bizarre architectural cluster that sits on the ravine cliff.

This eerie and grotesque cluster of buildings is immediately viewed as a spectacle of sinister art by all who first lay eyes on it. After marveling at this wild-growing architectural cluster, people lament its fate—such a structure will inevitably collapse one day.

Yet those living in the wavering crossroads don't think this way. Under the continuous rainstorm, the architectural cluster shakes incessantly, and the surrounding cliffs grow increasingly steep. But no matter the collapse, people firmly believe this destruction will not befall this place.

"Tyrant, the great Tyrant..."

After the storm, people flock to the streets, praising the misty air and then waving their hands as they throw countless Mammon Coins into the fog.

This is a blessed land, where only its shadows are willing to accept them like rats, accepting anyone as long as you can create corresponding value.

The door of the Spider Bar was pushed open forcefully, and a bedraggled figure walked in, drenched. His face was pale from blood loss and exhausted.

No one paid attention to this figure, and no one worried this man would cause any chaos. Such people are common in the wavering crossroads, and while everyone fights fiercely outside, they would sheath their weapons upon entering the bar.

This is considered an unspoken rule—no one makes a move inside the Spider Bar. And the Spider Bar is like a service center: need weapons? They'll sell weapons; need information? They'll provide information; need a doctor? They'll find you one.

"I need a doctor..."

Gray came to the bar counter, barely managing to prop himself up.

Before arriving at Opus, he had learned enough about the Great Rift. Once discovered by the Order Bureau, the Great Rift was the only place that could shelter him. For this reason, he had memorized the rules of the wavering crossroads, knowing it's the sole place to find a life-saving doctor.

Vika sized him up, glancing down at the cold steel.

"It's been a long time since I've seen a customer like you," Vika set down the polished glass, her voice gentle, "but rest assured, the wavering crossroads does not turn away any guests."

"Enough with the talking."

Gray took out some blood-stained Mammon Coins from his pocket and slapped them onto the bar counter.

For some reason, at this moment, an elusive glow floated on the Mammon Coins—something Gray hadn't seen before. Then, he recalled the intelligence regarding Mammon Coins.

The Alchemists of the King's Secret Sword had conducted extensive research on Mammon Coins. While these coins were within Opus, they were endowed with peculiar and unfathomable powers, yet once outside Opus, they reverted to ordinary metal.

Now, that enigmatic power was once again bestowed upon the metal.

"These Mammon Coins cannot heal your wounds," Vika said, refusing to take them.

"Then am I left to die?"

Gray's eyes were bloodshot as he clenched his fists, drawing the attention of those around—like watching a show, considering it had been years since anyone had made a move within the Spider Bar.

"An absolute fair trade between value and value."

Vika's voice was cold, and amidst Gray's desperation, she spoke again.

"Fortunately, I happen to know a doctor who doesn't need payment in Mammon Coins."

"Then what does he need?"

"No matter what he needs, you have no reason to refuse, do you?" Vika replied indifferently.

Gray fell silent, recalling Jia Meng's betrayal and his own perilous situation. He understood that, as Vika said, he had no reason to refuse.

"Please wait at the back for a moment. The doctor will arrive shortly."

Vika spoke while offering Gray a drink, a glass filled with a blood-red liquid, unsettling.

Seeing Gray hesitated for a few seconds, Vika continued, "This is free. It might help you feel better; I don't want customers dying in the shop."

Hearing this, Gray picked up the drink. Having fallen into this desperate state, he had nothing to lose.

He downed the drink in one go, a burning sensation scorched through his throat as if swallowing a fireball, but soon, his cold body started warming up, gaining a touch of color.

Vika stepped out from behind the bar, gesturing Gray towards a direction.

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In a dark room, the doctor didn't make Gray wait long. Soon the door opened, and a figure wearing a black cloak entered, a white doll mask covering his face, wordlessly approaching Gray.

"You're the doctor?" Gray asked.

The doctor did not respond. He opened a briefcase filled with surgical tools and bottles of varying colors.

"No anesthesia. This will hurt."

The doctor spoke, his voice nearly neutral, making Gray unable to discern his gender.

"You..."

Gray wanted to say something more, but the doctor picked up a syringe and stabbed it into his thigh, not caring about the force; Gray felt as if he'd been punched.

With the injection, a more intense pain emerged, spreading throughout his body.

Gray's body started trembling uncontrollably, sweat pouring, as he clenched his teeth to endure the pain, yet he couldn't help but let out a muted growl.

This pain lasted for a minute before subsiding. Gray felt utterly drained, but his hand still reached for the short knife at his waist.

"What did you inject into me?"

"An alchemy potion, it accelerates blood production and healing temporarily; the side effect is consumption of life force..."

While explaining, the doctor cleaned up Gray's wound, trying to use forceps to extract the bullet from within the flesh.

"But compared to dying now, living a few days less should be more acceptable, right?"

Gray stared intensely at the doctor, who utterly ignored his gaze. After cleaning the wound, the doctor took out sutures and began to stitch it up.

In the silent room, aside from Gray's slightly painful breaths, only the sounds of the doctor's work could be heard.

Apart from the doctor's somewhat bizarre behavior, he was quite diligent thus far. Gray let go of the short knife, allowing the doctor to inject syringe after syringe into his body.

"By the way, why are you afraid of death?"

Suddenly, the doctor asked unexpectedly.

"What?" Gray's consciousness was somewhat drowsy, becoming clearer from the doctor's question.

"Death, why does everyone want to live?"

"Are you kidding?"

Gray looked at him with suspicion. A doctor who deals with life and death asked such a question; however you think about it, it feels strange.

"I'm not joking; I really want to understand this. Why do you want to continue living?" The doctor's voice remained blurred and neutral, devoid of emotion.

"Does living require a reason?"

Gray was confused. He'd long heard that the Path of Wandering Crossroads was a peculiar chaotic place, and now it seemed true. Even doctors here were strangely odd.

"From your condition, you were injured and struggled to get here."

The doctor caressed Gray's arms full of abrasions; the black hand felt devoid of human warmth, only metallic coldness. Gray felt as if he were being touched by ice.

"Coming all this way was tough, right? What supported you through it, rather than choosing to die there?"

Gray did not speak; betrayal and death flashed before him, amidst the clamor of shouting, only fiery anger burned.

"If you don't want to say, that's fine."

The doctor didn't continue to press. He had asked many, receiving many different answers; Gray's answer wasn't particularly important.

"You're all set. Inject once daily, and about a week should see you healed, then you can stay here temporarily until you're well. As for the rent, I've taken care of it."

This doctor was unexpectedly considerate, quickly shattering Gray's initial perception of the Path of Wandering Crossroads' people. But he wasn't happy for long, instead asked.

"What kind of price should I pay?"

Gray remembered the rules of the Path of Wandering Crossroads: value-for-value equal transaction. Under the constraints of such rules, the people of this dark, chaotic place surprisingly adhered to promises.

"I need you to retrieve something for me; I will notify you when the time comes."

"You're not afraid I'll escape once I'm healed?"

Gray stared at the white doll mask, attempting to see through it and catch a glimpse of the face beneath. The doctor said nothing, just stood dazedly.

The two maintained a silent stare for a lengthy time, finally ending when Gray averted his eyes. The feeling of confronting the doctor was terrible, akin to gazing upon a corpse.

"How should I address you?" Gray asked.

"Delusional."

The Delusional paid little attention to Gray. He didn't even ask Gray's name before directly leaving, leaving Gray alone again in the dark room.

In the dim shadows, Gray gazed at the tightly closed door, his resolutely strong face twisted by pain. He breathed heavily like one drowning, sweat dripping to the floor, forming a moist patch.

Uncertain how much time passed, Gray finally recovered from the pain and fatigue, the Delusional's words endlessly swirling in his mind.

"A reason to live?" Gray murmured to himself.

Extending his hand, he grasped the cold metal, his trembling hand caressing the icy blade—this was Milasha's Secret Sword.

Gray melded into the darkness; wicked, hateful voices lingered in the shadows.

"Jia Meng..."