

Imitator 42

Chapter 42: Running Oneself Ragged

Gao Zhankui, with his fierce face, glared at Ding Wenqiang, his eyes carrying some mockery, seeming somewhat defiant.

"I don't want to say it a second time!"

Ding Wenqiang, obviously somewhat irritable, raised his scepter and pointed it at Gao Zhankui.

Gao Zhankui reluctantly walked toward the first prison cell.

Zhang Peng followed closely behind, while Cai Zhiyuan was supported by Wang Yongxin as they brought up the rear.

After walking a short distance, everyone arrived at the first prison cell within the official venue.

There were six prison cells in total, roughly arranged in a circular layout, with only a gap left at the passage where everyone had entered. The big screen and the glass cabinet storing the videotapes were surrounded in the center position.

From its appearance, it was undoubtedly a prison cell, about ten-plus square meters in area, with iron bars and a cell door.

At the prison cell entrance was also a screen displaying the game introduction for this cell.

[Cell No. 1: Running Oneself Ragged]

[The criminal is forced to push a crossbar. Each complete rotation earns 10 minutes of visa time. If they stop, they will receive electric shock punishment.]

[During multiple games, the electric shock intensity will increase progressively.]

Everyone then looked at the adjacent cell.

[Cell No. 2: Hanging from a Lamppost]

[The criminal is suspended by a noose. When standing on tiptoes, both feet will not be completely suspended. Each minute earns 1000 minutes of visa time. After 10 minutes, the mechanism automatically releases.]

[During multiple games, the game duration increases by 5 minutes.]

Additionally, there were Cells 3, 4, 5, and 6 further away, but these cells were currently still in an unlocked state, with no game explanation information on their screens.

According to the game rules, after a prisoner entered any one of Cells 1 or 2, Cell 3 would be unlocked.

The cell doors stood open, like monsters with gaping mouths, waiting for willing victims to take the bait.

Besides this, there was a line of prominent reminder information.

[Completed judgment count: 0/10]

Ding Wenqiang's gaze swept across the faces of the other four people. Obviously, now someone unlucky needed to enter any one cell before the third cell would unlock.

Finally, he fixed his gaze on Gao Zhankui.

Ding Wenqiang currently had no clear ideas, but Wang Yongxin and Cai Zhiyuan were both players from Community 17 after all. Everyone would see each other regularly, so naturally there was a distinction of closeness compared to the other two.

More importantly, in the previous Farmer Walking game, Ding Wenqiang more or less also felt some guilt toward Wang Yongxin and Cai Zhiyuan.

Zhang Peng had little presence, so this first unlucky person could only be Gao Zhankui.

From the very beginning, Ding Wenqiang's impression of him had been extremely poor.

Moreover, Gao Zhankui had just tried to steal the identity.

"You, go in," Ding Wenqiang said with a cold face.

Gao Zhankui glared with wide eyes, looking completely defiant, but seeing the scepter in Ding Wenqiang's hand, he ultimately swallowed back the words at the edge of his mouth.

The game rules were crystal clear: within the game rules, Ding Wenqiang could make any demands of the four of them, and they could not disobey.

Otherwise, Ding Wenqiang could completely use the scepter to keep electrocuting him to death.

However, just as Gao Zhankui was considering with a dark expression which cell would be better to enter, a weak voice sounded.

"Uncle Ding, wait a moment. I think I should enter the first cell."

Ding Wenqiang was stunned for a moment, turned his head to look, and saw it was Cai Zhiyuan, who was being supported by Wang Yongxin, speaking.

Cai Zhiyuan at this time was still in a disheveled state, but fortunately the wounds on his body had mostly stopped bleeding and were gradually scabbing over, and his spirits were much better.

"You rest first," Ding Wenqiang shook his head slightly.

Obviously, the games in these two cells, or rather the punishments, had certain physical requirements.

And Cai Zhiyuan's current physical condition was worrying. Ding Wenqiang was also afraid that after he went in, he might die inside before completing the game.

Cai Zhiyuan shook his head, "Uncle Ding, haven't you noticed yet? The games in these cells aren't randomly arranged, but have certain meanings. The game rules also said you want us to accept 'fair judgment,' meaning the game content should relate to our crimes."

He pointed at the first cell, "Running oneself ragged, isn't this the fate of workhorses?"

Wang Yongxin was silent for a moment, "But... this doesn't seem to relate to so-called crimes either, right? What do you think your crime is?"

Cai Zhiyuan sighed, "How would I know! I'm just a law-abiding programmer. When I order takeout, I even say thank you to the delivery workers. Every day I work 996 hours until I go home and collapse into bed. What crime could I have committed? If I had to say something, I work on big data algorithms, using virtual algorithms to pen up many bottom-level workers like me, dangling a carrot in front of them,

making them pull the millstone tirelessly. Now I'm locked in such a cage, pulling the millstone non-stop for pitiful rewards, which could be considered getting what I deserve."

Ding Wenqiang looked at him silently for a moment, "Whether you deserve it or not, we'll know after watching the videotape."

As he spoke, Ding Wenqiang returned to the center position of the scene again.

Although Cai Zhiyuan claimed he was just a law-abiding programmer, obviously no one would completely believe such words.

After all, these five people were sinners selected by the Gallery, and no one was absolutely innocent.

Ding Wenqiang pressed the button in front of Cai Zhiyuan's videotape. With a "pop," the glass cover opened and the videotape popped out.

He picked up Cai Zhiyuan's videotape and inserted it into the video recorder.

[As an excellent programmer, you are very proficient in various algorithms and also skilled at using programs to optimize human behavior and calculate human value.]

[The layoff program you developed caused countless people to be laid off at age 35, losing their jobs that supported their families.]

[The route algorithm program you developed continuously exploited delivery workers' limits, making them run themselves ragged just to earn meager compensation.]

[From the very beginning, you were very clear about what results the algorithm would lead to, but you still used countless days and nights to continuously iterate and improve, making it reach what you considered "perfect."]

[You tried hard not to feel too much guilt, repeatedly telling yourself that you only developed tools, sharp kitchen knives, and those who used them to kill were the evil bosses.]

[You said this was just an ordinary job, you were just completing your assigned duties.]

[But deep in your heart you knew clearly, this was just self-deception, you were an accomplice to evil.]

[If one day you also fell into a deadly net, would you be able to calmly accept the consequences?]

In the footage, Cai Zhiyuan worked day and night in front of the computer, but from the excited and happy expressions on his face each time a program iteration update was completed, his heart was full of pride and satisfaction.

Then the videotape content ended, and Cai Zhiyuan's file appeared on the big screen.

[Cai Zhiyuan, Male, 28 years old.]

[Occupation: Algorithm programmer.]

[Mainly responsible for artificial intelligence, big data, and algorithm development. Led the development of the "Hundred Cities Connect" food delivery system adopted by multiple food delivery companies.]

[Judgment result: Not yet judged.]

Ding Wenqiang was silent for a moment, then pressed the buttons for Wang Yongxin and Gao Zhankui.

But unfortunately, both buttons were in an unpressable state.

[After conducting 1 more judgment, any two videotapes can be unlocked.]

Ding Wenqiang hesitated for a moment, but ultimately still looked toward Cai Zhiyuan.

"You go ahead."