

## Global Collapse

*Chapter 10: Chapter 10: Launch of Big Data Technique\_1*

"Dr. Gu!"

Gu Mian watched as Fatty, his cheeks streaked with tears, ran over, intending to land yet another lethal blow on him.

Fortunately, he had been prepared and quickly sidestepped.

In the dimly lit dorm, Chu Changge stared at the immobile humanoid figure by the door. "You just now..."

Gu Mian set down the chair in his hand. "I just saw it pressed up against the door, the back of its head facing me. I felt a sudden itch... and then..."

Fatty's crying abruptly stopped. "You felt an itch, and then it ended up like this?"

Gu Mian nodded. That was more or less what happened.

Seeing Gu Mian nod, Fatty excitedly rubbed his hands together. "These ghosts are actually afraid of physical attacks?"

"You'd better not try," Chu Changge shook his head. "They're probably only afraid of Gu Mian's physical attacks."

Fatty was completely bewildered, not quite understanding.

Gu Mian didn't plan to elaborate on that. He looked at the two of them. "Why did you come up on your own without waiting for me?"

The fourth floor was very quiet.

He had clearly watched those students enter the dormitory building, but when he came over in the evening, it was completely empty. He wondered where they had gone.

"We ran into a bit of trouble. We'll explain later. Let's look at the clues first," Chu Changge said, taking out an item. "We just found this. We didn't get a chance to look at it before we were cornered by a ghost."

Gu Mian looked down. It was a yellow-covered notebook, seemingly soaked in water. A few large characters were printed on it—

"Class Diary"

"Class Adviser- Zhang Ping"

He took it and flipped to the first page.

The date section had been soaked through, and the original writing was illegible. Luckily, the main content was still intact.

"I've noticed that everyone seems to be secretly bullying Yanan in the warehouse. When I get the chance, I must have a good talk with everyone."

That was the only line on the first page.

Just as Gu Mian was about to flip to the second page, his panel suddenly popped up.

[Side task initiated. From this moment, you must survive in this instance for another five hours. If the side task is not completed, you cannot exit the instance.]

[Side task reward: One lottery draw.]

*What the hell!* Gu Mian paused for a moment.

*I've only heard of not being able to leave an instance if the main task isn't completed, but never if a side task isn't completed.*

He knew this game often made things difficult for him. For such a side task to appear now, there was only one explanation.

"The truth might be about to surface," Gu Mian said. "Get ready."

Chu Changge and Fatty both gave him a strange look. Apparently, they hadn't received any miraculous side tasks.

Gu Mian rubbed his forehead. "I suppose they think letting me leave so easily isn't an option. The instance wants me to stay here for five more hours."

As he spoke, he flipped to the second page.

"I've had a good talk with everyone. The students promised they'd be good friends with Lin Yanan from now on. What a relief."

He flipped the page once more.

"Lin Yanan said she has something to tell everyone tonight. She's asked everyone to wait for her in the warehouse. It's time for everyone to apologize to her there."

The next page was no longer black words on white paper. Instead, large, blood-red letters sprawled across the entire page.

"I was wrong!"

"I was wrong!"

"I was wrong!"

After that, the pages were blank.

Gu Mian was silent for a moment.

"With these, we should be able to figure out the truth," he said, pulling a photograph from his white coat, along with the white paper with red writing taken from Zixin Bingling's corpse.

The photograph showed the contents of a book, with half a page missing and an image of a talisman on it.

The paper was the one Zixin Bingling had previously looked at.

The two beside him silently looked at the items in Gu Mian's hand.

With these pieces, all the mysteries were unraveled, and their conjectures were no longer groundless.

Lin Yanan was bullied by everyone. Later, she snapped, used the teacher to trick everyone into the warehouse, and then set it on fire, killing them all.

The twenty-eight vengeful spirits returned for revenge, murdered Lin Yanan, affixed a talisman on her to confine her, hid her somewhere, and continued their torment.

These students weren't in the dormitory at night; presumably, they were out looking for Lin Yanan.

Without Gu Mian needing to say more, Chu Changge and Fatty could piece all the clues together.

The bodies of the two flickered like static on a screen and were about to disappear, while Gu Mian still stood solidly in place.

Fatty reached out, seemingly wanting to pull Gu Mian along, but he vanished before he could make contact.

All that remained in the air was Chu Changge's warning, "Be careful."

There were still five hours before he could leave the instance. He looked again at the picture of the talisman in his hand.

The first line read: "Fiendish Ghost Nurturing Soul Spell."

The middle part explained that if this talisman was affixed to a corpse, the spirit would be suppressed and unable to move too far from it.

And the last line read, "Remember, after ten years this talisman will..."

Although Gu Mian's language skills weren't the best, he could deduce the rest from the context.

*The rest probably says that after ten years, the talisman can no longer suppress the Evil Ghost. And since this is a soul-nurturing spell, confinement is only a side effect. The Evil Ghost will become even more terrifying after ten years of nurturing.*

He remembered the notice posted outside the school stated that the fire occurred on the evening of November 26th, 2008, which meant Lin Yanan must have died around that night as well.

And today, the electronic clock he saw on the office desk showed November 26th, 2018.

*At some point soon, it will be exactly ten years.*

The instance delayed him for five hours, just to make him wait for this tenth year.

When the Evil Ghost awakened, the instance would become an even more terrifying place. It was originally rated three and a half stars; he wondered what horrifying level of difficulty it would reach after the transformation.

*The instance is really going to great lengths to kill me.* Gu Mian sighed.

As he was sighing, a pair of very familiar sneakers suddenly appeared in front of him.

Gu Mian looked up to see a female teacher with a ponytail. Her round face should have looked very cheerful, but now it was filled with distress.

"Zhang Ping?" Gu Mian rubbed his chin.

The female teacher nodded. "Mmm..."

She was the only innocent person in that incident years ago, exploited by Lin Yanan to kill the other twenty-eight people.

Seemingly sensing Gu Mian's thoughts, Zhang Ping bent slightly, her hands covering her face tightly. "No... I'm not innocent..."

"If only I had noticed something was wrong with Yanan sooner, if only I had stopped them earlier, if only I hadn't treated this as a trivial matter back then, if only I had cleared up the misunderstandings in time... If only..."

"Why couldn't they discuss things with their teacher?"

She lowered her head, her voice choking up as she spoke.

"All these years I could've left, I could have departed, but I stayed here, wanting to find her, wanting to take her away with me."

"I told her that no matter what happened, her teacher would always protect her, but I failed."

Gu Mian saw tears mixed with snot streaming from between the teacher's fingers.

"I want to save her, but I don't even know where she is." She trembled. "I know she's hidden somewhere."

"I can only keep searching desperately here, searching and searching, but I can't find her at all."

"Find her body, remove the spell from her, and then she can leave."

"Every night, I can hear screams coming from the classroom building, but I can't get into that building. I've tried throwing stones, banging my head against it, but it won't open."

"All I can do is stand outside and listen as that child, who once trusted and relied on me so much, is tormented."

"She must think her teacher has abandoned her, right? But I haven't..."

"Her teacher has always been here..."

Gu Mian looked at Zhang Ping, who was now crouching on the ground. He considered for a moment, then stepped forward and helped her up.

"For my safety, for your safety, and for Lin Yanan's safety, come with me to the academic building."

Zhang Ping looked up, stunned. "But I can't get in..."

"We'll figure it out when we get there."

