

Global Collapse

Chapter 13: Chapter 13: Uh oh, done for!_1

Holding this roll of paper towels that could become something unusual, Gu Mian fell into deep thought.

He didn't think for long before reaching out and tossing the roll of paper towels into the nearby trash can.

Although the world isn't exactly normal right now, I'm still a normal person. What would it look like, running around the streets with a roll of paper towels?

He pondered this as he looked at the panel again.

The Friends List feature was now active, allowing him to add friends. This indicated that the global player death count had reached one billion.

Looking at the panel, Gu Mian thought for a moment. His phone was unusable, so he typed three characters—Chu Changge—into the player search page.

[Do you want to add this player as a friend?]

Gu Mian chose yes.

He had initially thought he would have to wait for a response, but the other party accepted almost immediately.

Then, the other person sent a message: "Are you out? I'm near your hospital, by a ticket booth. Where are you?"

A ticket booth near Lianhua Hospital? That should be close.

Gu Mian looked around. There were only two ticket booths nearby. One had a sign that read "Gu Mian and dogs not allowed," and he was the only player there.

The other, however, was jam-packed. Focusing his gaze there, he indeed spotted a familiar pair of glasses in the crowd.

The two companions in misfortune finally reunited.

Upon meeting, Chu Changge immediately asked him, "What's your plan now?"

Gu Mian had told him that he could actually die in the instances. Chu Changge hadn't said anything at the time, probably thinking the instance wasn't the place for such a discussion.

Now that they were out, Chu Changge immediately began to ask about Gu Mian's plans.

As someone targeted by the world, Gu Mian wasn't safe in instances or in reality.

This global game seemed practically designed for Gu Mian's assassination, so preparations were essential.

"I expect everyone from the hospital has gone home by now. I plan to head back to my apartment. You?" Gu Mian tugged at his white lab coat.

The streets were chaotic, making a return to work unrealistic.

"I'll go with you," Chu Changge said. "We can discuss what to do next. We can't go on like before, and it's safer if we stick together."

Indeed, it was safer to stick together at this moment.

However, who one stuck with mattered. If it was someone like Gu Mian... one might get caught in the crossfire.

But Chu Changege was also quite fortunate. Every time he'd been in an accident with Gu Mian, he had always survived. The worst that had ever happened was a broken leg.

Having reached an agreement, they prepared to head back.

But as Gu Mian turned, his peripheral vision caught a portly man suddenly rushing out from the nearby ticket booth.

Fatty had also been at Lianhua Hospital when the game started, so it wasn't surprising that he was pulled into this ticket booth.

Gu Mian was simply curious why Fatty, who had finished his instance much earlier, had taken so long to emerge.

It was now approaching dusk, and darkness would soon fall.

As the sun set, Fatty anxiously explained, "After the instance ended, I... I opened my eyes, and everything was dark. I was afraid I hadn't actually left the instance, so I didn't dare move..."

"It wasn't until I couldn't stand it anymore that I started fumbling around. I found a door and figured it must be the portal that sent us into the instance. I

gave it a hard push, and just as I opened a crack, I saw you two about to leave."

Hearing this, Gu Mian thoughtfully touched his chin. *When I finished my instance, I appeared directly outside. Was it because the instance crashed?*

Fatty, still rubbing his hands hesitantly, said, "I want to go home first. I think we're headed in the same direction. Can I join you?"

Bringing Fatty along wasn't a big deal, so Gu Mian nodded.

Driving was out of the question.

The streets were littered with wrecked cars, and occasionally, one could spot overturned buses.

The roadside greenery had been devastated, flattened by errant cars, resembling the aftermath of a typhoon.

Some players were rushing home, only to be blocked by uprooted trees or wrecked cars, forcing them to clamber over.

New Year's Day had brought cooler weather.

Occasional gusts of cold wind made Fatty shiver.

The trio made their way down the chaotic road.

With nothing better to do, Gu Mian asked Chu Changge, who was beside him, "What were your rewards from the last instance?"

"Attribute Points, Game Coins, and a lottery draw," he answered succinctly.

Seems like everyone got the same rewards.

Gu Mian grew curious again. "So, what did you get from the draw?"

"A rusty fruit knife." A small knife appeared in Chu Changge's hand as if by magic. "It probably can't peel fruit anymore."

Gu Mian suddenly stopped in his tracks.

The other two looked at him in confusion.

Gu Mian stared at the rusty fruit knife that had appeared out of thin air, a bad feeling rising in him. "This knife... how did you make it appear?"

Chu Changge's glasses glinted. "Don't tell me you don't have an inventory."

He really didn't! How many features has this game stripped from me!

Fortunately, he'd been dealing with life's curveballs since childhood, so he was used to such surprises.

He was only momentarily shocked before accepting reality.

Life always found new ways to hit him unexpectedly.

Fatty was a chatterbox. His rambling talk quickly drew Gu Mian's attention.

"Seriously, you guys will never guess what I drew!"

Gu Mian looked at him with some curiosity.

The streets were eerily silent. Passersby were either fleeing in panic or ashen-faced with terror. Very few could still chatter away like Fatty.

"A groundhog, alive!"

"The description even said 'edible'! Absolutely ruthless."

It really was a lottery system that could give you anything. I even suspect that one day I might pull my missing parents out of the spin wheel.

"Speaking of which," Fatty turned to Gu Mian, "Dr. Gu, do you live near Lianhua City?"

Gu Mian nodded.

"Are your parents also here?"

"No," Gu Mian shook his head. "To tell you the truth, I don't think I have parents. Perhaps they realized I was destined to be a protagonist, got scared, and ran off, abandoning me."

Parents of protagonists were once the most high-risk profession in Qidian novels.

A great author once asserted that if all the parents who'd died in Qidian novels held hands, they could encircle the Earth.

Seeming to realize he'd misspoken, Fatty clammed up and stopped asking about Gu Mian's parents.

Gu Mian lived in an apartment quite far from Lianhua Hospital.

The apartment's name was the Passing Inn. No matter how you looked at it, it sounded like some kind of underworld establishment, but it was quiet.

It took the three of them over half an hour to walk there.

Gu Mian turned to Fatty, who was panting heavily beside him, "It makes sense for Chu Changge to come along; he lives nearby. But why are you following us?"

Fatty pleaded, "I live quite far... it's nearly an hour by car..."

And with the roads like this, driving is impossible anyway.

Gu Mian rubbed his temples. "Fine, stay if you want."

After all, my apartment is more than spacious enough for three people.

This was an old, seven-story apartment building. Though dated, it was very clean.

Just inside the entrance was an antique solid wood counter. The landlord usually lounged lazily in a wicker chair behind it, but he wasn't there today.

The landlord was probably in an instance now too.

Gu Mian lived on the sixth floor. There was no elevator, so the three of them climbed the stairs.

His security door was a bit more upscale than those of the other tenants; Gu Mian had paid to upgrade it himself.

Once they entered, Fatty marveled at the room, "Dr. Gu, your apartment is so big! You live in a two-bedroom place all by yourself?"

He originally had a roommate, but they'd since moved out.

Gu Mian couldn't be bothered to find a new place and had simply stayed on.

The living room was simple, with a gray-and-black solid wood table in the center, and a dark-colored sofa partially encircling it.

Opposite the sofa was a television. Gu Mian picked up the remote and turned it on.

It was tuned to CCTV.

But the screen was now almost entirely static, with images struggling to break through intermittently—

"BZZT—Please..."

"Worry... BZZT—Safe, try not to..."

Damn, it's completely out!

Phone signals are jammed, and TV signals are on the verge of collapse.