

Endless 60

Chapter 60: Hilbert's Hotel

Unlike the deep and cold darkness outside, upon stepping through the wooden door, Lebius felt a warmth from inside out. When his vision cleared, he found himself standing in a corridor, with the slowly closing wooden door behind him.

The world behind the door was not some perilous Hell, but a sun-filled inn, familiar to Lebius, just as he remembered.

The inn's front desk was unoccupied, only a record player was there, the vinyl spinning, playing that song which never ceased.

Facing the front desk was the inn's main door, a set of glass doors. Lebius couldn't see the outside world, only the infinite, cozy daylight that streamed through the door, evenly washing over him, dispelling the chill.

"Mother! Warn your child, do not repeat my mistakes."

In the empty inn, this song played; it wasn't loud, rather it echoed faintly, whispering in his ear.

Lebius walked past the front desk, heading towards another corridor, lined with rows of rooms, their doors tightly shut with not a sliver of space.

In the corner, there were potted plants and an upright mop, still wet, as if the cleaning staff was nearby, not far away.

Everything was warm, and even the air felt cozy, through the light, you could even see the dust drifting around.

As he walked on the red carpet, Lebius continued, but the corridor felt so endless, gradually, a sense of illusion rose within him that he would never reach the end.

He was always physically strong, even with a cane, but now Lebius felt utterly exhausted, as if he might collapse any moment.

Along the way, he could hear chaotic noises emanating from the tightly shut rooms.

The beasts' panting, the monsters' chewing, men and women's whispering, loud curses, plots being discussed, the future being schemed...

It seemed that all sorts of people were packed into the inn, as crowded as could be.

Lebius knew how large this inn was, it could be described as endless, like Hilbert's Hotel in a mathematical paradox, where there was always a room available for new guests.

No one knew exactly how many people lived here, only the infinitely extending room numbers were known.

Then... as he passed a certain room, Lebius heard a familiar voice.

"There are no other options, we must resort to this... by any means necessary."

The words were like a malicious curse, piercing his ears.

In an instant, it was as if sharp bone nails were driven through his body, pinning Lebius's joints completely in place; he stood rigid, eyes fixed, then like fleeing from a nightmare, he stubbornly pushed his cane, dragging his iron-stone-like legs, forging forward relentlessly.

He dared not listen, nor look at that door, his only thought was to move forward.

But that person continued to murmur, the voice clearly penetrating the door, echoing by his ear, as if he was eternally trapped in this day, trapped in that room.

"By any means necessary... by any means necessary..."

The voice struck Lebius's heart, almost crushing it to pieces.

Lebius recognized the voice; even turned to ash by fire, scattered into a deep, cold sea, he would never forget that voice.

It was his own voice, the voice of Lebius Lovisa...

The ghostly song pursued him.

The person sang.

"My life is filled with misfortune and sin."

For Lebius, this warm and beautiful inn was indeed a mad Hell.

No... for everyone, this place was Hell; they just didn't know it yet.

As if fleeing for his life, he reached the corridor's end; it was a fork, where two hallways extended into unknown ends, and between them was a white door. Lebius knew he eventually came here.

He pushed open the door, the room inside was dimly lit. After a brief moment of blur, Lebius saw the interior clearly.

This was a cinema, with a movie being projected onto a huge screen; in the movie, people were conversing, preparing guns and ammunition for the final battle.

Rows of seats were arranged under the screen, but there was not a single audience member; looking towards the middle section, there was just a hint of silhouette, the person sat among the audience, and behind was an old-fashioned projector, placed in the aisle were dark cases, piled together like a small mountain.

Lebius, leaning on his cane, stepped over the scattered dark cases, his eyes scanning over them, the names were written on the shells.

They weren't movie titles, but names of people.

Some dark cases were already damaged, with film loose like innards spilling out, swaying like rolling seaweed.

Looking around, Lebius then realized that this cinema was larger than he imagined, the surrounding darkness seemed endless, as were the stacks of dark cases, constantly rising, ascending into the darkness.

"Yo, Lebius, long time no see."

The person noticed Lebius, turned his head, and waved excitedly at him.

The man wore pale blue pajamas, his face a bit blurred; Lebius couldn't make out his features, forcing focus would only result in countless faces flickering, never settling.