

Imitator 55

Chapter 55: Cao Haichuan's Suspicions

Evening.

After the discussion ended, most people returned to their rooms.

This was the first death to occur in Community 17, casting a shadow over everyone's hearts.

Lin Sizhi came to the outdoor area of the community. In the darkness, a spark flickered intermittently, that was Cao Haichuan smoking.

"Lawyer Lin, want one?" Cao Haichuan offered him a cigarette.

Lin Sizhi sat down on a nearby outdoor single-person sofa and waved his hand, "Thanks, I don't smoke."

Cao Haichuan sighed, "Well, fewer and fewer young people smoke these days.

"Uncle Ding was the only one who occasionally kept me company for a smoke or two, now it's just me.

"It's good that you don't smoke, smoking is harmful to health."

As Cao Haichuan spoke, he took another deep drag, tilted his head slightly away from Lin Sizhi's direction, and exhaled a puff of smoke.

"Hah..."

He looked at the high walls at the edge of the community, "I've been thinking, what would happen if we climbed over the wall and ran to another community?"

After initially entering the community, the entire building complex had entered a closed state and could not be left.

Until now, all the players in Community 17 could only move around in this small building and the surrounding outdoor areas.

Lin Sizhi thought for a moment, "I think it's best not to court death.

"The New World seems to enforce different standards for players and God's Imitators.

"For players, it's 'what is not permitted is forbidden.'

"For God's Imitators, it's 'what is not forbidden is allowed.'

"So I guess climbing walls would at best result in deducted visa time, at worst direct deportation."

Cao Haichuan nodded slightly, "Ha, true."

"Actually just now, I was really a bit afraid. If Aunt Su had questioned me about why I couldn't save Uncle Ding, I wouldn't have known how to answer."

"I can probably understand why Aunt Su was so agitated: not only because this was the first death in the community, but also because Uncle Ding was Aunt Su's only peer in this community."

"From the beginning, Aunt Su held unrealistic fantasies, thinking the so-called New World was a paradise where everyone was equal, but that was obviously just her wishful thinking."

"When death of someone close actually appears, she instinctively resists, and this resistance becomes a kind of aggression toward the outside world."

"Moreover, although Aunt Su and Uncle Ding hadn't known each other long, Uncle Ding was her only peer in this community, and also the only person whose lifestyle, way of thinking, and background were relatively similar to hers."

"In Aunt Su's concept of closeness and distance, Uncle Ding's relationship with her was closer than any of ours. With Uncle Ding dead, it means that from now on she will definitely become a 'lonely old person' in this community, and no matter how hard she tries, it will be impossible for her to integrate among you young people."

"So her feeling of 'when the rabbit dies, the fox grieves' for Uncle Ding is much stronger than any of ours."

Lin Sizhi was silent for a moment, then asked, "What about you, Officer Cao? Can you integrate?"

Cao Haichuan smiled, "I'm doing okay, I still have a somewhat youthful mindset. Besides, I'm different from Aunt Su.

"Aunt Su is retired and has no spiritual sustenance. When people are idle, they overthink, and that makes them prone to extremism.

"But I'm not retired, I still need to find things to do for myself.

"Lawyer Lin, do you think that since God's Imitators will keep designing games to kill players, is it possible for us to root out these God's Imitators?"

Lin Sizhi thought for a moment, "That would probably be very difficult.

"God's Imitators aren't like real-world criminals who need to personally set up crime scenes. They only need to complete the game design, and everything else seems to be handled by the Gallery.

"This kind of armchair crime, I can't think of any way to solve it."

Cao Haichuan remained noncommittal, "Lawyer Lin, do you know what kind of cases are hardest to solve in reality?"

Lin Sizhi lowered his head in thought, "Incitement to murder? High-IQ perfect crimes?"

"But with technology so advanced now, chat records can be checked easily, surveillance footage can be viewed at will, so these two types of cases should be much easier to solve, right?"

Cao Haichuan shook his head slightly, "Those two are indeed hard to solve, but they're not the hardest."

"The hardest are actually motiveless indiscriminate killings."

"Because whether it's incitement to murder or so-called high-IQ perfect crimes, there's still a motive. As long as there's a motive, you can follow the trail and lock onto suspects."

"Once suspects are identified, no matter how clever they are, solving the case isn't far off."

"But indiscriminate killing is different. Because there's no motive, identifying suspects is like finding a needle in a haystack, completely without leads."

"Of course, if indiscriminate killing is combined with incitement to murder, or combined with high-IQ perfect crime, then that's trouble. Often those cases aren't even discovered, we usually call them 'disappearances.'"

Lin Sizhi nodded in agreement.

Cao Haichuan continued, "Originally I also thought that God's Imitators killing people was indiscriminate killing, and considering they don't need to set up scenes themselves, the possibility of solving the case was minimal.

"But just now, after thinking it over, I suddenly overturned that idea.

"I suddenly realized that God's Imitators killing people through death games also have motives."

Lin Sizhi thought for a moment, "You mean that when they design games, they also unconsciously reveal their inner thoughts?"

Cao Haichuan exhaled a puff of smoke, "Not just that.

"God's Imitators are also players, also living in the community.

"That means they very likely also participate in games, whether their own or others'.

"If they participate in others' games, that's fair, nothing to say about it.

"But if they actively or passively participate in their own games, to protect themselves, they would definitely leave some kind of backdoor in the game.

"Of course, they might also not participate in their own games.

"But in that case, they would most likely try every means to target players' weaknesses, set traps, kill players, then seize as much visa time as possible.

"After all, whether for players or God's Imitators, visa time is equally important, equivalent to our money and life in this world. No one would think they have too much."

Lin Sizhi considered for a moment, "You mean that if a certain player unreasonably discovers a backdoor in a game, they're very likely the designer of that game.

"This method could be used to identify them as a God's Imitator.

"Or if a certain game shows extremely strong targeting of a particular player, it means the game's designer is very familiar with that player. Perhaps by reverse-searching that player's network of relationships, the range of suspects could be narrowed."

Cao Haichuan nodded approvingly, "Exactly, that's what I mean. You're very smart, Lawyer Lin. If you weren't a lawyer, you'd probably be excellent at criminal investigation too."

Lin Sizhi thought carefully for a moment, "But this is very difficult."

Cao Haichuan smiled somewhat self-mockingly, "Yes, very difficult, just like solving cases is very difficult, but someone has to do it, right?"

"I'm actually a rather dull person, not as smart as you young people. But I have one advantage: my intuition is fairly sharp, and if I can't figure out a problem, I'll keep thinking about it. As long as I persist, I can always work out some clues."

"Take this judgment game for example. I've been thinking it over, and I always feel something isn't quite right."

Cao Haichuan turned to look at Lin Sizhi, "Don't you think this game's targeting of Uncle Ding was a bit too strong?"

"Just like we analyzed before, if we only discuss the game rules, the King actually had great advantages and many chances to survive."

"But Uncle Ding happened to step into every single trap without missing one."

"Just like Wei Xinjian back then.

"Do you think this is really just coincidence?"

Lin Sizhi considered for a moment, "But Uncle Ding's death actually had many complex prerequisites. If any one of these prerequisites hadn't been met, this wouldn't have happened.

"If you think this game was specifically targeting Uncle Ding, that would mean the designer had to control almost all the details, which I don't think is humanly possible.

"For instance, how could the game's designer determine how the audience would vote? And how could they determine which specific cells Uncle Ding would have the prisoners enter?"

Cao Haichuan nodded, "Yes, that's exactly what I thought at first too.

"No one can control everything. If they could, they wouldn't be God's Imitators, but actual gods.

"But between complete inability to control and complete control, there's also the option of partial control.

"Just like the gambling in Blood Poker, no one can guarantee 100% victory, but by doing well in the parts you can control, you can still increase the probability of winning.

"But I digress, back to this problem.

"Why do you think this game designed the 'Farmer's Walk' preliminary game at the beginning?

"No matter how you look at it, doesn't this seem like a screening game custom-made for Uncle Ding to ensure he could become the King?"