

Circle of Inevitability

- Chapter 973: An Unexpected Visitor

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[1,806 words]

When Lumian arrived at the administrative department, several professionals were already there collecting physical evidence for analysis, including but not limited to leftover milk tea, liquid from the water dispenser, discarded takeout containers, vomit, and swabs from computers, desks, and air conditioning vents...

After they finished, another group of specialists began a full disinfection process.

During this time, Luo Shan and the other administrative staff who were still working could only wait in the hallway.

At a glance, Lumian noticed that besides Mr. Ed and Luo Shan, only two people seemed unaffected by the mystical pathogen. Their complexion and movements appeared quite normal.

One was a male, relatively tall by Yangdu standards, standing over six feet. The other was a woman in her thirties, with a round face, slightly overweight, not particularly attractive but not ugly either.

They don't seem to be after Mr. Huang... or rather, not after Mr. Huang's body... Why would Beyonders work diligently in the Intis Group's administrative department? Lumian tried to fathom their intentions based on his own thinking.

Of course, he couldn't be certain that there weren't any Beyonders among those who went to Crimson Moon Hospital. Perhaps there was a Demoness waiting for a chance to have a taste of Mr. Huang, but upon sensing the presence and erosion of the mystical pathogen, she feigned severe symptoms and went to the hospital to avoid being discovered?

Luo Shan also noticed the reportedly handsome security guard and felt he lived up to her expectations.

After a while, Mr. Ed received a phone call.

"The problems aren't serious, and the situation has stabilized?" Mr. Ed asked happily.

Then he heard Zhang Qing on the other end say: "The test results show a mild viral infection. The doctor said they can go home after finishing their IV drips, take medication for two more days, rest a bit, and they'll be fine.

"More than a dozen people have already applied for sick leave, planning to stay home for a couple of days to recover. They're also asking if this counts as a work-related injury and if there's any compensation."

Mr. Ed's temple twitched as he suppressed his emotions and said, "They should rest at home. We can't have them forcing themselves to work and risking more serious problems. As for whether it counts as a work-related injury, ask the legal department when you get back."

"Alright," Zhang Qing said, "But there are also more than a dozen people who say they want to come back to work, however..."

"However what?" Mr. Ed asked.

Zhang Qing replied ambiguously, "They're all the ones who like to dress up, except for Luo Fu."

Even sick beauties were beauties—Mr. Huang might feel sympathetic when he saw them.

Mr. Ed was momentarily speechless.

Is it only the new employees who are eager to work and take their jobs seriously?

Meanwhile, Lumian used the incident in the administrative department as an excuse to keep watch nearby, occasionally offering help.

This was also to guard against Luo Shan being eliminated by the Celestial Worthy's subordinates in the chaos—as a Painter, she had some ability to protect herself, but she clearly lacked experience and could easily let her guard down in crowded situations. Now, with Franca in the hospital, she couldn't rely on Mirror Substitution to escape a first strike.

After Franca returned from Crimson Moon Hospital to help Luo Shan and others deal with the backlog of work, Lumian and Old Xia went back to the security department on the thirteenth floor.

He continued to ponder how to treat An Xiaotian.

He believed that An Xiaotian becoming a vegetable was symbolic, representing the decline and disappearance of Antigonus's spiritual imprint within The Fool's

Uniqueness. This couldn't be reversed through normal methods, so he had to seek a solution from the essence.

Find a way to strengthen Antigonus's spiritual imprint within The Fool's Uniqueness? But Antigonus can't enter Mr. Fool's dream now. Even if He's willing to provide the corresponding items, we'd have to corrupt Zhou Mingrui, the symbol of The Fool's Uniqueness, to achieve our goal. This would damage our image in Zhou Mingrui's mind, wasting all our previous efforts, and it's extremely dangerous.

Franca and Jenna's approach isn't wrong. Using the power of the Great Mother might awaken An Xiaotian, but it's not treatment or having An Xiaotian have a child. It's new birth, symbolically meaning that Antigonus's spiritual imprint within The Fool's Uniqueness is reborn. Whether the reborn An Xiaotian is a friend or foe is hard to say, but he would inevitably interfere with Mr. Fool's awakening...

Sequence 7 Heretic Spellmaster of the Villain pathway can perform rebirth rituals. Theoretically, Great Mother bestowed like Grimm can wake An Xiaotian, but it involves reversing symbolism. I estimate only a rebirth ritual performed by someone with godhood would be effective. In the dream city, Grimm and others believe only I, the fake Child of God, have this, while others don't. Well, there should be another place that has it, the basement of Mushu Hospital, but sending An Xiaotian there would be purely creating an enemy for ourselves...

After pondering for a long time, Lumian felt that both current approaches had significant problems. The hidden dangers and negative impacts far outweighed the gains, and it wasn't something he and his companions would choose.

He began to consider this matter from the perspective of finding loopholes.

Soon, he thought of someone: Li Keji!

Mr. Fool's subconscious understanding of Li Keji's mushrooms should come from Gehrman Sparrow's interactions with Frank Lee.

From what we've seen, he seems to think Li Keji's mushrooms are quite dangerous, with various possibilities, producing some incredible effects.

The essence of this city is a dream, and dreams are idealistic. As long as Mr. Fool truly believes Li Keji's mushrooms can achieve incredible things, Li Keji could create a mushroom to treat An Xiaotian and wake him up!

It's not the mushroom treating An Xiaotian, but Mr. Fool's subconscious being guided to reverse the symbolism.

Of course, that awakening would inevitably be distorted, abnormal, and horrifying, but if An Xiaotian could use this to say everything he wants to warn me, it would be

acceptable... The more Lumian thought about it, the more he felt that using Li Keji might be useful.

He planned to find an opportunity to talk with Li Keji through the door of the hospital room.

The original of this biology teacher was really a Doctor!

...

Jenna, who was observing other incarnations corresponding to Mr. Fool, received a call from Hall Film Company, asking her to head over to the talent department tomorrow to sign a manager contract.

Phew... I have a job now too. Jenna breathed a sigh of relief.

She even looked forward to filming movies and TV dramas but felt that the matter of awakening Mr. Fool wouldn't drag on that long, not until she joined a production.

At the same time, she felt that Hall Film Company was managed quite well. She had thought some interviewer would call in advance, hinting that she needed to do something to have a chance at a good contract.

She was prepared to use Charm to make the relevant personnel lose themselves, but nothing happened.

This was different from some things she had seen and heard at the Theatre de l'Ancienne Cage à Pigeons.

As expected of a film company founded by Madam Justice... Jenna felt relieved.

...

After dark.

Lumian, who knew the target's schedule, took advantage of Zaratulstra's absence from the hotel to cross over from the mirror world and retrieve the surveillance content stored in the pinhole cameras and listening devices.

After midnight, he returned to the rented apartment in Xinhong District and used his phone to play back Zaratulstra's activities in the hotel room.

This wasn't to spy on what Zaratulstra was plotting or planning to accomplish—though that would be a bonus. Lumian's main purpose was to observe Zaratulstra's behavior when alone, to find out how many marionettes he could currently maintain, how often he

summoned Historical Void images, how long these images would dissipate on their own, and other such information.

This was preparation for an upcoming surprise attack and encirclement to kill Zaratulstra.

Although Zaratulstra was also suppressed to Sequence 7, he still had an Angel's rank. Many of his abilities' effects and ranges were somewhat different from a true Sequence 7.

Take the number of marionettes, for example. A normal Marionettist who had just advanced to Sequence 5 could only control one marionette. If restricted to Sequence 7 level, theoretically, they wouldn't be able to control marionettes at all, only using marionettization for killing. But this ability might qualitatively change at Sequence 4 and Sequence 2, reducing spirituality consumption and lowering control difficulty. After that, even if the ability was suppressed to Sequence 7, it would still essentially exist, just with less pronounced effects.

In other words, Zaratulstra could still control marionettes, but the number was very limited—perhaps two, perhaps only one. Lumian now needed to confirm these details.

Without grasping the relevant intelligence, if they directly launched a surprise attack and tried to encircle and kill Zaratulstra, given their superior numbers, they might have some hope of defeating or forcing him to retreat. But achieving their predetermined goal would be almost impossible. The Seer pathway was known for its strong survival abilities!

Lumian stared intently at the phone screen, not missing any detail.

For now, he was skipping through, selecting only scenes with human activity.

When the surveillance video reached 11 pm last night, Lumian saw Zaratulstra, dressed in a black robe, walk to the door and open it.

Someone entered from outside.

The person wore sunglasses even at night, dressed in a black T-shirt and dark jeans that wouldn't attract attention, about six feet tall.

Who could it be? Lumian's focus intensified.

After entering the room, the person looked left and right, then removed the sunglasses perched on their nose, revealing a face quite familiar to Lumian.

He had seen videos of this person being interviewed and participating in certain activities online.

It was Jia Yu, the actor who played Gehrman Sparrow!

He doesn't look too much like Zhou Mingrui, which shouldn't be a problem, so why is he visiting Zaratulstra late at night? What have we missed? Lumian's pupils dilated as he watched more intently.

He was grateful for the technology that provided him with assistance, but also worried that Zaratulstra might have already discovered the presence of the pinhole cameras and listening devices, deliberately staging this scene.

Jia Yu sat down in the sofa area and talked with Zaratulstra for nearly fifteen minutes, then stood up and left.

Lumian quickly stopped playing the surveillance video, deciding to first listen to whether the listening device had recorded any dialog during that time period.

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Chapter 974: Instigation

[1,886 words]

Lumian quickly found the conversation between Zaratulstra and Jia Yu. The gist was that Zaratulstra wanted to poach Jia Yu for a newly established film and television company.

This company would be funded by the restructured Intis Group, which would also help pay the penalty for breaking Jia Yu's contract in the final year.

Additionally, Jia Yu would receive a hefty signing bonus, better contract terms, stronger resources, and endorsement deals with Intis Group's luxury goods company.

Lumian raised an eyebrow as he listened.

You're really discussing business cooperation?

Is this what I wanted to hear?

After Zaratulstra's repeated promises, Jia Yu was clearly tempted, saying he'd consider it and give a final answer in two days.

Lumian looked at his phone, hit pause, and replayed the conversation in his mind.

He turned to Anthony at the side of the table and mused, "Two key points:

"One, Jia Yu, the actor who played Gehrman Sparrow, is still useful. The Celestial Worthy's subordinates value him highly and want to bring him under their control, preparing for certain future developments.

"Two, Zaratulstra doesn't actually have much money. He only has an identity and company woven from dreams, which are outside this city and exist only as rumors. He needs the merger and restructuring with Intis Group to turn them into real money and resources. This can be deduced from the fact that all the benefits promised to Jia Yu can only be delivered after Intis Group funds the establishment of the film company, rather than writing an irresistible check on the spot.

"With Beyonder abilities restricted, the importance of money and resources is greatly amplified. I really want to know who won that unclaimed first prize earlier."

At this point, Lumian's expression turned cold.

"Another point we overlooked before is that once Intis Group completes the restructuring with Zaratulstra's company that's part of the plot background, Zaratulstra will gain access to a large amount of resources and money, which is very unfavorable for us.

"And whether or not Mr. Huang has been eroded and controlled by the mirrored Roselle, this merger will proceed. The only difference is whether Zaratulstra's benefits will be substantial or just average. As long as he's willing to compromise and give up some interests, the merger and restructuring will likely happen."

Anthony nodded slightly and said, "Contacting Zhou Mingrui, doing something in secret, and clearing out some dream characters; using the mirrored Roselle to influence Mr. Huang, eroding and controlling this tycoon; and promoting the merger of the two companies—these are the three main things Zaratulstra has done since coming to Yangdu. Some are overt, some covert, making it easy for us to focus on the first thing and overlook the latter two. By the time we realize it, he may have already created the momentum he needs, vast and unstoppable.

"Is this what an Angel who has lived for one or two thousand years is like?"

"However, it's surprising that He knows how to use corporate mergers and acquisitions in the dream city to turn virtual wealth into reality. He doesn't seem like an old fossil at all."

He, Lumian, and Jenna hadn't even thought about this aspect before, nor had Franca, who was just an undergraduate student before her transmigration and had almost no exposure to the business world.

"Did you forget that his current body belongs to another transmigrator?" Lumian suddenly smiled, "The operation to eliminate Zaratulstra must be launched as soon as possible."

"But we need to be wary that it might be a trap to lure us in," Anthony reminded Lumian.

Lumian nodded and stood up. "I'm going to chat with a friend now."

After giving some of the food from his Traveler's Bag to Ludwig, he used Teleportation and Mirror Traversal to arrive at the psychiatric ward of Crimson Moon Hospital.

Li Keji was still confined there.

Lumian changed into a more feminine shirt and loose trousers, transforming back into the appearance of a Demoness of Despair.

He gathered his black hair behind his back, letting it fall naturally, then stepped out of the mirror-like object and gently landed at the door of Li Keji's room.

Knock, knock, knock. Lumian gently tapped on the steel door.

He and Li Keji were on opposite sides of the door, so he couldn't use the Bottle of Fiction to isolate the environment.

After a few seconds, Lumian saw a plump, white mushroom cautiously poke its cap out from behind the iron grate in the upper part of the metal door, then quickly retract.

I really want to throw a Fire of Destruction ball in there... Lumian grumbled as Li Keji's densely hairy face appeared at the window blocked by the iron grate.

"Who are you?" Li Keji asked, instinctively brightening.

"I'm here to rescue you," Lumian replied with a smile.

Li Keji shook his head. "No need, no need, I believe in the law!"

The law doesn't believe in you... Lumian thought to himself.

He took the opportunity to say, "Actually, I want to ask for your help."

"Do you want mushrooms?" Li Keji became excited, "I have many types of mushrooms here..."

He was about to start a lengthy introduction.

Lumian interrupted him. "I've heard about your ideas from someone, but I think they might be a bit too narrow."

"Too narrow?" Li Keji was taken aback.

Lumian nodded solemnly.

"For humans, food is indeed important, but it's not everything for survival.

"Diseases can also cause people to lose their lives prematurely. Haven't you thought about creating more magical mushrooms, each variety capable of treating one or multiple types of diseases?"

"That's too difficult." Li Keji fell into deep thought. "It's impossible to treat diseases by crossbreeding cows, fish, wheat, and mushrooms. Do we need to crossbreed with something else... implant my gene fragments into mushrooms, fusing the genes that produce healing power with the mushrooms? But gene fragments and transgenic technology alone are not enough..."

Lumian's eyelid twitched, and he said sincerely, "I have a friend who became a vegetative state due to a car accident, but I feel he still has a bit of consciousness.

"Can you think of a way to use your mushrooms to cure him, wake him up, but still retain that bit of his own consciousness?"

Li Keji was silent for a few seconds before saying, "Let me think about it. I can't guarantee it will work."

"Alright, I'll come back in a couple of days to hear your answer." Lumian stepped back two paces and disappeared into the shadows by the wall.

Throughout this conversation, he had been using Instigation with a hint of Charm.

...

The next morning, at the talent department of Hall Film Company.

Jenna entered an office, facing one of the female interviewers from before.

"Have a seat." The female interviewer pointed to the sofa area. "Let me introduce myself, I'm Mei Xin, head of the talent department at Hall Film Company. My English name is Christine."

She sat down and said to Jenna, "Before our legal colleague arrives, let me briefly explain the main terms of the contract.

"Your appearance and acting skills meet our requirements very well. In the industry, our Hall Film Company treats new actors the best. The contract is only for three years, with a monthly base salary of 4,000. You can keep 50% of all your income, including film fees and endorsement fees. We will also provide you with various training and professional makeup artists, and so on.

"The most important point is that the company's resources will be significantly tilted towards our own people.

"Once you've gained fame and have representative works, the contract can be renegotiated at any time to increase your profit-sharing ratio and gain some autonomy. And if this contract expires, we only ask for the right of first refusal for the new contract, under equal conditions..."

Jenna listened attentively, feeling quite involved. Although she didn't expect to stay in the dream city for a year or two, this might be her only chance to sign an actor's contract.

Finally, Mei Xin said, "After signing the contract, we will advance you 30,000 yuan to help you settle in and buy clothes. This amount will be deducted in installments from your future income, without interest."

30,000 yuan right after signing? Jenna didn't hide her change in expression.

Quick! I want to sign now!

With this money, plus the 30,000 yuan fee Bernie Huang gave to Franca yesterday, the team's savings would reach nearly 240,000 yuan. They could rent the magic mirror Arrodes from Star Dream Provisions Store!

Having such a magic mirror to help before launching the operation against Zaratulstra would be a major advantage!

During this time, whenever Lumian and the others visited Star Dream Provisions Store, they would try not to rent the mirror and instead ask questions directly on the spot to get answers. However, they were never successful. That first time when they got answers seemed to be just a coincidence, or perhaps such a benefit could only be enjoyed after a very long interval. Similarly, Franca's Magic Mirror Divination ritual aimed at Arrodes also failed to get any feedback.

Soon, an employee from the legal department of Hall Film Company arrived with the contract.

Jenna read all the terms carefully, albeit with some difficulty, asked a few questions, and then promptly completed the signing.

Before she left Hall Film Company, the advance settlement fee had already been deposited into her account.

To her disappointment, Jia Yu didn't seem to come to the company today, so she couldn't bump into him and make initial contact by pretending to be a fan asking for an autograph.

...

At 2 pm.

Jenna arrived at Star Dream Provisions Store.

Only after entering the shop did she send a message to Franca, Lumian, and the others: "You can transfer the money to me now."

She hadn't done this in advance for fear of encountering obstacles along the way.

If they lost all their money because of this, their previous efforts would have been in vain!

Lumian and the others, who had been waiting in different places, quickly completed the transfers, each keeping only enough for living expenses for the next week.

Jenna walked up to the cashier and said to the shopkeeper, "Hello, can I rent that mirror?"

She was referring to the magic mirror Arrodes.

Earlier, the team had already discussed what would be best to rent first. Considering that the magic mirror Arrodes was the only item Mr. Fool carried while sleeping, as well as the specific rental price and the symbolic meaning of Demonesses in the dream world, they finally decided to rent this mirror.

"220,000 for one day." The shopkeeper raised her head and smiled in the suddenly dimmed light.

"Alright." Jenna didn't haggle.

After she completed the payment through the store's POS machine and signed a very simple rental contract, the shopkeeper said while lowering her head, "You can take that mirror now. Return it by 3 pm tomorrow."

Jenna instinctively swallowed and walked to the shelf, picking up the silver mirror with black eyeball-like objects on both sides.

After placing the magic mirror Arrodes into the Traveler's Bag, Jenna quietly let out a sigh of relief.

It wasn't easy!

Saving money really wasn't easy!

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Chapter 975: The Diligent Magic Mirror

[1,741 words]

Late at night, in room 2303 of Dechuang Garden.

Lumian, Franca, and Jenna sat side by side on the long sofa, with the silver mirror bearing ancient patterns and black gemstones on each side placed in front of them.

Anthony had taken Ludwig out for a late-night snack, politely avoiding the question-and-answer session with the magic mirror Arrodes.

Of course, they had already discussed and decided which questions to ask beforehand, focusing mainly on two parts: first, Zaratulstra's current situation, and second, matters related to the dream city.

They had listed over twenty questions, but considering the subconscious limitations of the dream on various aspects, they believed it impossible to keep asking until all their doubts were answered by the magic mirror Arrodes. They suspected that the mirror could only answer a limited number of questions at a time or in a day, just like how Magic Mirror Divination normally only allowed three questions. Therefore, Lumian adjusted the order of the questions, placing the most important and crucial ones at the beginning.

"Shall we start?" Jenna turned her head to look at Lumian.

Lumian nodded and said calmly, "I'll go."

"No, we'll take turns. We can't let you bear the mirror's questions alone," Franca emphasized. "It must be fair!"

She felt that she should also make some sacrifices and not always let Lumian face the terrifying questions of the magic mirror Arrodes.

Lumian glanced at her. "Alright, you go first."

Franca took a deep breath and looked at the magic mirror Arrodes.

"Great Arrodes, may I ask you a question?"

Since they had already rented the magic mirror from Star Dream Provisions Store, she didn't follow the mystical ritual procedure and directly inquired of the other party.

The surface of the ancient silver mirror instantly became dark, as if sinking to the bottom of lightless waters. Rows of blood-colored words in ancient Feysac then appeared: "I can answer any question you ask, but you must also answer an equal number of questions from me, in the presence of at least one witness.

"If you refuse to answer, or if you lie, you will face punishment."

Franca recalled the list of questions and carefully phrased her words, "My question is, what are the current manifestations of Zaratulstra's Beyonder powers in the dream city?"

This was one of the questions their team most wanted to know the answer to.

When Lumian watched the surveillance footage and listened to the wiretapped conversation last night, he only confirmed one point:

Zaratulstra's summoning of images from the Historical Void had significant limitations. He wouldn't always use historical projections to replace himself in activities while hiding in the fog of history—before going to open the door for Jia Yu, he pulled out a past version of himself from the Historical Void, and that historical projection then communicated with Jia Yu for nearly a quarter of an hour.

Based on this, Lumian speculated that Zaratulstra would only use historical projections to replace himself for a period of time when he felt danger or had to face certain problematic individuals. As for disguising marionettes as his true self, Lumian believed that the Sequence 7 Faceless ability probably couldn't achieve this, but he didn't rule out the possibility that a similar ability descended from Sequence 2 to Sequence 7 might be able to.

The blood-red ancient Feysac words on the surface of the magic mirror Arrodes writhed and changed, revealing row after row:

"Zaratulstra can currently manipulate two marionettes. Through Spirit Body Threads, He can initially control a target for 20 seconds, and completely marionettize them in 1 minute and 30 seconds;

"His marionette manipulation range is 50 meters. He can switch positions with the marionettes. The marionettes can use their own abilities as well as borrow all of His abilities, but all at the Sequence 7 level;

"He can only maintain the existence of one Historical Void image at a time, including people, objects, scenes, and spirituality;

"He can currently maintain summoned Angel-level Historical Void images for 30 seconds to 1 minute, depending on His closeness to or understanding of the corresponding target. If He summons His past Sequence 1 self, it can be maintained for 1 minute and 30 seconds. If summoning His Sequence 2 self, it's 3 minutes. His past selves below angelic level can be maintained for up to a quarter of an hour. Other people, objects, and scenes below angelic level range from two to ten minutes;

"His Shapeshifting ability allows marionettes to disguise themselves as Him, surpassing any makeup effect. However, upon careful observation, differences can still be seen to determine authenticity;

"He can also Wish, creating some miracles, but the effects of these miracles are still restricted to the Sequence 7 level;

"His past Sequence 1 self could make the Spirit Body Threads of the dead or certain objects reappear, thereby marionettizing them. If one eats marionettized food, they will be corrupted and gradually become marionettized;

"His past Sequence 1 self could also Graft physical entities or abstract concepts that normally couldn't be directly connected, combining them to achieve incredible effects. However, these incredible effects are still only at the Sequence 7 level;

"His past Sequence 1 self could distort space and time, creating a Realm of Mysteries that surpasses the Bottle of Fiction and possesses concealed properties;

...

"His Air Straw is twenty meters long, potentially helping Him avoid areas densely populated with mystical pathogens."

The magic mirror Arrodes described all of Zaratulstra's abilities and their current manifestations, causing the blood-red words on the mirror's surface to change several times.

However, it didn't provide enough details about the Sequence 2 and Sequence 1 level abilities, only briefly mentioning them.

The mirror is really working hard to awaken Mr. Fool... Franca couldn't help but grumble inwardly after reading everything carefully.

Lumian, meanwhile, recalled the historical projection of Zaratulstra that had conversed with Jia Yu.

Judging from the fact that they had talked for nearly a quarter of an hour, Lumian deduced that it was a Historical Void image of Zaratulstra before he became an Angel.

This also indicated that Zaratulstra wasn't a born mythical creature, but had ascended step by step from lower Sequences.

After displaying Zaratulstra's current abilities, the blood-colored words on the surface of the ancient silver mirror changed again:

"Based on the principle of reciprocity, it's my turn to ask a question.

"If you answer incorrectly or lie, you will be punished."

Franca gritted her teeth and nodded slightly.

What do they not know about me? There's nothing to be afraid of!

On the mirror, new words began to form, composing a sentence: "After entering the dream city, have you ever thought about doing something with Lumian when Jenna wasn't around?"

Dammit, that's harsh... Franca didn't dare look at Jenna and squeezed out a word through her teeth. "Yes..."

She immediately defended herself, "I just thought about it occasionally, never put it into practice! This is Mr. Fool's dream, how dare I do anything inappropriate? If Mr. Fool's subconscious remembers it, I'd be socially dead for real!"

Lumian glanced at the rapidly speaking Franca and the silent Jenna, suspecting that while making Franca feel ashamed and embarrassed, the magic mirror Arrodes might also have a hidden intention of helping Jenna digest the Affliction potion.

It's really going all out to wake up Mr. Fool...

Franca finally finished speaking and mustered the courage to look at Jenna, receiving an encouraging smile and slight nod from her.

Lumian spoke on Franca's behalf, "The second question is, has Zaratulstra discovered my surveillance?"

The ancient silver mirror with two black gemstones like eyes displayed new blood-colored words: "Zaratulstra discovered that someone was spying through mirror-like objects, but doesn't know who. He also learned about the existence of pinhole cameras and wiretaps, because He has a Saint-level Seer subordinate living next door who can marionettize mosquitoes and hide them in the room to observe the situation."

So, when I cautiously used the Fire of Destruction to burn all spiritually imbued things in Zaratulstra's room, it made him alert that someone had infiltrated his room. After a covert search, he discovered the pinhole cameras and wiretaps? But because his marionette subordinate died, he only knows someone infiltrated his room, not who it was... Lumian immediately analyzed the important information hidden in the magic mirror Arrodes' answer.

At the same time, he suspected that Zaratulstra knew Mr. Huang had concealed the fact that someone was spying through mirror-like objects but didn't expose it on the spot.

Moreover, knowing there was surveillance, Zaratulstra still had Jia Yu come to his room for a private conversation. Was this to mislead us, making us think Jia Yu was important and focus our attention there? But his plan to poach Jia Yu wasn't a sudden decision; it should have started before I went to spy on him in the hotel room... Does he think that deep contact with Jia Yu holds hidden dangers, and without knowing certain details, it could easily lead to him being kicked out of the dream? So he deliberately exposed his intentions to let us step on the landmine? Lumian's thoughts were in turmoil, feeling that Zaratulstra—this Seer—was really quite similar to a Conspirer, his mind full of conspiracies and schemes.

Now that he knew Zaratulstra had discovered his spying and had been acting all along, Lumian could design targeted action plans.

Demonesses had ways and abilities to evade the dangerous premonitions of a Seer!

After answering, the magic mirror Arrodes routinely displayed the corresponding prompt before posing a question to Lumian: "Is your feeling for Franca and Jenna love, or just valuing them?"

Lumian fell momentarily quiet before responding, "I value them."

After a few seconds of silence in the sofa area, Jenna moved forward slightly and said, "It's my turn to ask."

Lumian and Franca both nodded.

Jenna recalled the list of prepared questions and looked at the ancient silver mirror.

"The third question is, who was the last person to rent you?"

The blood-red words on the mirror's surface suddenly disappeared, leaving only a faint shimmer of water.

After several seconds, a few words appeared on the deep, dark surface of the mirror—the unique text of the dream city, all in a pale white color: "It's Peng Deng."

Peng Deng? The person who spent 220,000 to rent the magic mirror Arrodes for a day was Peng Deng? Lumian, Franca, and Jenna were all shocked.

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Chapter 976: Scheming and Strategizing

[1,889 words]

Regarding who had previously rented the magic mirror, Lumian and the others had various guesses, but they never imagined it would be Peng Deng.

Where did Peng Deng get so much money?

Why did Peng Deng want to rent the magic mirror Arrodes?

What exactly did Peng Deng want to do?

Lumian, Jenna, and Franca looked at each other, all feeling it necessary to adjust the order of questions and temporarily add some related to Peng Deng renting the mirror.

At this moment, the pale white text on the silver mirror's surface twisted and writhed, turning blood-red again and stretching into individual ancient Feysac words:

"Based on the principle of reciprocity, it's my turn to ask a question.

"If you answer incorrectly or lie, you will be punished."

Jenna nodded slightly, beginning to think about what question to ask next.

The blood-red words on the mirror changed to new content: "Have you considered how you would intimately get along with Lumian and Franca if you switched to the Hunter pathway in the future and became male?"

That's quite a subtle way of asking... Jenna sensed Arrodes' goodwill.

Although it was still quite embarrassing, for someone who was once a Showy Diva, she could answer with her eyes closed. "I have thought about it."

Franca's mind suddenly flashed with a thought: Thought about being on top or on top?

She steadied herself and looked at the mirror.

"The fourth question, what did Peng Deng do with the help of the great Arrodes?"

On the surface of the ancient silver mirror, the blood-red words quickly faded away, the watery sheen receded, and it no longer had a deep, dark feel.

Franca's question went unanswered.

"So it's only three questions..." She sighed in disappointment.

Lumian thought for a moment and said, "Let's try asking again before returning it to Star Dream Provisions Store this afternoon. Perhaps the interval between inquiries is calculated by time, not by rental frequency."

"Mm." Jenna nodded.

Of course, she would be responsible for returning the rental.

...

Friday morning.

Zhou Mingrui, busy at his workstation, felt his phone vibrate beside him.

He picked it up and saw a message from Luo Shan: "I might be losing my job. Let me treat you to dinner again tonight."

"What happened?" Zhou Mingrui asked, both puzzled and concerned.

Luo Shan sent a "" emoji:

"I'll tell you when we have dinner. Oh, and Luo Fu will be there too."

"Alright, should I choose what to eat, or will you?" Zhou Mingrui politely asked.

"It's my treat, so of course I'll choose!" Luo Shan quickly replied.

After putting down his phone, Zhou Mingrui focused on his computer screen, as if seriously evaluating his previous work results.

In reality, he was thinking about Luo Shan's situation.

How could she suddenly lose her job? The last time we had dinner, Luo Shan was praising Mr. Huang for paying well and the relaxed work atmosphere. She didn't seem to have any intention of quitting...

Is it because of her special circumstances that she must change her workplace, or does the company want to fire her, or both?

About half of the administrative department came because of Mr. Huang. Luo Shan is considered a very qualified employee. There's no reason for the HR department to actively fire her. Moreover, the company's overall revenue and profits have reached new highs, and they even said the administrative department was short-staffed, specifically hiring Luo Fu...

Has Luo Shan shown any unusual behavior or done anything problematic recently?

Zhou Mingrui thought back and forth, feeling that after Luo Shan discarded those original paintings, everything seemed normal, except for secretly forming a group with Luo Fu and Li Ming, and warning him to be wary of Zaratulstra.

The group is in talks with Zaratulstra's company about a merger and restructuring... Luo Shan has warned me twice to be careful of Zaratulstra... Luo Shan then gets suddenly being fired...

Is there a connection between these events?

Well, after Luo Fu warned me last time, she was off for a few days. Tonight, she and Luo Shan might hint at something again... Because his previous interactions with Luo Shan and Luo Fu hadn't brought any abnormalities or led to attacks or difficulties, Zhou Mingrui wasn't averse to having another meal with them and listening to what they had to say.

Frankly, if it weren't for Luo Shan and Li Ming hinting three times since Sunday to be wary of Zaratulstra, he would have felt that everything around him was calm and normal, without any issues, as if he had never drunk the Assassin beverage.

But the more it seemed so, the stranger Zhou Mingrui felt, as if he were trapped in a cocoon, with various abnormalities lingering outside, waiting for a chance to invade, yet invisible to him.

So he was trying hard to probe, and contacting Luo Shan and Luo Fu was part of that effort.

...

Hall Film Company, Talent Department.

The young employee who had previously introduced various situations to Jenna smiled at her.

"I'm Jiang Yue. I'm responsible for helping you new recruits connect with various departments of the company. You can come to me for anything."

"What a coincidence." Jenna, who had changed into a short-sleeved chiffon blouse, smiled back.

Jiang Yue looked around and said, "This isn't a coincidence, it's destiny."

"Why was I waiting outside the conference room to take the interviewees out? It's because I'm responsible for these matters later on. Well, I'm not the only one in charge of you new recruits. When selecting, I chose you first. I have high hopes for you, keep it up!"

Whether Jiang Yue was sincere or not, these words made Jenna quite pleased, giving her a feeling of being valued and affirmed, naturally generating a happy mood.

Jiang Yue continued, "I thought you'd only report to work on Monday. The physical training courses and media response courses arranged for you are all next week. Well, today let's just chat casually. I'll give you a tour, and if we happen to meet a producer or director, you might get a chance to audition soon."

If I had come next week, Jia Yu might have already paid the penalty and left... Jenna followed Jiang Yue, walking forward in the Talent Department.

She glanced at Jia Yu's studio and said, "Jia Yu isn't here? I have a friend who's his fan. I wanted to get his autograph."

"He's not here. After The Great Pirate 3 blew up, he's been coming to the company less and less," Jiang Yue said with a complex tone. "Today he said he was going to attend a film-related event."

Jenna showed a disappointed expression on her face and nodded, saying, "The Great Pirate 3 is quite popular, with high box office numbers."

"Yeah, although those film critics all say it's just a qualified popcorn flick, audiences love watching popcorn flicks. What can those that don't even qualify compare with us?" Jiang Yue said, somewhat indignantly.

Jenna took this opportunity to ask, "So, is the company planning to make The Great Pirate 4?"

Jiang Yue lowered her voice. "There is such a plan, but the problem is that the romance queen is too slow. We've already finished filming and released The Great Pirate 3, but she still hasn't written The Great Pirate 4!"

After all, the person herself has been completely kicked out... After all, the dream manifestation's pen name is "Salted Fish Without Dreams"... Jenna continued Jiang Yue's conversation for a few sentences and then said, "Moreover, I see that The Great Pirate 3 is popular mainly because of the adventurer image of German Sparrow. If the next one doesn't have him as the main character, I think there will be big problems. The box office might even be a disaster, just like how The Great Pirate 1 and The Great Pirate 2 movies didn't have much fame."

This was laying the groundwork for the team's alternative awakening plan.

Jiang Yue was stunned for a moment. "The Great Pirate 1 and The Great Pirate 2 were never made into movies."

"Huh?" Jenna was stunned for two seconds and then said, "Then why is this movie directly called 'The Great Pirate 3'?"

"I don't know either," Jiang Yue answered with a bewildered face. "The big boss personally decided it, and no one else raised any objections. If you hadn't mentioned it, I wouldn't have remembered that the previous parts of 'The Great Pirate' series hadn't been made into movies..."

What's going on? How can they skip The Great Pirate 1 and The Great Pirate 2 and directly make The Great Pirate 3? Even if they skip, why not change the name instead of adding "3"? Amidst her confusion, Jenna vaguely grasped a key point.

This was related to one of Anderson Hood's reminders.

The master of the dream city is a symbol of loopholes and errors, so no matter how real this dream is, there will still be inconsistencies, loopholes, and places that make people feel terrified upon deep thought. It will still express the "dream" aspect!

A dream normally operates smoothly, but if outsiders do something beyond the norm and pointing to loopholes in between, could it create problems? For example, being illogically accepted by the masses, or being absurd and horrifying in the underlying realization of things...

After Madam Justice forcibly named this movie 'The Great Pirate 3' instead of 'The Great Adventurer', the dream manifestations naturally accepted it, and only outsiders

could discover the discrepancy, while dream manifestations could perceive the problem after being reminded?

Madam Justice didn't mention this point because it was linked to An Xiaotian's car accident, and she forgot after being forced to leave the dream?

The reason for the loophole of The Great Pirate movie having 3 but no 1 and 2 is because Mr. Fool's subconscious believes this book series should indeed be made into movies? Jenna thought a lot in an instant.

She didn't delve deeper into this topic, fearing that Jiang Yue, as a dream manifestation, would become more confused and conflicted, leading to chaos in the corresponding dream and affecting herself.

"Since it can't be filmed later, The Great Pirate 3 can be made into stage plays, animations, TV series, games, and such, taking full advantage while the movie's popularity is still high." Jenna acted like an enthusiastic and kind-hearted audience member.

Jiang Yue nodded in agreement. "True."

She then said self-mockingly, "Is this something we can decide? Wait until the next meeting, and suggest it to our boss, Mei Xin. Let her whisper it to the big boss."

...

In a high-end hot pot restaurant with a proper stage.

In a private room on the second floor, Mr. Huang introduced to Zaratulstra beside him, "This hot pot restaurant has a unique feature. Later, there will be a face-changing performance, one of the local intangible cultural heritages..."

Zaratulstra, sitting next to the window, glanced at the large screens behind and around the stage, smiled and nodded slightly. "I'm looking forward to it."

Just as Mr. Huang was about to say something more, his phone suddenly rang.

The caller was "Bernie".

"Excuse me, I'll take this call first." Mr. Huang stood up with his phone and walked towards the door of the private room.

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Chapter 977: The Best Support

[1,824 words]

After Mr. Huang left the private room to take the call, Zaratulstra leaned towards the center of the window, as if trying to get a clearer view of the stage and the corresponding large screen.

At the same time, Mr. Ed and other Intis Group employees responsible for reception, as well as Zaratulstra's entourage, all heard their phones vibrate.

They instinctively picked up their phones, unlocked the screens, and saw a pop-up message.

This wasn't a text message or WeChat notification, nor was it an alert for an incoming call. It seemed to be just a simple dialog box that had taken over the screen.

The dialog box contained a brief line of text: "Please be quiet for one minute."

As Mr. Ed, the Intis Group employees, and Zaratulstra's entourage noticed this line of text, it jumped up one by one, directly out of the phone screens, transforming into an invisible, colorless stream of information carrying mystical power that entered the heads of the corresponding people.

Except for Mr. Huang, who was making a phone call outside the private room, and Zaratulstra, who was looking at the stage below, everyone present suddenly became dazed, their eyes vacant, their bodies frozen in their previous positions.

They had truly become quiet.

Zaratulstra sensed something amiss and turned his gaze back to the people in the private room.

As he did so, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed his own reflection faintly appearing in the already open window.

His heart skipped a beat, and he instinctively pulled back his body, preventing the window from reflecting him anymore.

At this moment, behind the corresponding glass mirror surface, Lumian, in his Demoness of Despair form with disheveled black hair and wearing a dark T-shirt, quietly watched as Zaratulstra's ethereal figure appeared on the mirror and quickly moved towards the edge.

The normally invisible Spirit Body Threads on his body, upon touching the hard mirror surface, no longer extended as usual, but were drawn upwards by some force, disappearing into the deep, dark sky above.

This was Distortion's alteration of the Spirit Body Threads extension direction. This way, Zaratulstra wouldn't be able to detect in advance if someone was spying or lying in ambush behind the mirror by observing Spirit Body Threads.

The effect of Distortion came from the edge of the area behind the mirror, near the ghostly tunnel resembling a spider web, from a crown inlaid with numerous dark gems.

The crown floated silently in midair, with a tall, beautiful woman standing behind it.

This woman had tied her slightly curly chestnut hair into a bun, had straight eyebrows, blue eyes, and was wearing a white short-sleeved T-shirt and light-colored trousers. She was none other than Miss Bernie Huang.

She held a phone in her hand, talking to Huang Tao.

Logically, there shouldn't be any signal in the mirror world, but Bernie Huang's words, after going through the phone, directly transformed into an invisible stream of information, drilling out of this place. The replies from Huang Tao were similarly affected by Beyonder powers, entering as pure information streams and being converted into sound by the phone.

Lumian glanced at Miss Huang, recalling what she had said before the operation: "I can provide help for you, but I can't directly participate in the battle.

"I've already been kicked out of this dream twice and am under certain restrictions. If Zaratulstra sees me as his enemy, I might be kicked out of the dream for the third time, and the problem with my father hasn't been resolved yet...

"I'll create opportunities for you, but killing Zaratulstra or kicking him out of the dream can only be done by yourselves..."

"This item can't be lent to you, otherwise, before Zaratulstra dies, you'll die first..."

Lumian hesitated no longer and, looking at Zaratulstra's Mirror Projection that hadn't yet disappeared, raised his left hand.

On his wrist was a silver bracelet that lit up with a silver-white and black glow.

Circle Inhabitant!

Lumian seized the opportunity and used Circle Inhabitant on Zaratulstra's fading Mirror Projection!

Of course, this was also suppressed to the Sequence 7 level, unable to make the corresponding fate repeat, and could only be triggered twice at most.

The current implementation of Circle Inhabitant was to make similar scenes appear again in a short time through disturbances in fate.

In the private room, after Zaratulstra pulled back his body, preventing the glass window from reflecting him again, he suddenly felt a gust of wind blowing from the entrance of the hot pot restaurant.

Before he could check the status of the others at the table, he found the window being blown, moving towards closing.

This once again cast his reflection onto the corresponding glass.

In Zaratul's deep blue, almost pure black eyes, a dim light flashed, already sensing the presence of anomalies, not just simple vigilance.

He raised his right hand, using a Miracle Invoker's ability to influence the future.

He reduced the probability of his Mirror Projection being utilized by others!

In the mirror world, Lumian held an ice crystal thin sword wrapped in terrifying black flames in one hand, while touching the river of fate of Zaratulstra's Mirror Projection with the other, trying to magnify the fate tributary of his successful attack.

The two forces collided, with Zaratulstra's prevailing slightly, causing that fate tributary not only to fail to magnify but to shrink by one-tenth.

However, for Lumian, this was enough.

His use of the Magnified Fate ability wasn't to increase the probability of the curse succeeding, but to counteract the Miracle Invoker's interference with fate.

Being so close to Zaratulstra's Mirror Projection, as long as there was no interference from the Miracle Invoker, or as long as the Miracle Invoker's interference wasn't strong enough, his chances of achieving his goal were quite high.

Lumian's ice crystal thin sword darted out, striking the reappearing Mirror Projection of Zaratulstra.

The Fire of Destruction wrapped around the ice crystal thin sword instantly poured into that projection, igniting it from the inside out, placing it in pure, mad destruction.

This was a curse, a curse aimed at Zaratulstra!

The mystical principle behind many of a Demoness's curses was to utilize Mirror Projections, which was also a kind of Mirror Person, a temporary, short-lived Mirror Person with a very strong mystical connection to the original person!

When Lumian's Fire of Destruction ignited Zaratulstra's Mirror Projection, in the private room, Zaratulstra's eyes, nose, ears, mouth, skin pores, and other places erupted with violent black flames.

In an instant, this old man became a black torch, his body quickly thinning and shrinking, burning to ashes.

Paper Figurine Substitutes!

For an Angel like Zaratulstra, Paper Figurine Substitutes could long be used to transfer curses, but to escape a curse completed by a Demoness through a Mirror Projection, the main body still needed to hide in the fog of history in time.

After interfering with the development of fate using his Miracle Invoker ability, Zaratulstra didn't think the first wave of attacks would end there. He quickly used Paper Figurine Substitute, while he cautiously entered the fog of history, hiding in a crevice.

The scene of him burning into a paper figurine didn't attract the attention of those at the table.

Those people were still in a quiet state.

In the mirror world.

Near the illusory dark tunnel, Bernadette held a phone in one hand, while with the other, she made several dark gems on the crown in front of her light up with strange radiance.

Distortion!

She used Distortion again, swapping the spatial positions of Zaratulstra's main body plus Paper Figurine Substitute and his Mirror Projection.

Thus, Zaratulstra, who had hidden in the fog of history, and the Paper Figurine Substitute that had been burned to ashes, came to the mirror world.

This place was also connected to the spirit world, this place also had the fog of history.

Meanwhile, Zaratulstra's Mirror Projection sat by the hot pot table, quickly disappearing into nothingness amidst the madly growing black flames.

It vanished into the void along with these Flames of Destruction.

After completing this, Bernadette quickly put away the crown inlaid with dark gems, stepped back twice, and disappeared into the illusory, complex tunnel resembling a spider web.

Throughout this process, she maintained her call with Mr. Huang.

Lumian showed no emotional fluctuation at Bernadette's departure. According to their agreement, this princess was mainly responsible for three things:

First, to draw away Mr. Huang, who was suspected to be influenced by the mirrored Roselle;

Second, to use the Mystery Pryer pathway's control over the information world to "push" a message to the others in the private room that would make them "quiet", with the subsequent cleanup and erasure of traces to be done by the Information Shredder—Lumian still remembered that when Miss Huang saw the Information Shredder, her expression noticeably became more complex, as if seeing a natural enemy being artificially created;

Third, to help Lumian and the others hide their Spirit Body Threads, preventing Zaratulstra from discovering them in advance. If Lumian failed to assassinate successfully in the initial stage, she would help bring Zaratulstra into the mirror world, allowing them to change from assassination to forced killing, with the possibility of one more indirect assistance later depending on the situation.

This way, Lumian and the others wouldn't have to worry about their battle with Zaratulstra attracting the official forces of the dream city, being interrupted by them, or even hunted down.

Moreover, Zaratulstra would be separated from his marionettes.

Even if Zaratulstra could manipulate the Spirit Body Threads through the mirror, those marionettes, if they didn't possess the power to come to the mirror world, wouldn't be able to participate in this battle.

Cutting off the marionettes was the first step in dealing with high-level beings of the Seer pathway.

As the Paper Figurine Substitute was completely burned, Zaratulstra, at Sequence 7 and unable to stay in the fog of history for too long, returned to reality.

He saw that he was in the void dark area behind the mirror, and near the mirror surface stood a figure whose charm couldn't be concealed even by darkness.

Lumian smiled, making this area seem as if it was illuminated by clear moonlight.

Charm!

Zaratulstra's consciousness was momentarily stunned, all Worms of Spirit seemingly marveling at that heart-piercing beauty.

Almost simultaneously, the invisible spider silk that had long been spread throughout this place entangled him.

Lumian then drew the Sword of Courage and, from a distance of over ten meters, slashed towards Zaratulstra.

That iron-black straight sword created a highly compressed fire serpent, falling towards the old man dressed in a black formal suit from a distance.

At the edge of the area behind the mirror, Jenna emerged from her Invisible state, used the mirror in her hand to reflect Zaratulstra's figure, and smeared her other hand, covered in Demoness black flames, onto it.

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Chapter 978: Wishes

[1,895 words]

Boom!

The highly compressed red fire serpent exploded, engulfing Zaratulstra before Jenna could complete her curse. It tore him into shreds of paper, causing them to ignite simultaneously.

Zaratulstra once again retreated into the fog of history.

As the explosion from the red fire serpent began to subside, he returned to the present from a corner of the area behind the mirror, dragging out his past self from the Historical Void—the self that was a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries.

As soon as Zaratulstra appeared, clad in a black robe with eyes pure black and lightless, he immediately transformed into a massive vortex composed of countless maggots.

This enormous vortex was deep and dark, extending numerous slimy tentacles covered in bizarre patterns.

Mythical Creature form—the Mythical Creature form of the Seer pathway!

For Angels, the Mythical Creature form was their truest appearance, so there was no question of whether They could or could not transform into it within the dream city. Of course, this too was suppressed to the Sequence 7 level.

The instant he saw the maggot vortex, even Lumian, as a Demoness of Despair and possessing godhood, couldn't help but feel his thoughts stutter, his joints stiffen, and his mind as if it were under attack from a super-strong hurricane.

He instinctively closed his eyes, while Jenna, who was near the mirror tunnel, seemed to be twisting her entire body.

Seizing this opportunity, Zaratulstra's main body made a wish, "My wish is: For my marionettes to return to my side."

As soon as the words were spoken, two more figures appeared in the area behind the mirror.

They were dressed as business people, one male and one female.

As for the other marionettes, they of course belonged to other Marionettists. Zaratulstra could command their operators, not them directly.

Zaratulstra didn't wish to leave the mirror world because he had sensed the presence of Distortion power from the fact that he had been swapped into the mirror world despite hiding in the fog of history. So he chose not to directly leave the current area.

He feared having his position Distorted again, which might cause him to appear out of thin air in front of Yagates, the number one figure in the police department.

At this moment, because Zaratulstra's Mythical Creature form was restricted to Sequence 7, both the godhood impact and mental corruption effects were greatly reduced. So Lumian, as a Demoness of Despair, with his eyes closed and maintaining distance, began to recover. He raised his left hand and snapped his fingers with a loud crack.

In different parts of the area behind the mirror, under the cover of a Mirror Maze composed of numerous mirrors, groups of delayed explosion fireballs that had been prepared in advance received the order to explode immediately!

Rumble!

They exploded simultaneously, intertwining with each other, causing a fierce red flame storm to cover the entire area behind the mirror, completely engulfing Zaratulstra's Historical Void image, the two marionettes, along with Jenna and Lumian.

This was the Hunter's home turf, a battlefield meticulously prepared by Lumian!

As for Zaratulstra's main body, he had once again hidden in the fog of history.

Rumble!

Zaratulstra's two marionettes used Paper Figurine Substitutes, being torn to pieces in the violent impact waves and ignited by the red flames.

Zaratulstra's Historical Void image maintained its Mythical Creature form, extending numerous tentacles to entangle the oncoming flame storm.

He Grafted himself onto the flames, thus avoiding harm, merely drifting to another side with the storm.

Normally, Grafting suppressed to Sequence 7 wouldn't allow Zaratulstra's Historical Void image to recombine with the concept of fire, but Sequence 7 Magician of the Seer pathway could manipulate flames, having a very close connection with fire itself. Therefore, Zaratulstra's Historical Void image could become a special kind of flame, constantly flashing within the storm.

Lumian's body also shattered like a mirror.

Immediately after, he teleported near the newly emerged female marionette, using the mirror in his hand to reflect her figure, and smeared the Flames of Destruction imbued with Cull forces onto the mirror surface.

Affected by both Zaratulstra's main body entering the fog of history and his historical projection turning into a "flame" drifting with the storm, the female marionette had no time to react or time to hide in the fog of history. Extremely suppressed black flames hiding destruction, erupted from within her body.

She quickly regressed into a paper figurine, but when she emerged in another part of the area behind the mirror, the Flames of Destruction on her body had not extinguished.

After using Paper Figurine Substitute twice in succession, this marionette's main body also turned to ashes.

At this point, the terrifying scene created by the groups of delayed explosion fireballs finally subsided. Zaratulstra's Historical Void image extended his right hand and gently grasped.

The surrounding space-time distorted in response, covering the entire area behind the mirror as if with a giant curtain, forming a concealed area isolated from the surroundings.

Realm of Mysteries!

After confirming that Lumian and Jenna had been pulled into the Realm of Mysteries by his historical projection and could not prevent him for a short time, Zaratulstra returned from the fog of history, landing at the edge of the dark and void area behind the mirror.

He ignored his historical projection and the remaining marionettes that were also trapped in the Realm of Mysteries, walking directly towards the glass mirror surface leading to the hot pot restaurant's private room.

Now, he had the energy to be vigilant and avoid the influence of the Distortion forces.

Just as Zaratulstra approached the glass mirror surface, he suddenly heard a "bang" of a gunshot.

A golden bullet, carrying an indescribable sense of decay, flew out from one of the spider web-like tunnels, heading straight for his chest.

Anthony, wearing a cheap black T-shirt and sporting a crew cut, flashed out of the tunnel following the bullet.

He had been lurking there using the power of the Ice Mirror Charm, not venturing into the area behind the mirror, so he wasn't encompassed by the Realm of Mysteries created by Zaratulstra's historical projection.

As Zaratulstra's main body avoided the bullet, Anthony, using the remnant power of Mirror Traversal, instantly appeared beside the white-haired old man.

He raised a pre-drawn picture while his eyes turned golden and vertical.

Frenzy!

Anthony thought that Zaratulstra had resurrected by seizing Loki's body, so there might still be some struggle between them. Therefore, using Frenzy to target Zaratulstra's mental state might have a miraculous effect.

The picture in his hand was drawn on a blank sketchbook, depicting a door, a lock, and wooden bars completely sealing the door.

The picture spontaneously ignited, turning into a phantom image that attached itself to the glass mirror surface leading to the outside world, sealing it with wooden bars and adding a lock.

Zaratulstra, directly affected by Frenzy, suddenly faded, becoming a phantom.

This was a Magician's ability to create illusions.

After returning from the fog of history, the first thing Zaratulstra actually did was create an illusion, rather than directly approaching the exit.

He used this to make Anthony misjudge his position, only hitting the illusion.

Zaratulstra's true figure quickly sketched itself not far away, speaking coldly in Dragonese, "My wish is: To banish the enemies here."

Before Anthony could use his area-of-effect Awe, he suddenly blacked out, as if lifted by an invisible force and thrown into the air.

When he regained consciousness, he found himself in a prison, with no mirror-like objects around to use—all the iron bars were wrapped in cotton cloth.

Zaratulstra chose to banish Anthony rather than wish for his death because this Angel believed that the enemy mixed with the Demoness likely also had one or two Mirror Substitutions, which would lead to a momentary failure of the wish and a waste of time.

However, this meant that Lumian, who was inside the Realm of Mysteries, was unaffected by the miracle and remained inside.

Zaratulstra's wish was to banish the enemies "here", and the Realm of Mysteries no longer belonged to "here"!

No longer disturbed by Anthony, Zaratulstra turned his gaze back to the glass mirror surface.

He had already realized two wishes, creating two miracles, which had considerably drained him. So he just opened his mouth, preparing to use an Air Cannon to blast the wooden bars and lock, removing their blockade of the exit.

Inside the Realm of Mysteries, Jenna had disappeared, while Lumian, having slightly recovered, teleported behind Zaratulstra's historical projection.

He raised his head, looking up high, letting his eyes, which had burst many capillaries from directly viewing the Mythical Creature form earlier, turn iron-black. At the same time, he let out a harrumph.

As two beams of white light shot from his nostrils towards the dark vortex composed of worms, he threw the Sword of Courage in his hand upwards towards a certain point in the sky.

That place appeared pale white in his eyes.

It was the weakness of the Realm of Mysteries!

Even though the Realm of Mysteries was an ability that only Sequence 1 could use, it currently only had the strength of Sequence 7!

Outside the Realm of Mysteries.

Zaratulstra made a "bang" sound, firing an Air Cannon, causing the wooden bars and iron lock drawn on the glass mirror surface to shatter inch by inch.

At this moment, several figures traversed through another tunnel.

There was Ludwig wearing a child's formal attire, a slightly plump female version of Anthony with a mature demeanor and fairly pretty features, and a handsome male version of Jenna with flaxen hair styled dashingly.

The real Jenna was still hiding inside the tunnel, not entering this area behind the mirror.

Her previous appearance was a shallow mirror person created using special Mirror World Fragments, which could be maintained for a longer time to confuse Zaratulstra. However, under the influence of Lumian's area explosion and the Realm of Mysteries earlier, that weak shallow mirror person had been destroyed.

The current male version of Jenna and female version of Anthony were deep mirror people created in advance using the special Mirror World Fragments in Franca and Lumian's possession. They could only be maintained for three minutes, but in terms of abilities, they almost perfectly replicated the originals, and could also borrow power from the special mirror world to a certain extent.

After the battle with the reanimated female corpse, Lumian and the others began to pay more attention to the abilities that came with the special Mirror World Fragments.

In the real world, the effect might not be obvious, but in the dream city where everyone was suppressed to Sequence 7, the more mirror helpers, the better!

Jenna hadn't let her male version, the female version of Anthony, and Ludwig follow Anthony to attack Zaratulstra earlier because she remembered Lumian's prior reminder: "If we fail to assassinate successfully, subsequent attacks should come in batches. We can't all rush in at once, lest Zaratulstra's special ability takes us all away at once. This can also deplete his spirituality and the number of times he can use his special abilities..."

In the Hunter's home turf, although it couldn't be said that they could make arrangements for the enemy from beginning to end, at least the first few waves of attacks could reflect their intentions!

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Chapter 979: Mythical Creature

[1,782 words]

Faced with the attack from Ludwig, the male version of Jenna, and the female version of Anthony, Zaratulstra showed no surprise.

His body inside the black formal wear suddenly disintegrated, along with his face, collapsing inward into a dark vortex.

If one looked closely at this vortex, they would see countless transparent insects frantically writhing, seemingly crawling into the observer's mind and body, devouring thoughts and nerves.

From within the sleeves and pant legs of the black formal wear, numerous slimy tentacles covered in bizarre patterns extended outward.

Zaratulstra had also revealed his Mythical Creature form!

Unlike His Historical Void image, His clothes were real, not part of a historical projection. They didn't transform into the Mythical Creature, remaining draped over the surface of the maggot vortex.

This made Him appear even more terrifying.

As Zaratulstra revealed his Mythical Creature form, both the male version of Jenna and the female version of Anthony instantly froze.

One's hair rapidly grew thicker and longer, their skin losing its luster, while the other's face became covered in patches of grayish-white dragon scales.

Silently, their bodies simultaneously collapsed. The former turned into a writhing mass of flesh, covered in thick, slimy, and bizarre black hair as thick as small snakes. The tips of these hairs struggled to open black and white eyes or stick out snake-like tongues. The latter disintegrated into several lizards covered in grayish-white dragon scales.

They had lost control.

Although Zaratulstra's Mythical Creature form was suppressed to the Sequence 7 level, as deep Mirror People, their mental states were already unstable, and their emotions tended towards extremes. Naturally, they couldn't help but lose control.

With this development, Ludwig's movements slowed slightly, his mind bearing the impact of the female Anthony's indiscriminate Frenzy.

Just as he was about to succumb to the male Jenna's Charm and turn to devour that mass of flesh, the two out-of-control deep Mirror People began to fade and become transparent, quickly disappearing.

They were illusory to begin with.

Ludwig could only open his mouth wide, his mouth corners splitting to the back of his head.

Then, he leaped towards Zaratulstra's Mythical Creature form in its black formal wear, biting down on one of the extended bizarre tentacles.

He wanted to use this to Deprive Zaratulstra of His Paper Figurine Substitutes ability.

Crack!

Ludwig bit down, but only crushed a paper figurine.

Zaratulstra, transformed into a Mythical Creature, appeared in midair. Within the dark vortex of countless maggots that formed His face, several differently colored gems seemed to light up simultaneously.

Around Ludwig, who still had the paper figurine in his mouth, numerous illusory doors suddenly appeared.

These illusory doors took various forms: some double-doored, some single, some barely showing a crack, some covered in mysterious patterns... They were densely packed and numerous, completely enveloping Ludwig.

As Zaratulstra waved His slimy tentacles, one of the illusory doors suddenly opened, welcoming Ludwig as he was thrown towards it.

Ludwig's figure instantly disappeared into the profound darkness behind the door.

Exile!

This was a Secrets Sorcerer ability that Zaratulstra used with the aid of a certain Sealed Artifact. It could throw the target into a corresponding space-time turbulence, only able to return after five seconds. Of course, complete return was contingent on the person or object thrown into the space-time turbulence being able to withstand its impact.

Combined with a Miracle Invoker's influence on fate, this could banish Ludwig for a full ten seconds.

In just two or three seconds, Zaratulstra had permanently or temporarily dealt with the third wave of attacking enemies.

He spoke again in the Dragonese, "My wish is: that no one else will interfere with me from now on."

As soon as the words were spoken, Zaratulstra realized His wish.

Affected by this aspect of his abilities being suppressed to Sequence 7, the realization of his wish had clear boundaries—it was limited to only the next thirty seconds, with poor effectiveness against enemies possessing godhood. The stronger the godhood, the more likely they were to break through the restrictions and interfere with him.

At this moment, Jenna, hiding in one of the tunnels, suddenly found herself unable to "traverse" to the corresponding area behind the mirror.

Zaratulstra, maintaining His Mythical Creature form, descended from midair, floating towards the glass mirror surface leading to the hot pot restaurant's private room.

Rumble!

He heard a faint explosion and saw a place in the area behind the mirror where an illusory curtain seemed to be pushed up, but not completely broken through.

Inside the Realm of Mysteries.

When Lumian threw the Sword of Courage and used the Spell of Harrumph, Zaratulstra's historical projection instantly swapped positions with His marionette.

The marionette, hit by the two beams of white light, only shook slightly.

His spirit was essentially already dead.

Rumble!

The Sword of Courage struck the weak point of the Realm of Mysteries, creating a terrifying explosion, but failed to penetrate through.

Amidst this chaos, Lumian's figure disappeared, Blinking to the side of Zaratulstra's Historical Void image.

His left hand was already raised, the silver bracelet on his wrist glowing with a silvery-white light tinged with black.

Circle Inhabitant!

Lumian once again used Circle Inhabitant, targeting the position of Zaratulstra's Historical Void image!

Of course, this attempt also forced him to face the other's Mythical Creature form directly. His thoughts and joints were once again filled with glue, and his mental state showed signs of some confusion.

It was only because he possessed godhood, and the other's Mythical Creature form was also limited to the Sequence 7 level, that he didn't lose control on the spot. Otherwise, even if he hadn't lost control immediately, he would have been in a state where his mind was swept by a storm, unable to continue subsequent actions.

Just as Zaratulstra's Historical Void image was about to continue swapping positions with His marionette, He suddenly found the attempt failed.

He remained in place.

Seizing this opportunity, Lumian, his eyes showing a silver-black color, suddenly pushed his right palm forward.

All his remaining spirituality surged towards the river of fate of Zaratulstra's historical projection.

Compelling Fate!

He wanted to compel the fate of Zaratulstra's historical projection to rush towards the imagined tributary!

Due to the influence of Zaratulstra's historical projection's own status, the probability of success for this action was actually not high. But as a historical projection, there was a natural flaw, problem, and weakness in terms of fate, which was the time limit on their existence.

If Lumian wanted to compel fate to make Zaratulstra's historical projection fall into dire straits and be killed by his subsequent attacks, it would depend on whether Mr. Fool would provide protection. But if he chose the fate tributary of "historical projection prematurely terminated due to unexpected influence", there was a considerable chance of achieving the goal!

In an instant, Lumian's spirituality was completely drained, forcing him to release the part he had accumulated in advance to barely support himself.

His body involuntarily leaned back slightly, and on his bright face, streams of blood flowed from his eyes, nose, and the corners of his mouth. His black long hair seemed to have gained its own vitality, floating upwards and becoming slightly thicker.

This was the backlash from directly viewing the fate of a Mythical Creature.

Not only did one of his eyes go blind immediately, but his entire person became like a marionette, temporarily unable to think or move.

Almost simultaneously, Zaratulstra's Historical Void image became semi-transparent, with ripples appearing on its surface.

It was as if some accident had prevented the spirituality of Zaratulstra's main body from penetrating the Realm of Mysteries to maintain the existence of the historical projection.

In the blink of an eye, Zaratulstra's Historical Void image faded to invisibility, completely dissipating.

Without His presence, Lumian finally recovered.

His blue eye, covered in a blood mist, saw the black curtain enveloping this area rapidly collapsing. He saw that male marionette, having lost the control of Zaratulstra's Historical Void image and being isolated from Zaratulstra's main body by the Realm of Mysteries, standing still, motionless.

Taking advantage of the Realm of Mysteries not yet completely collapsing, Lumian took out a mirror, reflected that marionette, and cursed it with the Fire of Destruction.

The male marionette immediately erupted with black flames suppressing madness and destruction from the inside out, its body beginning to melt like steel.

Lumian didn't look at him again. After the Realm of Mysteries further collapsed, he used the ability of Mirror Traversal to return to the area behind the mirror.

Just as Zaratulstra approached the glass mirror surface, He sensed movement behind Him.

This maggot vortex, clad in black formal wear and extending numerous bizarre tentacles, suddenly turned around to see Lumian, one eye covered in blood, the other unfocused, with blood flowing from them.

Although Lumian didn't directly look at this complete Mythical Creature, only glancing towards the black shoes where things were vaguely crawling out, he still fell into intermittent thought stutters and slight mental confusion.

His tendency towards madness worsened.

At this moment, he had already retrieved the Sword of Courage with invisible spider silk. Holding this iron-black straight sword burning with scarlet flames in both hands, he was about to strike at Zaratulstra from a distance.

After overcoming difficulties and launching several waves of attacks, he and his teammates had finally taken out Zaratulstra's marionette and Historical Void image, and could now challenge His main body!

Within the dark vortex that formed Zaratulstra's head, each worm emitted an elderly voice.

The words they spoke came together, forming echoing speech in just one second.

"To be able to end my Historical Void image in such a short time, I'm indeed a bit surprised.

"But it doesn't matter, I'll just summon another one."

As He spoke, Zaratulstra extended a bizarre, slimy tentacle and dragged out another version of Himself from the fog of history.

This was still him as a Sequence 1 Attendant of Mysteries.

If it weren't for His concern about the hidden enemy who used the power of Distortion to transfer Him to the mirror world, Zaratulstra felt He could have killed this group entirely, rather than just thinking about escaping this place.

At this moment, Lumian couldn't help but feel a bit of despair.

Zaratulstra still has the spirituality to summon a Historical Void image?

Is this what an Angel is? Even suppressed to Sequence 7, so many of us have only taken out His marionette, not even scratching His skin!

Courage and madness occupied Lumian's body. Without fear, he slashed out a highly compressed scarlet fire serpent towards Zaratulstra and His Historical Void image from a distance.

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Chapter 980: Together

[2,000 words]

Faced with the giant fire serpent slashed out by Lumian, Zaratulstra's Historical Void image had not yet fully emerged from the fog of history and was unable to respond effectively. Meanwhile, the countless transparent maggots within the dark vortex of Zaratulstra's main body merely watched, taking no action.

The highly compressed scarlet fire serpent had not yet truly approached Zaratulstra's main body when it suddenly changed direction, curving to the side, as if unwilling to conflict with this complete Mythical Creature.

This was the power of a "miracle".

Zaratulstra's previously made wish that "no one else will interfere with him" was still in effect, still functioning!

Although Lumian possessed a certain degree of godhood, the power of the wish was unable to prevent him from leaving the Realm of Mysteries and returning to this area behind the mirror. However, it could still prevent him from directly affecting Zaratulstra's main body, causing all his attacks to bypass the target.

At this moment, Lumian suddenly raised his head.

But he wasn't looking at Zaratulstra's Mythical Creature form. Instead, he was looking at the glass mirror surface not far from Zaratulstra.

His eye, covered in a blood mist due to burst capillaries, turned iron-black, reflecting the glass mirror surface that represented the entrance and exit, reflecting the pale spots on it.

This was the mirror's own weakness.

Immediately after, Lumian, wearing a silver-white earring on his left ear and his black hair floating gently, smiled and raised the Sword of Courage in his hand.

The giant fire serpent that had bypassed Zaratulstra's main body changed direction accordingly, fiercely pouncing towards the pale spot on the glass mirror surface.

The distance between them was extremely short. Before Zaratulstra's main body could react, the highly compressed scarlet fire serpent hit the target area.

Zaratulstra's head, composed of countless maggots forming a vortex, turned towards that spot, seeming somewhat stunned by Lumian's choice.

Once the mirror surface shattered, the corresponding area behind the mirror would collapse with it. If the people and objects in that area couldn't escape in time through the mirror tunnels, they would be swallowed by the turbulence of the mirror world and dragged into its depths. The dangers there were fatal for Beyonders without a complete Mythical Creature form, meaning Lumian!

Even for Angels with complete Mythical Creature forms, unless they were of the Door pathway or the Demoness pathway, the depths of the mirror world were places they were reluctant to venture into lightly.

Seeing this scene, Lumian's smile grew increasingly manic.

I never intended to attack you at all!

My initial goal was to shatter the mirror corresponding to this area, dragging you down into the depths of the mirror world, into dangerous space-time turbulence!

And to prevent you from detecting my true intentions, I pretended to attack you directly. That strange interference helped me save a lot of spirituality. Otherwise, even as a Pyromaniac wearing the Lie earring, changing the direction of the fire serpent midway would have been very strenuous and consumed a lot!

Boom!

The scarlet giant serpent, carrying the effects of Cull and Mighty Blow, exploded thunderously at the weak spot on the inside of the mirror, stirring up violent winds.

Amidst the gale, the sound of cracking was drowned out as the mirror instantly shattered into pieces, causing the entire area behind the mirror to collapse with a thunderous roar.

This dark, void world crumbled.

Neither Lumian nor Zaratulstra's main body managed to enter that spider web-like illusory tunnel. They plummeted sharply towards the unseen bottom of the darkness, not knowing where it led.

The collapse of this mirror world also brought intense shock waves to the historical fog that had previously permeated this place. Zaratulstra's Historical Void image returned to formlessness before it could be fully dragged out.

As they fell rapidly, Lumian's body became very light, noticeably slowing his descent.

He could already see the dark storm raging below, seemingly able to tear apart everything, and he was about to be engulfed by it.

He activated the black mark on his right shoulder, vanishing from the current void with a whoosh.

His figure didn't appear in the outside world. He didn't use a Demoness's control over the mirror world or the Spiritual World Traversal ability from Hand Bro to escape this dangerous place before being caught in the space-time turbulence. Instead, he Blinked to Zaratulstra's side.

Invisible spider silk then became visible, layer upon layer binding the maggot vortex clad in black formal wear.

After escaping from the Realm of Mysteries, Lumian had been secretly producing spider silk, letting it surround Zaratulstra's main body. When the area behind the mirror collapsed, these transparent spider threads immediately entangled the target, disregarding the corruption and effects brought by the Mythical Creature form on itself, making contact with Zaratulstra's main body.

It was through this contact, relying on the positioning provided by the Demoness's spider silk, that Lumian was able to find Zaratulstra's main body in this chaotic and dangerous space-time and Teleport to His side.

Those spider threads slowly and jerkily entangled Zaratulstra, while Lumian, positioned beside Him, closed his eyes and slashed the Sword of Courage towards the maggot vortex clad in black formal wear, following the pull of the spider silk.

The scarlet flames on this iron-black straight sword silently turned pitch black, restraining violence and madness.

Fire of Destruction!

As Lumian drew closer to Zaratulstra's main body, even with his eyes closed, his thoughts became sluggish, and the Sword of Courage he was slashing noticeably slowed.

This was the corruption brought by the Mythical Creature form, which was also a kind of marionettization.

Now, it took Zaratulstra 20 seconds to gain initial control over a target's Spirit Body Threads, but with the impact and corruption of the Mythical Creature form added, it only took 7 seconds!

From the moment Lumian left the Realm of Mysteries, He had been secretly diverting attention to manipulate the other's Spirit Body Threads!

As expected... it's like this... The manic smile didn't disappear from Lumian's bright face.

He activated the black mark on his right shoulder once again.

And now, he was depending on how Zaratulstra's main body was bound to the invisible spider silk.

In other words, his Teleportation would bring Zaratulstra along with him!

He wanted to go somewhere together with Zaratulstra!

Zaratulstra suddenly had a sense of danger. He abandoned manipulating Lumian's Spirit Body Threads and was about to use Paper Figurine Substitutes to escape the binding of the spider silk, and then leave this area that was about to be swallowed by space-time turbulence using the Secrets Sorcerer Sealed Artifact he carried.

At this moment, in a virtual tunnel of the mirror world, Bernadette, sitting on a green pea vine, was making a phone call while looking at a mirror.

That mirror was a substitute Lumian had made for himself, having a very close connection with him. It was relying on this connection and the abilities of the Mystery Pryer pathway that Bernadette was able to monitor every move on the battlefield.

She suddenly reached out her right hand and once again virtually wiped the dark crown she had taken out again.

The numerous gems on that crown lit up simultaneously, using Lumian's mirror to Disorder the corresponding space-time.

Zaratulstra first turned into a paper figurine, then His main body reappeared in the same position, still bound by spider silk.

This was the last bit of help Bernadette could provide.

Lumian's figure disappeared from the dark void that was about to be swallowed by space-time turbulence, taking Zaratulstra with him.

The two of them appeared on the surface of the large screen on the hot pot restaurant's stage and passed through it.

Zaratulstra then saw the private room that belonged to his group, saw tables of customers eating hot pot.

Thankfully, it's not the police station... Zaratulstra immediately contracted the maggot vortex, quickly changing back into a white-haired elderly man.

He was worried that his Mythical Creature form would cause massive casualties and madness in the public setting of the hot pot restaurant. If that happened, He would certainly be captured by the main consciousness of the dream and forcibly kicked out or turned into a marionette, which could no longer be avoided by historical projection.

Just as Zaratulstra regained human form, He suddenly saw a pair of eyes, dark brown eyes.

Those were Zhou Mingrui's eyes.

Zhou Mingrui was sitting at a table not far from the stage, staring blankly as he watched Zaratulstra and a beautiful woman with a bloody face walk out from the screen. He felt that a dangerous aura lingered on the former, as if he had just emerged from a state that could kill everyone in the hot pot restaurant.

This deeply shocked him, and the goose intestine he was holding with his chopsticks, not yet placed in the pot, froze in midair.

Outside the hot pot restaurant, the sky at 7 pm was still bright.

Zaratulstra's gaze instantly froze.

The next second, he turned his head to look at Lumian.

One of Lumian's eyes had lost focus, dazed and confused, while the other blue eye was shrouded in a bloody mist.

He put away the Sword of Courage and smirked at Zaratulstra, a dangerous yet beautiful smile playing on his lips.

Both of them felt pain simultaneously, as if tightly entangled by invisible tentacles, forcibly being dragged away from the world they relied on for survival.

Their thoughts were also rapidly becoming sluggish and stuttering.

Confirming that the situation was as he had anticipated, Lumian smiled even more happily.

Zaratulstra didn't put up much more resistance, as that would prevent Him from entering the dream again later.

He took a deep look at the Demoness of Despair before him, then left this world along with the force kicking Him out of the dream.

Lumian did the same.

Clap, clap, clap, warm applause suddenly came from all directions in the hot pot restaurant.

Whether that scene of the beautiful woman and the old man walking out of the screen was magic or an application of virtual reality technology, it was worth applauding!

What the audience didn't notice was that behind Zaratulstra, an illusory door discreetly appeared, and Ludwig, dressed in children's formal wear, walked out.

People and objects banished by the Secrets Sorcerer ability, when the time was up, didn't return to their original position but to the side of the person who used the Exile ability.

Ludwig glanced at Lumina and Zaratulstra in front of him, quickly changing his mouth back to its original form.

He walked around to the front and took Lumina's hand.

Lumina remembered that this was her child. Under Ludwig's guidance, she left the stage and walked towards the back of the hot pot restaurant—the resting place for the face-changing performers.

Zaratulstra looked at his position in confusion, and amidst the audience's applause, he also walked off the stage, heading towards the second floor.

After walking seven or eight steps, he saw the stairs, and for some unknown reason, his mood suddenly became joyful.

At this moment, he heard a "bang" sound.

A dim green bullet flew from somewhere above, hitting the side of his head.

On the surface of the glass window in the corner of the second floor, Franca's figure faintly appeared.

Located in the blind spot of surveillance, she had extended the Inevitable Gun slightly out of the glass mirror surface.

Certain Death!

As the gun fired, Zaratulstra's pupils suddenly dilated, and his head exploded, splattering red and white in all directions.

Franca quickly withdrew the Inevitable Gun and calmly left the current glass window using the remaining power of the Ice Amulet.

We may not be able to kill your main body, but can't we kill your dream manifestation?

Without this current identity, let's see how you obtain money and resources, see how long it takes you to get a new identity and return to the dream city!

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Chapter 981: Wrapping Up

[1,787 words]

At a table near the stage, Zhou Mingrui had been observing Zaratulstra and the unknown beautiful woman ever since they walked out from the screen.

Unlike the majority of people who were drawn to the woman with blood on her face, a dazed look in her eyes, and an strangely alluring beauty, he was more focused on Zaratulstra's state and actions.

Of course, during this process, he still used his peripheral vision to keep an eye on the woman, to see her condition and what she would do next.

After just a few seconds, he noticed a strange child appear from behind Zaratulstra, take the hand of the blood-faced woman, walk off the stage, and head towards the resting area for the face-changing performers. Meanwhile, Zaratulstra also looked confused, slowly following them off the stage and approaching the stairs leading to the second floor.

Zhou Mingrui noticed that Zaratulstra's pace quickened as he walked, his expression gradually becoming relaxed and showing a hint of joy.

Just then, he heard a "bang" and saw Zaratulstra's head explode like a watermelon dropped from a great height.

As red and white matter splattered in all directions, the applause, cheers, and chatter in the hot pot restaurant seemed to have been muted, disappearing instantly.

Everything froze or solidified in that moment, except for the fragments of Zaratulstra's head mixed with red and white liquid, blossoming like fireworks.

Thud!

Zaratulstra's corpse fell not far from the stairs.

Zaratulstra is dead... shot to death... In that moment, Zhou Mingrui was extremely confused and bewildered, feeling as if a movie special effect had intruded into daily life, making it all seem very unreal.

In all his life, this was the first time he had witnessed someone being shot to death.

He usually had full confidence in public safety and felt very secure.

The next second, Zhou Mingrui thought of the Li Ming, Luo Fu, and Luo Shan group who had been constantly reminding him to be careful of Zaratulstra. He also remembered that Luo Fu, who had been eating hot pot here just a few minutes ago, had gone to the restroom.

What a coincidence, she just happened to not be in the dining hall...

It couldn't have been her, could it?

Just as this thought flashed through Zhou Mingrui's mind, he heard screams and felt the entire hot pot restaurant in an uproar.

Just as this thought flashed through Zhou Mingrui's mind, he heard screams and felt the entire hot pot restaurant in an uproar.

People had finally reacted.

A bloody shooting had just occurred right before their eyes!

Some people immediately called the police, some tried to leave the hot pot restaurant, fearing there might be more gunfire, while others, both nauseated and terrified, wiped the stains from their faces...

"What happened?" Zhou Mingrui suddenly heard Luo Fu's voice.

This beautiful woman wearing a black T-shirt with sequins and black-framed glasses had returned to her original position.

Luo Shan abruptly stood up, pointing at where Zaratulstra had fallen, and said in a terrified and stammering voice, "S-someone died!"

"Zaratulstra was shot dead!"

Seeing Luo Shan's reaction, Zhou Mingrui doubted his earlier judgment: Luo Shan seems completely unprepared for Zaratulstra's shooting...

"Huh?" Franca, taking advantage of her height, stood on tiptoes to look towards where the body lay.

After seeing the corpse with its head blown apart, her face gradually turned pale, and she hurriedly averted her gaze.

"It's really Zaratulstra?" she asked Luo Shan.

At this point, Luo Shan also suspected it was Luo Fu's doing, because inviting Zhou Mingrui to this hot pot restaurant and sitting near the stage were both Luo Fu's instructions. And just minutes before Zaratulstra was shot, Luo Fu had gone to the restroom and wasn't at her seat.

But Luo Fu's reaction and the change in her complexion made Luo Shan uncertain.

Luo Shan nodded with a grave expression. "Yes."

She was indeed scared. Since becoming a Beyonder, at most she had only killed monsters in the Shaman's world and subtly influenced a few people in reality through her paintings. She had never truly fought with any human, let alone killed one.

She knew Luo Fu and the others' purpose and target, but she hadn't expected them to use such drastic measures.

As she spoke, Luo Shan leaned closer to Franca, wanting to sniff her to check for any lingering gunpowder smell, like they did on TV. But she only caught a whiff of a pleasant, intoxicating fragrance.

Franca's face seemed to pale even more as she murmured, "How did he just die..."

Amidst the commotion in the entire hot pot restaurant, Zhou Mingrui's gaze moved from Luo Shan and Luo Fu's faces to the resting area for the face-changing performers.

He hadn't forgotten about the beautiful yet dangerous woman who had walked out of the screen along with Zaratulstra.

Inside the hot pot restaurant's rest area.

Lumina was led by Ludwig to a corner, where he drew a curtain, as if they were about to change clothes.

The face-changing performers present were all attracted by Lumina's beauty, aura, and dazed expression. No one questioned why she had come in.

After blocking the surrounding gazes, Ludwig took out a mirror from his pocket.

Inside the mirror, Jenna was already waiting.

Jenna reached out with both hands, grabbing Lumina and Ludwig, and pulled them into the mirror world.

Lumina didn't resist; she remembered this was Li Lu's mother.

What confused her was that she thought she was Li Lu's mother, so why did Li Lu have another mother? Yet her memories and consciousness told her this was the truth.

Smack!

As the mirror fell towards the ground, it burst into quiet and eerie black flames, then shattered into pieces.

Having already traversed to a mirror near the Dechuang Garden, Jenna began cleaning the makeup off herself and Ludwig, and removed the Lie earring from Lumina's ear.

Their action plan for this operation was divided into three parts:

The first part was to attempt an assassination;

The second part was to immediately switch to an encirclement attack if the assassination failed;

The third part, if the encirclement attack still couldn't kill Zaratulstra, was to "bring" the enemy before Zhou Mingrui in a way involving mysticism and Beyonder powers. This would likely result in both Zaratulstra and the person who "brought" Him being kicked out of the dream on the spot. Then, Franca, who hadn't appeared or participated in the battle before, would seize the opportunity to covertly assassinate Zaratulstra's dream image—now an ordinary person without an Angel's rank and temporarily unprotected by bodyguards. This would force this character off the stage, no longer able to be used by the real Zaratulstra to approach Huang Tao and obtain money and resources through company mergers and restructuring!

Moreover, this might even prevent Zaratul from re-entering the dream city for a considerable time, until He had a new identity. Lumian and the others would use this window of opportunity to make more attempts.

Because there was a possibility of being exposed to the audience at the end, and also the possibility of the plan failing with Zaratulstra successfully escaping, so except for Lumian who could transform into a female form and Franca who would only carry out the covert assassination in the final stage, Jenna, Anthony, and Ludwig all used the Lie earring to adjust their appearances to some extent, applying near-perfect makeup. Additionally, they used Lumian's Mystery Prying Glasses to add suggestive power to their disguises, making everyone who saw them believe this was their true appearance.

The Mystery Prying Glasses itself was not above Sequence 7, so the mystical effects it produced were not discounted.

In the hot pot restaurant, Mr. Huang, who was on the phone with his daughter, heard the gunshot and commotion in the hall and specifically walked to the stairway to look down.

His face, which had been wearing a faint smile, instantly darkened when he saw Zaratulstra's nearly headless corpse.

He moved the phone from his ear to in front of his eyes, staring at the call interface displaying the words "Bernie".

After a few seconds, Mr. Huang brought the phone back to his ear and said in a gentle voice, "Something's happened at the scene, I need to deal with it. I'll call you back later."

As soon as he hung up the phone, Zaratulstra's subordinates rushed past him in fear, panic, and anger, surrounding the corpse.

Edward—the vice president of Intis Group—followed behind them, approaching Mr. Huang and saying in a low voice, "Besides Zaratulstra, one bodyguard and one negotiator are missing."

Mr. Huang nodded slowly, looking at the chaos in the hall, and sighed. "Call the police, let them handle it."

...

As soon as she resumed her daily appearance in the dream city, Jenna took Lumina and Ludwig back to room 2303 of the Dechuang Garden.

She had used her Ice Mirror Charm once again; now only one use remained.

She then placed Franca's Traveler's Bag on the coffee table.

Franca had gone to the women's restroom under surveillance, used a mirror placed on the water tank to lurk in the surveillance blind spot, shot and killed Zaratulstra, then immediately drank the healing agent provided by the Tarot Club to delay the negative effects of using the special ability of the Inevitable Gun. This would allow the severe illness to manifest after she had been questioned by the police. Of course, before that, her complexion would still show some changes.

After doing this, she quickly handed over the Traveler's Bag and all items related to Beyonders to Jenna, letting Jenna take them away from the scene to prevent the police from discovering any clues.

Jenna took out a bottle of healing agent and handed it to the confused Lumina, saying in a gentle voice, "First, let's treat your wounds."

Lumina took the agent and trustingly opened the cap, tilted her head back slightly, and drank it.

Watching this scene, Jenna was actually quite anxious inside.

She discovered a problem that hadn't been anticipated before.

Lumina had exited the dream in female form, leaving behind Lumina, but the identity woven by Madam Justice was Li Ming, a male.

Normally, when an outsider was kicked out of the dream, their remaining manifestation would maintain daily life based on the woven identity and memories not involving Beyonders, just like "Luo Fu". But now, Lumina and the Li Ming identity were clearly different, even in gender.

This would cause a conflict between Lumina's self-perception and the actual identity situation!

Does this count as actively creating a dream loophole? Seeing that Lumina had quickly recovered, Jenna carefully asked, "Can you still... transform into a male?"

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Chapter 982: Exploiting Loopholes

[1,870 words]

Lumina looked at Jenna with her now fully recovered eye and asked in confusion, "What do you mean by transforming into a male?"

Her previously blinded eye, limited by the effects of the healing agent, was still suppressed at Sequence 7 and recovering more slowly, with vision still blurry.

As expected, she can't do it, or doesn't know how... Jenna's thoughts raced as she quickly fabricated an excuse. "Don't you remember that you like to dress up as a man and wear men's clothes?"

Lumina looked down at her clothes and accepted Jenna's explanation. "Yes, I still like that."

She believed it... She's accepted this character setting? Jenna vaguely grasped the current loophole and probed further, "You seem a bit shaken and confused. Don't tell me you've forgotten that we're a couple raising Li Lu together?"

"Uh..." Lumina was stunned for a moment. "No wonder he calls me mother and you mom. I remember now, that's right!"

She just "remembered" like that? The corner of Jenna's mouth twitched slightly.

Lumina's reaction and changes also confirmed her theory: Due to the conflict between Lumina's true gender and background identity, a loophole had appeared in the dream. Before this loophole was patched, whatever character background story was fed to Lumina, she would become that person!

Of course, this couldn't involve the supernatural or conflict with actual character relationships—Lumina clearly remembered the people around her.

Recalling that she had brought Lumina and Ludwig back through the mirror world, Jenna felt a headache coming on, unsure what kind of changes such details might bring.

After a few seconds of thought, she decided not to mention the mirror world or why Lumina was injured for now, waiting for Lumina to bring it up herself before coming up with an explanation.

She pointed to the bedroom and said, "You look exhausted, and you're not fully recovered. Let me help you to bed to rest."

Lumina nodded slightly.

Jenna then helped her up and said to Ludwig, "You did well today. You can rest for a while before studying. There's food in the bag."

"Okay." Ludwig had been waiting for these words.

He quickly reached out and grabbed Jenna's Traveler's Bag.

After settling Ludwig and tucking Lumina into bed under the air-conditioned blanket, Jenna went to the bathroom to wet a towel to wipe Lumina's face, which still had traces of blood.

Just as she wet the towel, she saw Anthony's figure appear in the vanity mirror.

Jenna immediately felt relieved and turned off the faucet, saying, "I was just about to look for you after settling Lumina and the others. Are you all right?"

She used the name Lumina to quickly inform Anthony of what had happened afterwards.

Anthony asked a follow-up question as if to confirm, "What about Zaratulstra?"

"The third part of the plan was successfully executed," Jenna replied concisely.

Only then did Anthony describe his own experience, "I was transferred to a prison that clearly had defenses against Mirror Traversal. I Hypnotized my 'cellmate' to feel unwell and call for help loudly. Then, using Psychological Invisibility, I slipped out of the cell and made it to the guards' office area, where I finally managed to escape using the mirror I had on me and the Ice Mirror Charm.

"When I returned to the mirror world corresponding to the hot pot restaurant, I found you had already left, so I came here to confirm the situation. There are already police there, and the area behind the mirror might not be safe."

"You can clean off your makeup and return to your original appearance now," Jenna said as she tossed the Lie earring into the mirror. "I've already done anti-divination using mirror magic, and Queen Mystic will help with the aftermath. Don't worry, go home and rest. I'll keep Ludwig here for now."

"Alright." While the power of the Ice Mirror Charm was still active, Anthony took the Lie earring and traversed back to the rented apartment in Xinhong District.

He could only use his Ice Mirror Charm one more time as well.

Jenna let out a sigh, wrung out the towel, left the bathroom, entered the bedroom, and began wiping Lumina's face.

Along the way, she also checked how much Ludwig had eaten.

...

In the hot pot restaurant, the police had set up a cordon, isolating the corpse and the surrounding area.

Franca, looking shocked, was being questioned along with Luo Shan and Zhou Mingrui by a police officer named Li En.

She said fearfully, "We weren't eating quickly, waiting for the later performance. Then I went to the bathroom, and when I came back, I found someone had died!"

"So you weren't in the dining hall when it happened?" Li En probed.

"Yes, I was in the bathroom," Franca explained.

Li En made a note of this, deciding to check with his colleague monitoring the surveillance footage later to confirm if this woman named Luo Fu had indeed entered the women's restroom and how long she had stayed there.

He then turned to Zhou Mingrui.

"You saw the deceased and a woman walk out from the screen?"

"Yes." Zhou Mingrui glanced at Luo Fu.

After listening and observing for a while, he increasingly felt that Luo Fu didn't seem to be the culprit.

Or is her acting so superb that I can't detect any flaws? Zhou Mingrui mused as he added, "At the time, I thought it was a magic show. Thinking back now, there was something off—that woman had blood on her face..."

Li En asked a few more questions, then walked over to Officer Deng, summarizing the key points from his inquiries.

Deng held a pipe but didn't smoke it in public, only sniffing it to stimulate his nerves and make them more alert.

"Captain, we've found something," another police officer approached and said to Deng.

He was responsible for searching for the beautiful woman who had come out of the screen.

Deng nodded and followed this officer to the back of the hot pot restaurant, entering the resting room for the face-changing performers.

The performers were all a bit scared, huddled in corners, watching the police come and go.

"This is where the suspect was last seen," the officer who led Deng in pulled back a curtain, pointing to the changing area.

Deng scanned the area, his gaze falling on the shattered mirror on the ground.

...

In Trier, inside that luxurious villa.

Lumian opened his eyes to find one eye unable to sense light, while the other was tinged with a faint bloodiness.

Every joint in his body ached, his thoughts occasionally stuttering. His emotions were clearly off—despite achieving his goal, he felt a sinking depression as if trapped in inescapable darkness, along with an impulse to explode and tear everything apart.

This was the corruption from Zaratulstra's Mythical Creature form, which would affect reality, and the resulting damage was real too.

Lumian slowly stood up, confirming the presence of the Traveler's Bag and Beyond items, then stumbled out of the room and down the stairs.

He hadn't immediately drunk the healing agent because he was mainly corrupted, not injured.

When Lumian reached the ground floor living room, Madam Magician, dressed in a yellow and white gown, was already waiting there.

Starlight flashed in Madam Magician's eyes, condensing into an illusory book that instantly flipped to a certain page.

Accompanied by an ethereal, illusory voice, drops of sweet dew fell, sprinkling onto Lumian, washing away his blood stains without wetting his clothes.

Lumian's blinded eye gradually regained sight, and the discomfort in his body quickly dissipated.

"The best way to deal with your current condition would actually be to have Mr. Sun come and purify you," Madam Magician said with a smile, "but you have too many things that need purification, and the rank is too high. That might be even more detrimental to you. Now, your spirit and mind certainly still have residual corruption. Later, Madam Justice will come to give you a targeted treatment. Fortunately, the corruption from the dream has also been suppressed to Sequence 7. As long as you don't encounter the Celestial Worthy, it shouldn't be a major problem."

Lumian tucked his falling black hair behind his ear and briefly recounted the actions he and the others had taken against Zaratulstra, as well as the assistance provided by Queen Mystic.

During this, Madam Magician gestured for him to sit in an armchair.

"I don't know if Franca ultimately killed Zaratulstra's dream image, but it shouldn't be a big issue. At the time, Zaratulstra's bodyguards were all in the private room upstairs, and the other demigod of the Seer pathway was stationed at the hotel. Even if Mr. Fool subconsciously believed that Zaratulstra also possessed Beyond powers, he would

just be an ordinary Sequence 7, without special abilities or an Angel's rank," Lumian said finally.

Madam Magician replied, "Divination on Mr. Fool's dream situation is very restricted and dangerous. I'm not sure yet if Two of Cups was successful. Well, we can ask Miss Justice when she arrives. She can glimpse some details of the dream using her Dreamweaver ability.

"What we need to pay attention to now is that your actions were a strong stimulus to Zhou Mingrui. No one knows what changes might occur in the dream next."

Lumian nodded, saying thoughtfully, "This time, our biggest gain wasn't kicking Zaratulstra out of the dream and likely being able to eliminate His corresponding dream manifestation. It was verifying one thing."

As Madam Magician turned her gaze to him, Lumian spoke slowly, "As long as we perform actions deeply involving Beyonders in front of Zhou Mingrui and make him feel danger, whether it's the subordinates of the Celestial Worthy or us, we'll all be kicked out of the dream and quickly marionettized.

"On this point, no matter what stance people take, they receive the same treatment."

...

Affected by the shooting incident, Zhou Mingrui, Franca, and Luo Shan couldn't continue eating hot pot.

Since many dishes hadn't been touched, Luo Shan was hesitant about how to pay the bill and how much to give.

At this moment, the hot pot restaurant manager came over and proactively said to them,

"No need to pay, no need to pay. Mr. Huang from Intis Group said he's covering everything. He said it was their client's issue that prevented everyone from enjoying their meal, so he'll foot the bill."

"Mr. Huang is as generous as ever," Zhou Mingrui remarked.

Luo Shan strongly agreed.

Seeing that Luo Fu wasn't feeling well, Zhou Mingrui didn't suggest finding another place to eat. He politely saw the two ladies off in a ride-hailing car.

Franca had been holding up, but upon returning to Dechuang Garden and entering the elevator, she suddenly went weak and leaned against Luo Shan.

"What's wrong?" Luo Shan asked in surprise.

"I seem to be... falling ill... How sudden..." Franca herself was puzzled.

Luo Shan didn't get off at the 15th floor but supported Franca to the 23rd floor.

Upon seeing the door of Room 2303, Franca suddenly "woke up".

The illness was due to using the Certain Death effect of the Inevitable Gun!

I really killed Zaratulstra...

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Chapter 983: A Glimpse

[1,856 words]

Looking at the door of Room 2303, Franca suddenly recalled everything.

Considering that if the shooting of Zaratulstra was successful, the police department would inevitably be involved in the investigation. Regardless of whether the police department previously had Beyonders, now that Zhou Mingrui himself had gained Beyonder abilities and the dream subconscious recognized the Sequence 7 level, they, as representatives of the "official" side, would certainly have gained mystical power enhancements. Therefore, Lumian and the others had already thought of ways to avoid subsequent investigations.

Starting from the fact that the main officers of the dream city's Police Department were based on the Nighthawks of the Church of Evernight, Lumian reasonably deduced that their most commonly used and convenient method for finding clues in public was to forcibly drag suspects into a dream and directly question them there.

For this reason, he had Anthony give Franca a psychological suggestion in advance, making her forget everything related to the incident as soon as she drank the healing agent. The corresponding psychological suggestion would only be completely lifted when she returned to Dechuang Garden and saw the rented room.

This way, even in the dream, Franca's performance would be flawless.

If her own subconscious didn't believe she had shot Zaratulstra, how could she show any abnormality in the dream!

The performance that Luo Shan and Zhou Mingrui saw from Franca also came from her instinctive reactions, not acting. Only her complexion was enhanced by the negative effects of the Inevitable Gun, so it was completely flawless.

Phew... that shot of mine was really cool, calm, relaxed, natural, composed, that's what an assassin should be like! Franca, feeling a bit feverish and confused, proudly praised herself in her heart.

By this time, Luo Shan had already rung the doorbell and saw Jenna open the door.

She was about to ask in a low voice, "Was Zaratulstra's death your doing?" when she suddenly noticed a small boy writing furiously at the dining table.

"Who's that?" Luo Shan swallowed the question she was about to ask.

Franca let go of Luo Shan's support, glanced at Ludwig, and said with unsteady steps and a smile, "My godson."

Theoretically speaking, that's right!

As soon as Franca finished speaking, she was already panting, looking as if even talking was a great effort. Jenna quickly supported her.

Seeing this, Luo Shan waved her hand and said, "Get well soon. You probably won't need to work overtime tomorrow, you can rest at home."

The big client is dead, what overtime would there be!

Back in Room 1502, Luo Shan took out her phone and sent a WeChat message to Jenna:

"Is there anything wrong with Luo Fu? Does she need to go to the hospital?"

She intended to use this to open the conversation, then ask Jenna if "Zaratulstra's death was related to them".

Jenna quickly replied: "She took some fever medicine, let's observe for a while before deciding.

"I heard there was a shooting at the hot pot restaurant where you were eating?"

She instead asked about Zaratulstra being shot... What does this mean? Could it really not have been them? Luo Shan wondered, once again doubting her own deductions.

She briefly told Jenna about what happened in the hot pot restaurant, watching to see how she would respond.

Jenna sent a emoji: "No wonder Luo Fu got sick. She always falls ill when frightened, but she also recovers quickly. She'll be fine in a couple of days."

That doesn't make sense... She's a powerful Beyonder, from a future on the edge of the apocalypse; she must have seen countless deaths. How could she get sick from being frightened by a single shooting? Just as Luo Shan had this doubt, she suddenly understood what Jenna really meant: We'll tell you the truth about this matter in a couple of days.

Is it because this is the crucial period of the police investigation, and they're worried that if I know who the real killer is, I might let something slip or become nervous and anxious, and then be questioned by the police? Luo Shan nodded in understanding.

She then felt somewhat happy.

In the past, she wouldn't have been able to pick up on such hints. Sometimes when others mocked her, if it wasn't obvious enough, she wouldn't even realize it. But now, she had grasped the hidden meaning in the words!

Ah, I've grown too. Luo Shan leaned back on the sofa contentedly and started using her phone.

Soon, she saw the police announcement soliciting key information, part of which read: "This woman is involved in the case. We hope the public will actively provide clues..."

Next to this part of the content was a photo. The woman in the photo was the one who had walked out of the screen with Zaratulstra.

Luo Shan could clearly see that the photo came from someone's phone at the scene rather than from surveillance cameras. It captured the woman's exquisite and elegant features, her confused yet seductive gaze, and her blood-stained face quite clearly, bringing that dangerous beauty to life.

Looking at it again, she's still very beautiful, even a bit more beautiful than Luo Fu and Jenna when they're not downplaying themselves... Luo Shan mused as she scrolled through the comments:

"Such a beautiful woman, why become a villain?"

"I'm not just judging by her looks, but I feel like there's no way she'd kill someone for no reason, right?"

"Sister, give me a shot!"

"Do all the commenters let their morals follow their appendages?"

"Isn't she more beautiful than those female celebrities nowadays? She could definitely squeeze into the top tier!"

"This is my dream lover, her face stained with blood, holding a gun, pressing it against my head, forcing me to give up my true heart."

"So, who exactly was killed?"

Luo Shan scrolled through with a smile for a few minutes, then suddenly remembered something.

She had forgotten to check the details of the room.

Ever since Luo Fu and Jenna reminded her to be careful of Zaratulstra's group potentially attacking her in secret, every time she returned home, she would use her Beyonder ability to examine the details of every corner, to avoid being assassinated or ambushed.

Luo Shan stood up and walked to the oil painting of a parrot, extending her hand towards it.

The colorful parrot poked its beak and upper body out of the oil painting and said crisply, "No one has been here."

Luo Shan stroked the parrot's feathers, then turned and walked to the window.

She looked outside, raised her right hand, and pinched her eye socket.

She wanted to use a Reporter's ability to observe and uncover the true world.

This wasn't because she didn't trust the parrot, but because there were some intrusions the parrot couldn't detect.

However, she didn't dare to observe the true world for too long. Every time she used this ability, she felt danger and only dared to maintain it for about ten seconds.

This could only be used to look at the "corners" that the parrot couldn't reach.

The next second, the light and shadows before Luo Shan's eyes changed, and different scenes of the surrounding area overlapped in a strange way, presenting themselves in a chaotic and complex manner.

Luo Shan quickly saw the glass windows connecting to the dark world, saw the oil paintings pressed against the glass windows, saw different rooms stacked together like

building blocks, saw people doing different things in different rooms yet mixing with each other, saw the thin gray fog permeating the edges of all these scenes.

What exactly is this fog... Luo Shan instinctively frowned.

Every time she used a Reporter's ability to observe reality, she would discover this thin gray fog, but she never knew what it symbolized, what it represented, or where it came from.

Just as Luo Shan noticed that the movements of a man in one of the rooms seemed to stutter, the colorful parrot fluttered its wings in her line of sight.

Then, she saw Luo Fu lying on the sofa, physically cooling herself with an ice pack.

Then, she heard Luo Fu's weak voice: "Is this what happens after being kicked out of the dream in a female identity?"

Kicked out of the dream... Luo Shan was stunned.

The scene before her eyes immediately shattered.

She instinctively ended her observation of "reality".

Luo Shan stood by the window, her expression bewildered as she recalled what she had just heard.

Kicked out of the dream? Did Luo Fu mean to say this is a dream? Was her condition last time because she was kicked out of the dream? Luo Shan's gaze gradually became vacant.

After a few seconds, she murmured very softly and weakly, "If this is a dream, then what am I..."

...

Late at night, the bedroom door where Franca and Lumina were sleeping opened silently, and a figure walked out without making any noise.

It was Lumina in her nightgown, her eyes like highland lakes, both confused and irritated.

Lumina walked along the darkest areas, stealthily reaching the door and unlocking it.

Then, she put her hand on the handle, trying to open the main door.

But the handle didn't move at all.

Is the lock broken? Just as Lumina showed a surprised expression, she heard Jenna's voice from behind. "Where are you going?"

Lumina turned around quickly, looking at Jenna. "Didn't you take Li Lu to An Ruide's place?"

"We later came back, but you were all asleep. I thought I shouldn't disturb you, so I just slept here on the sofa." Jenna stood up from the sofa and asked curiously, "You want to go out? It's the middle of the night."

"I-I feel very stuffy, very depressed, I want to go out for a walk," Lumina explained, "But the door lock is broken."

She then laughed self-mockingly. "Am I too unlucky?"

Being unlucky is normal, and inevitable, this is the negative impact of using the Circle Inhabitant effect... Jenna didn't explain, but shook her head and said, "The hot pot restaurant incident isn't over yet, and your body hasn't fully recovered. If you go out for a walk now and someone sees you, it will be very troublesome."

"Alright." Lumina pursed her lips and said, "I-I feel like there's always a voice, an impulse in my heart telling me to go out."

"A voice?" Jenna frowned, becoming more vigilant, "Go where?"

Lumina didn't conceal.

"On the one hand, I want to go to the rooftop, to feel the wind, to see if there are any stars, and to space out a bit. On the other hand, I want to go to a certain place, that place is calling me."

"Which place?" Jenna asked.

Lumina tried hard to recall. "I think it was... I think it was..."

She paused for a moment, finally remembering. "Mushu Hospital."

"Mushu Hospital." Jenna's pupils dilated slightly.

She suddenly remembered that Lumian, that is, Lumina, really did have the bloodline of Omebella, the Child of God—the Great Mother.

This wasn't a ruse to deceive Grimm and the others!

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Chapter 984: A Tranquil Night

[1,842 words]

Jenna's mind instantly tensed up. She decided to placate Lumina and not give her the opportunity to go to Mushu Hospital, until Lumina returned around 7 or 8 pm the next evening.

She looked at Lumina and said sincerely, "The investigation into the hot pot restaurant shooting hasn't ended yet. If you go to Mushu Hospital, you might be taken to the police station. Even if the police can prove you're not related to Zaratulstra's death, it will take a considerable amount of time. You'll be detained for at least a few days, which could cause you to lose your job."

Hearing the phrase "lose your job", Lumina showed a not-so-obvious expression of fear.

"Yes, I should hide for a couple of days. After that, going to work disguised as a man shouldn't be a problem."

She had already been instilled with the setting of working as a security guard while disguised as a man.

Jenna didn't dare to relax. She glanced at the curtains blocking the bright moonlight and said to Lumina,

"We can't go to Mushu Hospital, but we can go to the rooftop to feel the breeze and relax a bit."

"Okay," Lumina said, an uncontrollable smile appearing on her clean and clear face.

Jenna first fixed the door lock, then took Lumina out of Room 2303 and to the rooftop via the elevator and stairs.

Throughout the process, she hid a mirror in each hand, using them to reflect light and create illusions to conceal herself and Lumina from the surveillance cameras.

Feeling the cool breeze that had lost its scorching heat in the night, Lumina half-closed her eyes and took two deep breaths.

She then walked to the parapet wall at the edge of the rooftop, pointed at the top, and asked for Jenna's opinion, "Can I sit up there?"

"Normal people can't since it's very dangerous. But you're fine, your sense of balance is very good, even better than acrobats," Jenna wasn't afraid of Lumina falling. She had enough ability to rescue her, so she wanted to see if the loophole hadn't been patched yet, and if by constantly suggesting to Lumina that she had abilities beyond ordinary people, whether Lumina would actually possess Beyonder powers.

Lumina put her hands on top of the parapet wall and lightly jumped up, preparing to sit down.

Suddenly, her hand slipped, and she lost her balance, about to fall towards the ground a hundred meters below.

At that moment, she felt several invisible ropes pulling at her, helping her stabilize.

"Phew, that scared me to death..." She turned her body sideways, looked at Jenna who was already sitting nearby, and patted her chest.

She thought Jenna had caught her.

Jenna, who had lightly wrapped Lumina with invisible spider silk for protection, realized she had overlooked something.

This person was still under the negative effects of misfortune brought by the Circle of Binding. Even if she had gained excellent balance based on Jenna's suggestions, she would fail due to extreme bad luck.

"Be careful," Jenna specially cautioned.

Lumina responded tersely and nodded lightly.

She looked at the lit internal roads of the residential area below for a few seconds, then raised her head, casting her gaze towards the bright moon in the sky.

The moonlight and the city's light pollution had hidden the stars from view.

Lumina supported herself with both hands on top of the parapet wall, quietly looking at the moon, completely absorbed.

After an unknown amount of time, she suddenly said, as if talking to herself, "A poem came to mind."

She didn't turn her head or look at Jenna, still gazing at the bright moon in the sky.

"What poem?" Jenna was enjoying the current peace and tranquility.

Lumina maintained her contemplative posture and said in a slightly ethereal voice, "Raising my head, I see the bright shining moon,

Bowing my head, I think of my hometown."

...

At the Police Department, in a certain meeting room, the lights were still bright late at night.

Lun Xiande stood in front of the whiteboard, pointing at two photos and said, "We can make a judgment that this case involves supernatural powers. The killer, or rather the criminal group, can use mirrors and the mirror world behind them."

One of the two photos was of the broken mirror in the changing room, and the other was of the shattered window in the private room where the victim was.

Officer Deng sat below, nodding lightly, indicating for Lun Xiande to continue.

"Therefore, those who were not in the hot pot restaurant's main hall and were not under surveillance during the corresponding time period are all suspects and need further investigation.

"They likely went to surveillance blind spots, used mirrors they carried with them to sneak back into the hot pot restaurant's main hall, waiting for the victim to return from the mirror world. If the victim returned, they would deliver a fatal blow. If not, it would mean their accomplices had already succeeded."

Deng raised his hand, pointing out a flaw in Lun Xiande's reasoning.

"It's also possible that they were always lurking behind a mirror or a glass window, not having appeared in the main hall of Shujin Hot Pot Restaurant before.

"Judging from how well this group utilizes the mirror world, they didn't need to send someone to the main hall of the hot pot restaurant in advance to wait by eating hot pot. They could have waited until the time was right, or received a signal, then entered the mirror world from afar, arriving at the predetermined assassination location. Look, the woman who walked out of the screen with Zaratulstra hadn't appeared in the main hall before either."

After speaking, Deng raised his palm and sniffed the tobacco pressed in his pipe.

"Yes," Lun Xiande admitted that the captain's point was valid. "But we still need to re-investigate those who left the main hall of the hot pot restaurant during that time period but weren't recorded by surveillance cameras in the corresponding state at the time of the incident."

"Remove the latter condition," Deng thought for two seconds and said, "People who can use the mirror world can also deceive surveillance cameras. You should know that surveillance cameras record based on optical principles, and those who master mirrors are good at affecting light and creating optical illusions."

After Lun Xiande nodded, Deng turned to Li En and said, "Tell us about the preliminary investigation results."

Li En stood up, taking Lun Xiande's place.

"So far, we've used dream interrogation on seventeen people without letting them notice anything unusual.

"Luo Shan: Very surprised about Zaratulstra's death, couldn't believe it.

"Zhou Mingrui: Very cautious about Zaratulstra, but also didn't anticipate Zaratulstra's death.

"Luo Fu: She left the main hall at the time and went to the ladies' room. There's no surveillance in the bathroom, but she was also very surprised about Zaratulstra's death, clearly shocked.

"We initially listed these three as key investigation targets because they're all employees of the Intis Group. They might have been instructed by some powerful figures within the Intis Group who don't want a merger and reorganization, to assassinate Zaratulstra at Shujin Hot Pot Restaurant and disrupt the ongoing business negotiations. But none of them knew that Huang Tao and Zaratulstra were also in Shujin Hot Pot Restaurant, and Luo Shan and Zhou Mingrui never left the main hall...

"The preliminary conclusion is that they don't have any issues."

Deng expressed agreement, and Lun Xiande didn't say anything.

After thoroughly discussing the case, Deng stood up and said to his subordinates,

"Currently, there are two key points. First, investigate the remaining suspects, including those mentioned by Lun Xiande and those with substantial motives. Second, find the woman who walked out of the screen with Zaratulstra. Although she didn't attack Zaratulstra at the time, the fact that she came out of the screen itself is worth noting."

"Yes, Captain," Lun Xiande, Li En, and other officers stood up and responded.

Deng smiled and said seriously, "This involves foreign guests and major business activities. You've all worked hard. I'm going to report to Chief Yagates now."

...

After looking at the moon and feeling the night breeze for half an hour, Jenna took Lumina back to Room 2303.

"Rest now, your body hasn't fully recovered yet," Jenna said, pointing to the bedroom.

Lumina, wearing her nightgown, opened the door and entered the bedroom. She found that the sick Franca had also woken up at some point due to her absence.

"Do you feel better now?" Franca had already learned from Jenna via WeChat about what the two had done.

Lumina looked at Franca and nodded with complex emotions. "Much better."

Her emotions were complex because she remembered that Luo Fu and she were also in a romantic relationship.

Yet this didn't affect her relationship with Jenna.

I thought I was just an ordinary yuri fan... How did the yuri circle become so messy? Am I really a player? Lumina sat on the edge of the bed and said to Franca,

"Let's sleep, I still have to work tomorrow."

Security guards worked in shifts.

Franca looked at Lumina and said with a smile, "Did you forget? You took two days off, Friday and Saturday. Your director, Grimm, approved it."

Lumina blinked. "Oh, right... I forgot. No wonder I don't have to work the middle shift today and can go directly to Shujin Hot Pot Restaurant in the evening..."

Looking at Lumina like this, Franca suddenly felt she was a bit adorably silly.

After the two in the bedroom went back to sleep, Jenna also lay down on the sofa, closed her eyes, and entered deep sleep.

After a while, her Astral Projection arrived in Luo Shan's Shaman world. She saw the girl still guarding by the translucent barrier, having repelled a new round of attacks from the monsters.

From the corner of her eye, Jenna saw Franca's Astral Projection wandering around in a daze like the other people around.

This indicated that Franca, due to her illness, had entered and then exited her consciousness.

Next, Jenna also found Lumina's Astral Projection, who also lacked clear consciousness.

"She really isn't a Beyonder..." Just as Jenna had this thought, she suddenly realized something.

Luo Shan must know!

It was hard to hide from her in the Shaman's "domain".

The next second, Jenna saw Luo Shan half turn her body and say to her, "So Zaratulstra was really killed by you guys."

Luo Shan had seen Lumina's Astral Projection, seen this beautiful woman who had walked out of the screen with Zaratulstra.

"Yes, we didn't tell you earlier because we were worried the police might have special methods to confirm whether you were lying," Jenna explained.

Luo Shan asked in confusion, "Wasn't Luo Fu afraid of being caught lying?"

"She was hypnotized in advance," Jenna didn't conceal.

Luo Shan fell silent. After several seconds, she asked in a low, extremely difficult tone, "Is this... is this really a dream?"

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Chapter 985: I Don't Believe It

[1,879 words]

Hearing Luo Shan's question, Jenna was stunned.

Why would she suddenly ask such a question?

How did she suddenly think this was a dream?

How did she know? Who told her?

After coming to her senses, Jenna carefully asked in return, "What dream?"

Luo Shan looked at her for several seconds. "A Reporter has an ability to observe the truth, to see different scenes within a certain area, but it can't be maintained for too long. I've been using it often lately to check if anyone is hiding in my home or if there are any traps.

"When I came back in the evening, I used it once and saw you and Luo Fu talking. I heard Luo Fu asking about being kicked out of the dream."

So that's how it is... So that's what observing the truth means... Jenna's first reaction was "Don't panic, I'll make up a reason on the spot," but after seeing Luo Shan's eyes filled with deep sadness, confusion, and pain, she closed her mouth and remained silent.

Luo Shan took a moment before saying, "So, when Luo Fu suddenly became like a different person last time, it was because the consciousness from outside the dream was kicked out?"

"So... this really is a dream?"

Jenna remained silent for several seconds, her tone becoming somber. "This is Zhou Mingrui's dream."

Luo Shan opened her mouth, but couldn't say anything. Her expression gradually became vacant.

Jenna continued, "Some people want Zhou Mingrui to continue sleeping until the apocalypse comes, while others want to wake him up so he can lead everyone to resist the apocalypse."

As she said these words, Jenna felt sympathy for Luo Shan while keeping her mind highly focused, waiting for the possible dream rejection that might come.

She had almost revealed the essence of the matter.

With Lumina already kicked out of the dream, Franca ill, and the police department highly focused on the horrible case of Zaratulstra's shooting, Jenna wasn't prepared to conduct further experiments.

Even if she wanted to experiment, the target would be Peng Deng or Zhou Mingrui. It was unlikely to reveal the truth to Luo Shan now. That would require a gradual, step-by-step approach.

No one would accept that they were fake, that their existence was meaningless. This would cause unpredictable shock to Luo Shan. Jenna could hardly imagine what kind of changes this would cause in Luo Shan.

Compared to this, being kicked out of the dream wasn't a particularly serious problem. After all, she could enter again.

Of course, it would be best not to be kicked out. Otherwise, the weak and sick Franca might not be able to control Lumina and prevent her from secretly going to Mushu Hospital.

Luo Shan's lips trembled for a while before she finally said, "So, I'm just an illusory figure in someone else's dream?"

Before Jenna could respond, Luo Shan raised her hand to touch her own face, then suddenly shook her head. "I don't believe it... I don't believe it... I don't believe it! This isn't a dream, and I'm not fake!"

At this moment, Jenna wanted to persuade her to shift her attention, to find new meaning, but the words caught in her throat and she couldn't form a sentence.

Luo Shan cried out for a while before finally calming down.

She looked at Jenna again and said, "Every time, every time I observe the truth, I see grayish-white fog. It's in every scene. Wh-what is it?"

Jenna pondered for a moment and then said, "It might be, it might be the boundaries of the dream."

Luo Shan fell silent again, staring intently at Jenna's eyes as if grasping at the last straw.

She slowly lowered her head, turning her body while mumbling, "No, it's not like this... I don't believe it..."

"I don't believe it..."

She completely turned her back on Jenna, facing the translucent barrier and the monsters hiding in the deep darkness beyond it alone.

...

Trier, beside the Srenzo River, in a café with outdoor seating.

Lumian wore sunglasses and had long hair draped over his shoulders. Basking in the bright sunlight, he held a cup of Intis coffee, his mind wandering as he gazed at the wide river, the classical buildings on the opposite shore, the steam-belching iron ships, the bustling and lively river island, and the occasional airship passing by, enjoying a rare moment of leisure.

He temporarily had nothing that needed to be done.

He had originally planned to take advantage of his return to the real world to visit Bansy Island, seeking special scenes that could maximize the effectiveness of the corpse wax candle. But after careful consideration, he abandoned this plan.

There were uncertain risks in Bansy Harbor. If it led to him being trapped there, unable to enter Mr. Fool's true dream, or directly resulting in his death, it would significantly affect the subsequent progress of the awakening plan.

Lumian was clear about which of these two matters was more important.

He had also considered whether to go to the New City of Silver, enter the underground, and borrow the Grade 0 Sealed Artifact—Gift of the Land—to bring it into the dream city, enhancing the team's power. After all, for him, he could return to Mr. Fool's dream using the lucky coin regardless of where he fell asleep, and the New City of Silver was also a safe place.

In the end, Lumian erred on the side of caution and didn't make this risky attempt.

He carried Omebella's bloodline, and in the dream city, those blessed by the Great Mother like Grimm viewed him as the Great Mother's Child of God. The underground of Mushu Hospital still concealed the Great Mother's influence and erosion of the dream city. If he added the Gift of the Land transformed from the real Omebella's remains on top of that, Lumian dared not imagine what problems might arise.

He worried that as soon as he brought the Gift of the Land into the dream city, he might find his dream manifestation appearing in basement one of Mushu Hospital, with the Gift of the Land fusing with his body, allowing Omebella to be fully reborn.

And such an Omebella might be able to withstand the divine descent of the Great Mother.

Unable to do this or that, Lumian could only give himself a day off. As for making new Ice Mirror Charms, he had to wait a bit longer, because his misfortune had not completely dissipated.

Yes, although he had used Circle Inhabitant within the dream city, after returning to reality, he still bore the negative effect of misfortune.

Correspondingly, he could only use the Circle of Binding effect of his Circle Inhabitant seven more times, and using Circle Inhabitant twice had stacked his misfortune to six hours, which didn't take effect immediately.

The types of Circle Inhabitant he used on Zaratulstra's mirror projection and Historical Void image were not the same. One was to recreate the scene, the other was to fix the position.

Is the essence of negative effects reflecting in reality that using Beyonder items in dreams causes Beyonder items in reality to be activated as well, thus producing corresponding negative effects? Lumian took a sip of coffee, allowing his body and mind to relax.

He silently sighed. A rare moment of leisure in this fleeting life...

After a while, Lumian gazed at the gently rippling, relatively clean water surface, breathing in the cool breeze from the river, and spontaneously thought, Is the other 'me' also daydreaming like this now?

He had considered the problem of identity conflict corresponding to his female form being kicked out of the dream, but he hadn't reminded Jenna and Franca about it, only telling them to be careful of the influence brought by Omebella's bloodline.

He felt that this situation might gradually awaken some of Aurore's qualities in his dream self.

...

At 8 am, Dechuang Garden.

Franca had just groggily woken up when she saw Lumina standing by the bay window, looking at the already brilliant sunlight outside, lost in thought.

After a night's rest, Franca's condition had improved considerably. She was no longer weak all over, and walking was no longer a problem.

"What... are you looking at?" she tentatively asked Lumina.

Lumina didn't turn around, her tone slightly distant as she said, "I really want to go for a walk. It's not too hot at this time."

"Let's wait for things to blow over," Franca suggested. "How about we play computer games?"

"What games?" Lumina turned around.

"..." Franca suddenly fell silent.

Without a computer, what computer games could they play?

They didn't even have a gaming console!

They had to save every penny for when they needed to rent useful items from the Star Dream Provisions Store or complete crucial tasks. In daily life, non-essential expenses were always cut wherever possible.

"Mobile games then..." As she spoke, Franca stopped again.

What games wouldn't lag on their cheap phones?

"Let's play Fighting the Landlord!" That was all she could say.

At this moment, Jenna walked in, supporting Franca to the bathroom to wash up.

After closing the bathroom door, Jenna kept an ear out for any movement outside, worried that Lumina might suddenly run out, while lowering her voice to tell Franca about Luo Shan's situation.

Franca sat on the toilet, her mouth half-open, completely stunned.

After hearing Jenna's full explanation, she sighed deeply.

"We still don't understand enough about the abilities of the Reporter Sequence..."

She could understand how Luo Shan felt now. If someone with authority told her that her life since transmigrating was fake, that her past was also fake, that she was just an illusory character existing in a dream, she would certainly suffer a huge blow. Not having a breakdown on the spot was already quite good.

Even though they had thought about using Luo Shan to awaken Mr. Fool, Franca had previously hoped to persuade her with fabricated stories, not to tell her the truth.

Some truths were best never known.

They represented despair.

Franca pondered for a moment, then said desperately, "Can we find an excuse to cover it up? Not saying we lied to her, but designing some events to let everyone 'discover' together that the dream theory is just another layer of disguise, not the final truth. I think Luo Shan could accept such a development. People can deceive themselves about certain things. Hasn't she been saying she doesn't believe this is a dream?"

"Moreover, we can't provide strong enough evidence to prove this is a dream!"

Jenna fell silent for a moment before saying, "We can only handle it this way for now. During this period, we need to find a way for Anthony to placate Luo Shan, or have him provide treatment directly."

Franca nodded lightly, suddenly showing a thoughtful expression.

She looked at Jenna and said slowly, "Based on our previous speculation, Luo Shan is a dream character shaped by Mr. Fool's divided subconscious, combined with corresponding images from memory. In a broad sense, she is equivalent to a part of Mr. Fool.

"After hearing the truth about the dream, the dream city didn't show any unusual changes, and you weren't kicked out of the dream..."

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Chapter 986: Girls' Day

[1,937 words]

"Yes." Jenna also expressed confusion, "I thought I would be kicked out of the dream immediately, but nothing happened."

Franca thought for a moment and spoke, "Is it that telling the truth about this world to dream figures other than Zhou Mingrui and a few others doesn't trigger an abnormal reaction? Or is Luo Shan special, a character lightly corrupted by that evil god of the Fantasy Association, no longer closely connected to the dream's main consciousness?"

Jenna shook her head and answered honestly, "I don't know."

She paused, her eyes turning slightly as she said, "If we can pacify Luo Shan this time, we can find an opportunity later to mention Mr. Fool to her, and see if there's any special reaction, or if it causes me to be kicked out of the dream."

"We can also try telling corresponding things to other dream figures and see what results." Franca made an affirmative sound, reaching out both hands to support Jenna as she stood up from the toilet.

After finishing her washing up, she returned to the living room to see Lumina watching TV.

An idea struck her, and she said to Jenna, "Should we invite Luo Shan over to play cards? Four people can play Shengji."

"I'll ask and see if she's willing." Jenna understood that Franca wanted to find something for Luo Shan to do, some entertainment to ease her emotional state, and they could also use the card-playing opportunity to provide subtle psychological guidance.

Jenna immediately picked up her phone and sent Luo Shan a message.

After about seven or eight minutes, Luo Shan replied: "Okay, after I eat breakfast. I just woke up."

"She's willing to come," Jenna told Franca and Lumina.

Lumina knew Luo Shan, aware that she was her colleague, and quickly stood up saying, "Should I change back into men's clothes?"

"No need, no need. Just pretend you don't know her, act like you're another friend of ours," Franca hurriedly shook her head.

If she really changed into men's clothes, wouldn't that make Luo Shan think of Li Ming?

After all, you two do look a bit alike!

Of course, as long as Lumina didn't wear men's clothes or pretend to be a man, no one would associate her with security guard Li Ming. Not to mention the fact that one was male and one was female, even in terms of appearance, at first glance, the difference was quite large, because when Lumina played the role of Li Ming, he used the Lie earring to lower his attractiveness and modify details.

Seeing this, Jenna, on behalf of the still somewhat muddled Franca, went through in her mind the potential problems that might arise when Lumina and Luo Shan meet. She then chatted with Anthony via WeChat about Luo Shan knowing the truth of the world, and consulted on the direction and strategies for psychological guidance.

Soon after, Luo Shan arrived on the 23rd floor and rang the doorbell.

At the same time, Jenna received a reply message from An Ruide: "Talk to her about her past."

Using a certain, experienced, and personally realistic past to reduce the current sense of disillusionment? Jenna roughly understood Anthony's intention.

She immediately followed Franca's instructions and found two decks of playing cards.

The four of them gathered around the coffee table and started playing Shengji, with Lumina and Jenna as partners, and Franca and Luo Shan on the same team.

They weren't gambling for money—Jenna, Franca, and Lumina had no spare cash to gamble. Instead, they bet that whichever pair of partners first upgraded to A could stick five small paper notes on the losers' faces or draw funny patterns with washable paint.

After successfully upgrading to "3", Jenna looked at Luo Shan and casually started chatting, "You mentioned before that your father was a police officer?"

"Yes," Luo Shan's mood had been low all along. As she pushed her cards towards the center of the coffee table, she said, "He was... severely injured while pursuing a cult leader with lots of blood on his heads, and died in the hospital."

"Was he honored as a martyr?" Franca asked.

"Yes." Luo Shan suddenly gave a self-deprecating smile, "When I graduated from university, I actually had the opportunity to work as a civilian employee at the police department, but I also received an offer from the administrative department of the Intis Group. I hesitated for a long time, feeling that I was just an ordinary person who didn't like exercise, so I wasn't suitable to be a police officer. Hence, I finally chose the Intis Group."

Perhaps that's not the only reason? Franca didn't pursue the question.

She simply felt that ordinary people without much ambition couldn't refuse a position in a public department, and it was just a civilian role, not requiring the arrest of criminals.

While waiting for the cards to be dealt, Luo Shan made a sound of agreement.

"This was actually my mother's wish too. Seeing police officers would remind her of my father's death."

"Your mother is in your hometown, not living with you?" Jenna asked, already knowing the answer.

Luo Shan looked at the cards in front of her, her voice gradually becoming distant.

"When I was in university, she fell ill and was hospitalized... It was on and off, she struggled for two years but still didn't make it..."

Before Franca and Jenna could comfort Luo Shan, Lumina suddenly spoke, "My mother was also seriously ill once, frequently going to the hospital. I was still young then, standing at the hospital entrance, watching her being pushed in, my father bent over, accompanying her by her side... I don't remember who was watching me then, I only remember that I was very quiet, didn't cry or make a fuss..."

"I was luckier than you, my mother was cured later."

At this point, Lumina's eyes suddenly became misty, her voice suddenly deepening, "I miss her so much..."

Franca and Jenna suddenly exchanged a glance, both looking a bit surprised.

This wasn't part of Li Ming's background information, nor was it content they had instilled.

Could it be... Franca quickly had a guess.

"I miss my mother too," Luo Shan responded to Lumina.

She seemed to recall her past life, remembering the days when she and her mother depended on each other. Although her emotions were sad, that lifeless feeling had faded considerably.

In the time that followed, Luo Shan's state improved somewhat—while playing cards, Jenna and Franca chatted with her about university life and career experiences, and Luo Shan recounted those events that were deeply etched in her memory.

Franca and Jenna could clearly hear that towards the end, Luo Shan's whole person became excited, as if trying to prove something.

"Let's end this; it's almost noon, I'll go make lunch for you all," Jenna stood up, smiling as she spoke.

Today's losers were Franca and Luo Shan, their faces covered with paper notes written with various funny phrases, and they suffered the indignity of having photos taken as a memento.

"I object! You're trying to kill me by taking advantage of my illness." Franca was, after all, still in a state of illness, her mind not so sharp, and she had done a good job of dragging Luo Shan down in the card game. She grumbled, "I'm bullied when I'm sick and weak!"

Jenna was amused by her.

"Wait until you're better and try again, you used to often lose to me before."

This referred to her Showy Diva days, often being dragged to play cards by the market district's boss "Red Boots" Franca.

Wasn't I just letting you win? Otherwise, how hard would it be for the mighty Witch to use a bit of mystical power to cheat and win easily? Franca grumbled inwardly.

At this moment, Lumina also stood up and said to Jenna, "I'll help you cut the vegetables."

"I'll help too." Luo Shan raised her hand. "The patient is responsible for resting!"

She took the opportunity to peel off the paper notes on her face and walked briskly into the kitchen.

Watching the three of them busy in the kitchen, with occasional laughter and cheerful voices, Franca leaned back against the sofa, peeling off the paper notes on her face, and spontaneously thought, If only this wasn't a dream...

After happily enjoying lunch, washing the dishes, and scrubbing the pots, Luo Shan said goodbye.

She had plans with a university friend in the afternoon.

Jenna and Franca, who was still a bit unsteady on her feet, saw her to the door.

Luo Shan turned sideways, her mouth open as if wanting to say something, but in the end, she just turned her gaze away and waved. "Bye bye."

She quickened her pace and walked straight towards the elevator.

Franca and Jenna watched her enter the elevator before turning back inside, each picking up their own phone.

Seeing their behavior, Lumina finally remembered that she had lost an important item.

"Where's my phone?"

It seemed to have disappeared last night...

"I have it," Franca took out Lumina's phone from her Traveler's Bag.

Before this operation, they had made contingency plans for different developments. Except for Franca, everyone was prepared to be kicked out of the dream, so they simply didn't bring their phones, or gave them to Franca for safekeeping, or left them at home. This way, when kicked out of the dream, they basically wouldn't be found by the Celestial Worthy through their phone contacts, and they wouldn't need to delete their contact list again—it would be too troublesome to add them back later.

Lumina took the phone and unlocked the screen with her fingerprint.

"'Intis Group Grimm' sent me a message... Why is the director sending me a message?" Lumina looked confused.

Franca leaned over and saw that Grimm had sent a emoji: "As expected of you!"

Obviously, Grimm had recognized that the woman who walked out of the screen with Zaratulstra was Lumina, and believed that Zaratulstra's death was done by the Child of God.

Jenna's thoughts raced, searching for an explanation for the relationship between Grimm and Lumina that didn't involve the supernatural.

She carefully fabricated, "Grimm has seen you in women's clothes and has become deeply infatuated with you. He's a masochist who sees you as his master. The more arrogant and cold you are to him, the more satisfied he is. Anyway, just ignore him and let him indulge in his own fantasies."

"Eww... pervert," Lumina looked disgusted.

Then she asked, "What does he mean by 'as expected of me'?"

"Maybe he saw a video or photo of you appearing with Zaratulstra and thinks you killed Zaratulstra," Jenna felt a fatigue from her brain working overtime. "Don't worry, he won't betray you. Instead, he'll keep this secret even more tightly and feel self-satisfied about it."

"..." Franca was left speechless listening to this, feeling that Jenna had been somewhat corrupted by the Internet lately.

"I see." Lumina breathed a sigh of relief.

The three of them each occupied a position, quietly being on their phones while digesting the food they had eaten at lunch.

Suddenly, Franca came across a local news item: "Crimson Moon Hospital's affiliated restaurant launched several mushroom set meals yesterday, which were well-received."

Devil's set meal—no, mushroom set meal? Franca's eyelid twitched, having heard about Li Keji from Lumina and seen the latest episode of "The Great Adventurer".

She remembered that not long ago, Lumina had gone to instigate Li Keji to create a new type of mushroom that could cure the vegetative patient An Xiaotian.

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Chapter 987: Calamity

[1,874 words]

What has Li Keji done again? Franca took a light breath.

She reflexively wanted to check and confirm, hoping to prevent more dangerous things from happening in time, but as soon as she moved her body, she remembered she was still sick and didn't have the ability.

Jenna can't go either; she still has to watch Lumina and not let her run around... Anthony has another task... We certainly can't let Lumina go, the outcome would either be Lumina covered in mushrooms all over her body, or Li Keji getting pregnant... After thinking it through, Franca decided to wait a bit, wait until Lumian returned to the dream city, and go himself.

Li Keji is an ally, no need to worry too much... Li Keji is an ally, no need to worry too much... Franca kept repeating these words to herself.

She planned to forward this news to Lumian, so he would know what happened as soon as he returned to the dream city.

Just as Franca was about to select the option, she suddenly froze.

Shit, I almost slipped up...

Isn't the current Lumian actually Lumina?

Being sick really messes with your head...

Good thing I realized in time...

...

Inside the Tianyue Hotel, in the room next to Zaratulstra's.

The two bodyguards who had originally been following Zaratulstra appeared here, with an elderly man with white hair but a youthful face standing in front of them.

This elderly man wore white training clothes and had his hands behind his back. He paced back and forth near the wall and said, "Still no clues about the killer?"

"No, we can only be certain that a Demoness was definitely involved," one of the bodyguards answered.

The elderly man in white training clothes pondered for a moment and said, "Zhou Mingrui couldn't have appeared at the Shujin Hot Pot Restaurant for no reason; such a coincidence is unlikely.

"Investigate who invited him there, or rather, who induced him to invite people to eat there.

"Luo Shan and Luo Fu, who ate hot pot with him, are key subjects for investigation."

"Yes, Mr. Cui," the two bodyguards responded in unison.

The elderly man referred to as "Mr. Cui" considered for a few seconds and then said, "Be careful when investigating Luo Shan. Previous feedback indicates that Luo Shan belongs to an otherworldly evil god and is a potential collaborator with considerable strength."

The two bodyguards acknowledged and left the room.

After pacing for quite a while, Mr. Cui brought his own bodyguard and silently opened the door to leave.

He deliberately didn't tell the two previous bodyguards that he would also investigate Luo Shan, that he would secretly follow them. If they stepped into a trap or encountered an accident, he would be able to glimpse the truth, catching any adversaries by surprise.

Out of the room, Mr. Cui walked unhurriedly along the thickly carpeted corridor towards the elevator area.

In one of the ventilation openings on the ceiling of the corridor, a pair of eyes was quietly observing him.

Those eyes were deep brown, completely blending into the darkness.

They belonged to Zhou Mingrui.

Zhou Mingrui had somehow sneaked into the ceiling of the corridor at an unknown time, observing every move of Zaratulstra's bodyguards and followers, and observing Mr. Cui's situation.

This was because, when he got up this morning and opened the door to get some good breakfast, he found a letter stuffed in the door crack, with a printed paper pasted on the envelope surface that read "For Zhou Mingrui".

At that time, Zhou Mingrui perplexedly opened this letter and found a photo inside, a secretly taken photo of "Mr. Cui".

On the back of the photo was also paper and text: "This is Zaratulstra's assistant. He will inherit Zaratulstra's will and do some things targeting you."

After reading the content on the back of the photo, Zhou Mingrui's spirit immediately tensed.

He believed this was a reminder from the group that shot Zaratulstra last night. He even suspected that Luo Shan inviting him to eat at the Shujin Hot Pot Restaurant was to let him witness Zaratulstra's death.

What exactly does Zaratulstra's group want to do to me? And what does the group that killed him want to do? Zhou Mingrui couldn't figure out the answer and finally decided to come and secretly observe the target person to see if he could discover any clues.

He thus confirmed that Mr. Cui, who lived next door to Zaratulstra and had no apparent connection to Zaratulstra's negotiation team on the surface, was indeed part of Zaratulstra's group.

He is indeed suspicious, Zhou Mingrui nodded slightly in the darkness within the ceiling.

At the same time, he also noticed some other oddities.

He originally thought he would be inexperienced and clumsy at crawling through ventilation ducts, climbing ceilings, and secretly monitoring, making many mistakes, but in actual operation, he had a strange sense of familiarity and very smoothly accomplished his intended purpose.

This relied on more than just the power of an Assassin.

Yesterday too, when I saw Zaratulstra being shot, I wasn't nervous at all, nor panicked, very calm... Is this the psychological quality of a qualified Assassin, or is there another reason? Zhou Mingrui fell into deep thought.

He vaguely suspected that it wasn't just this world that he didn't understand enough, but also himself.

Mr. Cui, accompanied by his bodyguard, took the elevator to the first floor.

Just as he had taken a few steps towards the revolving door, he suddenly raised both hands to cover his neck.

He felt the rapid arrival of marionettization, and also felt the rejection of the dream.

His breathing became difficult, as if his whole being had been thrown into a void without any objects.

How could this be? Mr. Cui's pupils dilated, not daring to force himself to stay, and voluntarily exited the dream.

Thud!

His bodyguard suddenly collapsed and died on the spot.

A small insect flying nearby also fell to the ground with a splat, motionless.

In the temporary parking lot at the entrance of the Tianyue Hotel, Anthony, sitting in the driver's seat with Ludwig, calmly watched this scene.

The other Seer pathway demigod mentioned by the magic mirror Arrodes had also been kicked out of the dream!

And once the other party lost control of their marionette, the latter was essentially dead.

Lumian and the others, with information provided by the magic mirror Arrodes, hadn't ignored the Seer pathway demigod living next door to Zaratulstra who had helped Zaratulstra discover intruders before. But they all understood that before dealing with Zaratulstra, it wasn't appropriate to act against Mr. Cui, as that would alert them. So, they only secretly photographed Mr. Cui, and after the hot pot restaurant operation was over, Anthony, the only one who could still do things normally, stuffed the pre-prepared envelope into the door crack of Zhou Mingrui's home early the next morning.

With Lumian kicked out of the dream, Franca seriously ill, and Jenna needing to look after two people, Anthony obviously couldn't deal with Mr. Cui on his own, so he could only "get" Zhou Mingrui's help.

Anthony watched the hotel staff hurriedly coming to check on the collapsed bodyguard and the bewildered Mr. Cui, not getting out of the car, taking the opportunity to eliminate the latter's dream manifestation.

It wasn't that he didn't want to, but after his observation, he found that there were police personnel discreetly deployed near Mr. Cui. If he were to act, even with Psychological Invisibility, he wouldn't be able to escape.

That would mean he was confronting the main consciousness of the dream, and the consequences could be more severe than being kicked out of the dream!

Anthony waited patiently, never finding an opportunity, so he decided to act after Lumian returned to the dream city.

When it came to covert killing, Lumian was more skilled than him, Jenna, and Franca!

Anthony chose to go back to rest last night and stuff another letter the next day, rather than going directly, in order to create a time difference.

Under the premise that the corresponding dream manifestation hasn't been killed, the time interval for those kicked out of the dream to return was about the same. If Anthony had reminded Zhou Mingrui last night, then Mr. Cui's return to the dream city and regaining control of his dream manifestation wouldn't be much later than Lumian's, at most a few hours later, and in those few hours, Lumian might not find an opportunity to make his dream manifestation die unknowingly.

Now, after Lumian returned around seven or eight in the evening, he would have nearly a day to plot the murder of Mr. Cui's dream manifestation.

...

In Room 2303 of Dechuang Garden.

Just past 7 pm in the evening, Franca and Jenna, who had been watching Lumina constantly, saw this beautiful woman suddenly change her appearance, becoming male.

Lumian immediately took the Lie earring, changing his facial features in a direction not too similar to Li Ming.

Franca took the opportunity to tell him about the mushroom set meals at Crimson Moon Hospital.

Lumian nodded. "I'll go deal with the other matter first."

As he said this, he stood up.

Franca held back her laughter and pointed at him. "Change your clothes first, don't walk away wearing Jenna's nightgown."

Lumian looked down and discovered that Lumina had been wearing Jenna's nightgown all along.

At 10 pm, in a white car parked by the roadside, Lumian was on his phone as if bored, seemingly waiting for someone.

They had rented a new car, because the previous car was registered under the name "Luo Fu", and if a car rented by Luo Fu happened to appear near the scene of Mr. Cui's death, the suspicion on Franca would be strong enough for an immediate arrest.

Lumian waited for a while, and through the rearview mirror, he saw Mr. Cui walking alone, preparing to cross the intersection to return to the Tianyue Hotel.

As Mr. Cui passed by his vehicle, Lumian's eyes suddenly took on a silver-white color with black.

Eye of Calamity!

Before Mr. Cui had passed the rearview mirror, he had already found the fate branch leading to the other's doom.

In the next second, Lumian hid his left hand wearing the Circle of Binding and slightly raised his right palm.

He touched Mr. Cui's main fate trunk from afar and violently pushed it towards the branch that appeared black.

His spirituality poured out frantically, his expression unchanged, his movements as usual.

Mr. Cui's dream manifestation was completely unaware of this, and the police monitoring him from hidden spots didn't notice anything unusual.

Mr. Cui continued walking for about fifteen to twenty meters, stepping onto the pedestrian crossing.

By now it was truly night, and there weren't many people on this road, nor many cars.

Suddenly, a car driving from afar seemed to lose control due to excessive speed, directly running the red light.

Mr. Cui saw this scene, his pupils suddenly dilating.

Bang!

He was hit and sent flying, his head heavily hitting the ground.

Then, he was run over by the out-of-control car, dying as thoroughly as possible.

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Chapter 988: Father and Daughter

[1,913 words]

988 Father and Daughter

As soon as Lumian heard the sound of the out-of-control vehicle crashing into the curb, he immediately rolled down the window and poked his head out.

He looked towards the intersection about 15-20 meters away, and at Mr. Cui who had been hit and thrown even further, tragically run over.

Almost simultaneously, he saw several figures emerge from different hiding spots, rushing towards the deceased and the vehicle responsible for the accident.

Lumian promptly took out his phone, snapped a couple of photos, and muttered, "Holy shit, there's been a car accident!"

"That driver was speeding like he was in a race, was he drunk?"

He acted like a bystander ready to post on social media and short video accounts.

At this moment, the dented vehicle responsible for the accident completely stalled, unable to start. The car door opened, and a man who could barely stand straight stumbled out.

"Damn, he really is drunk. If you drink, don't drive!" Lumian started recording a video, cursing as he filmed.

Only after the ambulance took away Mr. Cui's body, and the police led away the driver responsible for the accident after cordoning off the area, leaving just the traffic police investigating the scene and the tow truck on standby, did Lumian sit back in his car, as if contemplating how to share what had just happened in various group chats.

Not long after, Anthony, also in disguise, came out of the 24-hour convenience store on the side carrying a large bag of items, opened the car door and got in.

Lumian started the car and drove away from the scene.

They hadn't brought Ludwig with them, having sent the little boy to Jenna's place—if a seven or eight-year-old boy appeared at both the scene where Zaratulstra was shot and where Mr. Cui had the car accident, it would be very suspicious, even if the boy looked different at first glance.

...

In Room 2303 of Dechuang Garden.

Lumian sat in the single armchair and said to Franca and Jenna, "I'll go to Li Keji after midnight."

Pausing momentarily, he added, "Did Lumina show any unusual behavior today?"

Jenna was silent for a couple of seconds, then recounted everything about Lumina's blank stares, her inner impulses, the bad luck surrounding her, getting some fresh air on the rooftop, her words during the card game, and many other detailed behaviors, without hiding anything.

Lumian listened attentively without interrupting, his expression gradually softening.

After Jenna finished speaking, Franca opened her mouth, hesitated for a moment, and said, "If you get kicked out of the dream again, you'll face severe restrictions upon entering for the third time, just like Queen Mystic."

Lumian remained silent for a long while before saying, "I understand."

...

At the edge of a lake, inside a four-story villa.

Bernie Huang returned from outside and walked into the grand, opulent hall.

Every time her classmates came to visit, they would say, "Why is your house decorated like a palace? Don't you find it strange?"

Bernie could only spread her hands helplessly and say, "This is just my dad's preference."

"Where are my dad and the others?" Bernie asked the butler standing in the hall.

She usually lived at school, only choosing to come home on weekends if there wasn't a long holiday.

The butler respectfully answered, "Young Master Huang Xia is exercising in the underground basketball court, Young Master Huang Bo is assembling mini 4WD cars in the toy room, Madam has gone out to attend an art salon, and the Master is in the wine tasting room."

Bernie nodded, walked to the side of the hall, and took the elevator down to the basement.

There was a large wine cellar here, with a secure storage room, and a wine tasting room where you could see the rippling water of the indoor swimming pool.

Huang Tao was sitting on the sofa, holding a glass of pure malt liquor with ice cubes, leisurely savoring it.

"You're back?" He smiled when he saw Bernie come in.

"Why are you drinking again?" Bernie sat down opposite him.

Huang Tao smiled and said, "As I get older, I don't have many hobbies left."

Bernie didn't try to persuade him further, quietly watching as her father took another sip of the temptingly colored liquor and grabbed a few shelled pine nuts from the dish of dried fruits on the table, popping them into his mouth.

After finishing what was in his mouth, Huang Tao asked, "What about your classmate? Didn't she come to visit?"

"Something happened to her biology teacher at the cram school, she's busy dealing with that and doesn't have time," Bernie said simply.

Huang Tao laughed. "You mentioned that before. Really, if he wants to do experiments, he should apply for a job at a proper lab. Why be a biology teacher?"

At this point, Huang Tao looked at Bernie and sighed. "Why don't you like staying at home? There's still some time before school starts, but you've already moved into the dorm."

This isn't my problem... Maybe in Mr. Fool's perception, I'm separate from you all, we rarely get together... Bernie dutifully explained, "I'm involved in a research project."

Huang Tao didn't pursue the matter further, he was just complaining a bit. He changed the subject. "How's that children's book company of yours doing?"

"It's going well," Bernie recalled. "The children's book market is the most profitable area in the physical book market. There's a real demand for repackaging and redesigning classic fairy tales, and we're also nurturing our own children's book authors and illustrators."

"In this area, China started too late and it's still not very mature. There's still a lack of good works. You have a lot of potential," Huang Tao praised his daughter. "At the same time, you need to pay attention to importing copyrights. You can't ignore those excellent foreign children's books and leave them to your competitors."

He seriously instructed his daughter, looking as if he wanted to make Dawn Children's Publishing Company bigger and stronger.

Bernie listened attentively, occasionally offering her own ideas. The father and daughter discussed very harmoniously.

At the end of the discussion, Huang Tao suddenly swirled his drink and said with a sigh, "Do you know what the greatest pain in life is?"

Bernie shook her head.

Huang Tao smiled self-deprecatingly.

"It's watching the people and things you cherish most, the life you yearn for most, being occupied by others, while you can only be locked in a dark and depressing prison."

Bernie looked at Huang Tao without responding.

Huang Tao didn't mind, he just continued to drink his liquor with dried fruits, pouring for himself for a while.

He gradually composed his expression and looked at Bernie. "If you discovered that you were just an illusory character in a dream, and at this time, someone was trying to awaken the master of the dream, what would you do?"

Bernie was silent for a few seconds before saying, "It would depend on the specific situation."

Huang Tao smiled and said, "Then let's be more specific. You clearly know that if the master of the dream is awakened, you will completely disappear. Even if there's another dream, the corresponding person who appears will no longer be the current you. But the person you care about most supports awakening the master of the dream, is willing to take risks for it, even sacrifice themselves. What would you do?"

She looked at Huang Tao, remaining silent throughout.

Huang Tao calmly returned his daughter's gaze.

After a while, he finished the remaining alcohol and stood up, saying, "I'm going upstairs to deal with some matters."

Huang Tao walked out from between the sofa and tea table, passing by Bernie, heading towards the wine tasting room door.

"Dad."

Suddenly, Bernie called out to him.

Huang Tao turned around, a smile already appearing on his face.

"Is there anything else?" he asked.

Bernie also stood up, saying thoughtfully, "I've always been curious, if we don't talk about science, what's inside a mirror, and what's hidden in the depths of a mirror."

Huang Tao looked at Bernie for a few seconds and said, "It hides a great horror beyond your imagination."

After saying this, Huang Tao turned back, opened the wooden door, and walked out of the wine tasting room.

"Great horror..." Bernie stood still, ruminating over these words.

...

Late at night.

Lumian used Teleportation to arrive near Crimson Moon Hospital.

He didn't rush to enter, instead transforming into Lumina's appearance, disguising himself, and walking around Crimson Moon Hospital.

He saw that in the green belts around Crimson Moon Hospital, in the crevices of the walls of various buildings, mushrooms had sprung up like bamboo shoots after a spring rain, all kinds of mushrooms.

These mushrooms hadn't invaded the living space of other organisms, nor did they threaten the structural safety of the buildings. They were just growing quietly and peacefully.

With so many mushrooms, no wonder Crimson Moon Hospital launched a mushroom set meal... They all look edible... Who wouldn't want to use free ingredients? After roughly confirming the situation in the outer area of Crimson Moon Hospital, Lumian hid in a concealed spot, entered a mirror, and made his way to the psychiatric ward.

He wasn't worried about being blocked or trapped by the dream city police in this mirror world, because Lumina didn't have a real identity and had no apparent connection to Li Keji on the surface. Unless high-ranking police officials like Yagates had received a revelation through prophecy or divination that staking out here would provide clues, it was unlikely they would send people here.

And with everyone being suppressed at Sequence 7, Lumian, as a Demoness of Despair, wasn't too afraid of divinations and prophecies pointing to his whereabouts.

After observing the entire ward for a while, Lumian jumped out of the mirror-like object, landing lightly.

He always held a hand mirror, using it to reflect light and create illusions to deceive the surveillance cameras.

Lumian then surveyed the dimly lit corridor lights and the iron doors sleeping in the dark environment. His spirituality didn't give any warnings.

Next, he took a breath, not smelling any blood or other strange odors.

Only then did he gently knock on the metal door of Li Keji's ward.

Knock. Knock. Knock. The knocking wasn't loud, quietly echoing in this area without reaching the nurses' station.

Li Keji's voice suddenly sounded, kept very low.

"Who?"

This time, no white and tender mushrooms came to the window to peek, nor did a large amount of white mycelium emerge from the door crack.

"It's me," the black-haired Lumian answered softly, "The person who asked for your help in treating a vegetative friend before."

"Oh, it's you..." Li Keji still didn't appear behind the iron-barred window of the door, seemingly shrinking in a corner of the bed.

"Has your research made any progress?" Lumian asked.

"I have some ideas, a bunch of failures, and a half-finished product. It still needs verification, I'm not sure what the final effect will be..." As he spoke, Li Keji's voice revealed a hint of confusion, "But some strange things have happened, I might not have time to advance the experiment you want recently."

"What things?" Lumian's spirit suddenly tensed.

What could make Li Keji put aside his mushroom experiments?

After a few seconds, Li Keji answered in a confused, self-musing tone, "I'm pregnant."

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Chapter 989: Bloodline

[1,863 words]

989 Bloodline

Pregnant? Hearing this word, Lumian's scalp instantly went numb.

Li Keji is pregnant?

Pull yourself together; you're a man!

How did he get pregnant? Who did it? When?

Relying on the endurance of an Ascetic, Lumian maintained relative calm on the surface. He asked in a deep voice, "Are you certain?"

"It's definitely pregnancy," Li Keji's voice came from somewhere far from the iron door. "I used to be a doctor, then became a biologist. Do you think I can't tell if it's a pregnancy?"

He really is pregnant... Lumian's whole body went numb.

Among all the Beyonder paths he currently knew of that could make a man pregnant, only those related to the Great Mother could do it!

Did Grimm and the others secretly come to Crimson Moon Hospital to impregnate Li Keji without telling me? That doesn't seem right. For such a big matter, they would have no reason not to report to the Child of God... Moreover, he said that currently in the dream city, only I, as the Child of God, possess godhood and can promote rapid fetal growth while impregnating Li Keji, and this would still require the support of the obstetrics and gynecology department of Mushu Hospital... Lumian's first reaction was to suspect Grimm and other bestowed of the Great Mother, but the information he had previously obtained was insufficient to support this reasoning.

He immediately thought of a possibility.

Zhou Mingrui had received a strong stimulus, causing some changes in the dream that he and others hadn't yet noticed, and the Great Mother could now bestow godhood on a few chosen ones.

It's only been one day, and problems from the changes have already erupted. Could it be this fast?

Besides, Grimm believes I've already impregnated Li Keji, there's no need to do it again...

I've already impregnated Li Keji...

As his brain worked rapidly, Lumian suddenly had an incredible guess.

Could the child in Li Keji's belly be mine?

Amidst his shock, Lumian followed this train of thought.

Last week, I high-fived Li Keji in the psychiatric ward of Mushu Hospital. I used this to falsely claim that I had impregnated Li Keji to deceive Grimm, so he wouldn't suspect my identity as a Child of God...

21:50

Could it be that this contact actually made Li Keji pregnant?

But I only have a bit of Omebella bloodline, and I don't possess any Sower-related abilities...

No, it's just that I don't have them in reality, the objective conditions are completely unsatisfied, but this is a dream...

As long as the dream subconscious believes it, even the most outrageous and absurd things can happen...

At that time, when I high-fived Li Keji, in Grimm's eyes I was the genuine Child of God Omebella, and I do indeed possess Omebella's bloodline. Did this make me roughly equivalent to the real Child of God Omebella in the dream subconscious's perception? And the Child of God Omebella does have the corresponding Beyonder powers to impregnate Li Keji...

Moreover, most importantly, the place where I high-fived Li Keji and said words like "he's already pregnant" was Mushu Hospital, a place where the Great Mother can exert great influence. It's possible that the dream subconscious, confused and misled by the environment there, equated me with the Child of God Omebella...

Yes, there's one more point!

Lumian's pupils suddenly dilated.

They had previously overlooked one thing, subconsciously equating the dream subconscious with Mr. Fool's subconscious.

But in reality, the dream subconscious should be a mixture of Mr. Fool's subconscious and the subconscious of The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings

In this situation, the characters created by the dream subconscious and the changes brought about wouldn't completely originate from Mr. Fool's cognition, nor would they always be beneficial to Lumian and others!

Based on this, the character images in the dream city, including Luo Shan, Ai Nana, Deng, and others, couldn't be simply defined as characters woven by Mr. Fool's subconscious based on his own cognition and the situation in the dream city. Here, Mr. Fool's subconscious needed to be replaced with the dream subconscious.

In other words, Deng, Ai Nana, Luo Shan before drinking the Shaman potion, and other various characters, some came from Mr. Fool's cognition, some from that Celestial Worthy's cognition, some were mainly based on Mr. Fool's cognition but have been secretly spiced up by the Celestial Worthy. They couldn't be thoughtlessly viewed and analyzed as one type.

The environment of Mushu Hospital, as well as Grimm's cognition and the fact that I truly have Omebella bloodline, made the dream subconscious at that time become dominated by the Celestial Worthy, choosing to "believe" that I was the Child of God Omebella, so Li Keji quietly became pregnant after our high-five? Omebella's child is equivalent to a direct descendant of the Great Mother, so when it's born, Li Keji will be completely corrupted by the Great Mother? The more Lumian thought about it, the more horrified he felt.

He thought of an even more terrifying development.

If Mr. Fool was at an absolute disadvantage, and the Celestial Worthy became the ruler of the dream city, He could completely blur the line between truth and falsehood, making the identity of "Child of God Omebella" in the dream city fully activate on the real-world Lumian, becoming real.

At that time, the real Omebella would resurrect and return through Lumian's body.

I almost fell for it without realizing... A cold sweat broke out on Lumian's back.

He remembered a joke he had seen online recently, and couldn't help but laugh self-mockingly. "Pregnancy really can happen from holding hands..."

"What did you say?" Li Keji asked confusedly from inside the ward.

Startled and emotionally stirred, Lumian calmed down and asked calmly, "When did you become pregnant?"

He was still a little in denial.

Li Keji honestly said, "At first I thought it was because I used my own flesh and blood and spirituality to create new mushrooms, causing spores, mycelium, and such things to enter my body and implant in my abdomen. Yes, this was part of my new experiment after you suggested it.

"But after careful examination, the time of pregnancy was clearly earlier."

Lumian fell silent for a moment before responding, "Can I come in to confirm?"

"Sure," Li Keji didn't refuse.

Lumian took a step forward, his figure suddenly disappearing from the corridor and appearing in Li Keji's ward.

At first glance, he didn't see a single mushroom,

This surprised him.

Logically speaking, Li Keji's living space, under the bed, in the corners, behind the door, should have been full of various mushrooms.

But now, the room was as clean as someone else's home.

Lumian then looked at Li Keji sitting on the bed and found that his belly had indeed swollen slightly.

In the next second, his spiritual intuition as a Demoness of Despair allowed him to confirm that the child in Li Keji's belly was blood-related to him.

But it wasn't related to Lumian, nor to Lumina, but to Omebella!

It really is mine... Just as Lumian was about to speak, he suddenly felt many nearly invisible fine threads swaying around.

Mycelium? He instinctively looked up and finally saw a mushroom.

The mushroom was semi-transparent, attached to the chandelier position, with a large amount of mycelium hanging down. At first glance, it looked just like a common jellyfish.

"Is this the half-finished product you mentioned?" Lumian probed.

The scruffy Li Keji nodded. "Yes."

"Where are the failed products?" Lumian asked further.

Li Keji answered seriously, "They were all absorbed by it."

As he spoke, he waved his hand, and the jellyfish-like mushroom floated down, brushing against his palm.

For some reason, Lumian was reminded of the image of a young brown bear nuzzling its keeper.

"What about the mushrooms that were in the room before?" Lumian asked for confirmation.

"They were also absorbed by it," Li Keji's voice carried a hint of expectation.

Lumian was silent for a while before saying, "I can help you abort it."

"But, but he is indeed my child," Li Keji responded hesitantly.

He seemed to have gained some maternal instinct.

Lumian's lips twitched slightly as he initiated Instigation.

"No, he's not your child, he's the child of an evil god.

"Haven't you always wondered why you were arrested? It's because an evil god took a liking to you and had Her followers fabricate charges to lock you up in the psychiatric ward.

"Think about it, you're a man, how could you normally get pregnant?"

"Women can get pregnant, why can't men? Mushrooms can too!" Li Keji argued with Lumian.

Lumian didn't give up and continued, "But can you get pregnant without doing anything, unconsciously?"

"Right..." Li Keji finally felt something was amiss.

Lumian quietly exhaled and said, "This pregnancy is the result of the evil god entering your dreams."

Lumian felt that if he hadn't fully digested the Instigator potion, using Instigation to persuade Li Keji to abort would be enough to complete the act. Unfortunately, he didn't need to additionally digest the Instigator potion.

As a member of the assassination operation against Zaratulstra, as the person who assassinated Mr. Cui, Lumian had already digested the Assassin potion. Currently, only the Witch needed to be acted upon. He decided that if Li Keji chose to abort later, he

would try to make the process as mysteriously terrifying and flashy as possible, to expel the Great Mother's child in the identity of a Witch.

"If you don't abort the child in your belly, it will absorb your flesh and spirituality, growing rapidly in two to three weeks. When it's born, you will become a dried corpse, unable to do more mushroom experiments, unable to fulfill your dream," Lumian said in a low voice, describing the possible consequences.

Hearing that he wouldn't be able to do more mushroom experiments, Li Keji made a decision. "Alright, please help me."

Before Lumian could respond, he continued on his own, "If the evil god's child hybridizes with mushrooms, it might produce some special changes..."

Evil god's child... hybridize... Forget about your mushrooms... Lumian didn't want to be chased by a mushroom calling him mother in the future.

At this moment, Li Keji's eyes lit up.

"Wait until I've thought of a plan, then you can help me abort it. This will take one or two days."

Lumian didn't dare to force Li Keji; after all, in Mr. Fool's subconscious cognition, no matter how inconceivable things were, this biology teacher could create them through mushrooms. If he became an enemy and forced an abortion, perhaps something terrifying would happen.

"No problem," Lumian responded.

He secretly decided that when the time came, he would make the evil god's descendant in Li Keji's belly disappear without a trace, unable to hybridize with mushrooms.

Lumian then cautioned, "Don't tell anyone else about the evil god for now, otherwise catastrophe will befall us."

"I won't," Li Keji shook his head. "I haven't dared to talk to Ms. Jiajia or other colleagues about mushrooms recently; they seem to have become different people."

"Become different people?" Lumian's gaze suddenly froze.

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Chapter 990: True Commonality

[1,854 words]

990 True Commonality

Lumian's initial feeling was that Li Keji had noticed the difference between Queen of Stars Cattleya and Huang Jiajia, but after careful consideration, he overturned this guess.

This was because Li Keji said his other colleagues also seemed to have become different people, and it was unlikely that they had all been occupied and used by external consciousnesses.

"Why do you feel this way?" he asked Li Keji.

Li Keji stroked his belly and said, "The previous ones ate the mushrooms I sent, but the current ones haven't!"

The current ones haven't? Does this mean they've been replaced? Lumian's thoughts raced as he carefully asked, "What about Bernie Huang? Have you seen her recently, and is she different from before?"

"I've seen her, but I don't know if there's been any change. She never ate the mushrooms I sent before," Li Keji answered honestly.

In other words, Li Keji can't distinguish the difference between external consciousnesses and dream manifestations, nor does he have the observational ability to do so. However, he can determine whether the person in front of him has eaten the mushrooms he created... Taken together, did he mean that Huang Jiajia and others at Star Tutoring Classes had eaten them before, leaving corresponding traces, but recently they hadn't? Had Huang Jiajia and the others been replaced? Lumian had already been surprised when he heard Li Keji say that Huang Jiajia and the others seemed to have become different people, but now he felt more confused and alert.

He was currently inclined to believe Li Keji's statement, thinking that the Mushroom King, who was confined to the psychiatric ward and hadn't yet given birth, had not been completely corrupted and wouldn't be experiencing hallucinations or have his personality twisted to enjoy lying. Moreover, in the dream city, based on Mr. Fool's subconscious cognition, Li Keji had a certain uniqueness and could indeed possibly discover anomalies.

Who replaced Huang Jiajia and the others? Why replace them? Lumian pondered these questions.

Suddenly, he thought of one person: Zaratulstra!

When Lumian first discovered that Zaratulstra had visited Star Tutoring Classes, his initial reaction was that this Angel wanted to do something to the dream manifestation of Ma'am Hermit. But later, as events unfolded with Li Keji being arrested and sent to the psychiatric ward, this led him to overturn his original suspicions and stop thinking in that direction.

Now, the new discovery made him reconsider his earliest guess.

Zaratulstra likes to exert force on both overt and covert lines simultaneously. On the surface, he was helping the Great Mother control Li Keji and eliminating the hidden dangers brought by mushrooms, while secretly taking advantage of opportunities like visits to target Huang Jiajia and other teachers at Star Tutoring Classes, replacing these dream manifestations? The benefit of doing this would be that the attention of covert saboteurs would be focused on Li Keji's matter, overlooking the key point that Star Tutoring Classes itself was also a target... Lumian only now realized that Zaratulstra's plan was far more extensive than what he and his team had previously analyzed.

Based on this, he believed that Zaratulstra should have chosen the Conspirer pathway rather than being a Seer.

His experience, knowledge, intellect, and style are truly worthy of a real Angel... Lumian inwardly sighed, continuing to question Li Keji, wanting to understand more details.

But apart from knowing whether those colleagues had eaten the mushrooms he gave them, Li Keji shook his head in ignorance to all other questions.

Finally, Lumian could only caution, "You must come up with a plan in these two days, otherwise the minions of the evil god will take action against you again, causing the child to be born in the near future."

This referred to his and Grimm's previous agreement to take action again in a week to help the fetus in Li Keji's body develop rapidly.

"Alright," Li Keji answered, touching his belly.

Lumian looked at him deeply, forming a new idea: After Grimm confirms that Li Keji is truly pregnant and helps the fetus gain growth "momentum" with the help of Mushu Hospital's obstetrics department, I'll secretly return and complete the abortion!

...

At Xinhong District, in the rented apartment.

Lumian's team gathered again to hear him talk about Li Keji's pregnancy and the suspected replacement of Huang Jiajia and others.

"If we assume the culprit is Zaratulstra or his accomplices, then we can't just look at Star Tutoring Classes for the replacements," Jenna expressed her thoughts. "Doesn't this remind you of anything?"

Franca had a sudden realization. "The death of the Oracle?"

"Yes," Lumian had already connected this incident with the replacement of Huang Jiajia and other Star Tutoring Classes members. "If Anderson hadn't interfered, if we hadn't discovered the Oracle's body in time, he would have definitely been sent to the morgue in Mushu Hospital B1, gaining a 'rebirth'. After that, wouldn't it count as the 'reborn' him replacing the original him?"

"Did Huang Jiajia and the others experience something similar? Was Zaratulstra targeting not just Star Tutoring Classes, but also Dream Tutoring Classes?" The more Franca spoke, the more shocked she became. "On the surface, he was seeking opportunities to contact Zhou Mingrui through visits to Dream Tutoring Classes but secretly he was replacing the teachers at Dream Tutoring Classes? How damn insidious!"

21:51

"Did Huang Jiajia and the others experience something similar? Was Zaratulstra targeting not just Star Tutoring Classes, but also Dream Tutoring Classes?" The more Franca spoke, the more shocked she became. "On the surface, he was seeking opportunities to contact Zhou Mingrui through visits to Dream Tutoring Classes but secretly he was replacing the teachers at Dream Tutoring Classes? How damn insidious!"

At this point, Franca sincerely sighed.

"Who knows what else Zaratulstra has done in secret, it's probably not just this one thing... Fortunately, we chose to eliminate the hidden danger in advance, kicking Zaratulstra out of the dream and killing His dream manifestation. Otherwise, if His overt stratagem and covert scheme were to be launched simultaneously, both reaching the brink of success, the situation would be unimaginable!

"Perhaps the whole affair would have ended there, with our complete failure as the conclusion."

"Now without the leadership of Zaratulstra and Mr. Cui, their subordinates will find it difficult to consider the overall situation. We can take this opportunity to dismantle the bombs one by one and eliminate the hidden problems," Anthony agreed with Franca's sentiments.

Lumian nodded slightly and solemnly reminded, "This is both good news and bad news.

"I believe you can all see that a Seer is more suited to hiding in the shadows, directing the play, rather than directly stepping onto the stage and exposing themselves to the audience's view.

"Zaratulstra previously needed to advance overt matters to obtain money and resources, to openly contact Zhou Mingrui, so He couldn't hide His identity and stay in the shadows. The same goes for Mr. Cui. This gave us the opportunity to set traps and make good use of the dream rules.

"Once Zaratulstra and Mr. Cui obtain new identities and return, they will surely hide behind the scenes, covertly advancing their own agendas. At that time, the roles of hunter and prey will be reversed. Even if we show just a slight flaw, we will immediately be discovered and face deadly assassination. Once attacked, the best outcome would be the person being kicked out of the dream, with the dream manifestation most likely destroyed."

"Yes, at that time the enemy will be in the dark and I'm in the light, with the danger level skyrocketing," Franca nodded in agreement.

Because of her close relationship with Luo Shan, once Zaratulstra returned and focused the investigation on why Zhou Mingrui went to Shujin Hot Pot Restaurant that day, she could easily be discovered. That's why she said "I'm in the light."

Lumian chuckled in response.

"Of course, this is also an opportunity. You continue working in the administrative department of Intis Group for now. When Zaratulstra returns, see if you can use this to set a trap for Him. If not, you can quickly resign, change your identity, and also hide in the shadows.

"At the same time, we need to make good use of this period before Zaratulstra's return."

As he spoke, Lumian picked up his phone and sent a WeChat message to "A name that leaves a deep impression on you": "How have you been lately? Are you enjoying classes?"

Soon, "A name that leaves a deep impression on you" replied: "Do you want to check what time it is now?"

"If you have nothing better to do, I suggest you go out for a run."

Lumian calmly replied: "Do you still feel that the world is fake lately, that there are terrifying fake details in the people around you?"

After about ten seconds, Anderson Hood replied: "It's even more fake than before."

"Such as?" Lumian pressed.

Anderson Hood sent a emoji:

"For example, Ai Nana, Iron Skin, Flowery Bow Tie, and other tutoring center teachers all seem more fake now, different from before."

As expected... Lumian confirmed his team's speculation.

He asked with a emoji: "What about you, have you become more fake?"

Anderson Hood sent "a dog biting its own tail": "I might be next."

"But I recently saw news about a foreign guest being shot dead."

A good Hunter should know how to obtain information from public reports... Lumian put down his phone and said to Franca, Jenna, and the others:

"Most of the teachers at Dream Tutoring Classes have also been replaced."

"What's the significance of this replacement? To make all dream manifestations dominated by the Celestial Worthy, thus gaining victory in the consciousness battle?"
Franca raised a question.

Lumian didn't answer, instead using frost to create a white board and sticking notes on it.

Each note had the name of a dream manifestation currently suspected of being replaced, as well as their corresponding real-world person.

Lumian stood in front of the white board, studying it intently for a while before asking Franca, Jenna, and Anthony, "See anything in common?"

"They are or were all pirates?" Jenna tentatively answered.

Lumian shook his head.

"That's the surface commonality.

"There's another common point hidden beneath the surface."

Saying this, he turned to his companions and said, "These are all characters that have appeared in 'The Great Adventurer' series of novels.

"In other words, they are all participants and witnesses of Gehrman Sparrow's life!"

Hearing this conclusion, Franca suddenly thought of the movie "The Great Pirate 3", of Jia Yu who was poached by Zaratulstra for playing Gehrman Sparrow, and of An Xiaotian, the original actor for Gehrman Sparrow who was now in a vegetative state.

"Is the focus of the contest the identity of Gehrman Sparrow? This also fits the prophecy 'The awakening of The World spells The Fool's return'," Franca muttered to herself.

With a nod, Lumian replied, "It seems so for now, which is why these people related to Gehrman Sparrow have all been replaced.

"The Oracle's death was the beginning, not the end."

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Chapter 991: Proactive Small Talk

[1,788 words]

After suspecting that Zaratulstra had replaced the teachers at Dream Tutoring Classes and Star Tutoring Classes to target the image of Gehrman Sparrow, who didn't actually exist in the dream city, Lumian and the others discussed this for quite a while, but still couldn't figure out the significance and purpose of doing so.

They decided to write a letter, which Franca and Jenna would take to Star Dream Provisions Store tomorrow to mail out, to see what opinions the Major Arcana card holders would give.

As they stood up, preparing to leave the rented apartment in Xinhong District, Franca remembered something and curiously looked at Lumian. "You said earlier that Li Keji's pregnancy was because Grimm's cognition, the Omebella bloodline in you, and the Celestial Worthy's subconscious taking dominance because of Mushu Hospital's environment, equating you with the Child of God Omebella in the dream, making your casual comment 'he's already pregnant' become reality. So, as the Child of God Omebella, can you now use the Beyonder powers of a Planter, Apothecary, and Heretic Spellmaster pathways?"

Franca's eyes gleamed, feeling this had a bit of a "I guess that went well" flavor to it.

Of course, this "I" referred to the dream subconscious.

As long as the dream subconscious believed it, anything could happen!

Lumian tried to see if he could use the abilities related to Vampire, Harvest Priest, and Heretic Spellmaster, but all attempts failed.

"It doesn't work." He shook his head.

Before Franca could respond, he added thoughtfully, "Maybe it's possible in Mushu Hospital."

As Franca nodded in agreement, Jenna reminded Lumian, "If that's really the case, frequent visits to Mushu Hospital might cause you to become more and more like Omebella, until you're completely equivalent."

Lumian pondered for a few seconds, then said gravely, "It's a possibility."

Franca immediately hissed. "How sinister is the Great Mother's style, always making people fall into traps unknowingly? Sometimes, being vigilant seems useless..."

At this point, Franca answered her own question, "Judging by the name, perhaps the Great Mother symbolizes the 'yin'—'darkness' in the term 'yin-yang'..."

...

The next day, which was Sunday, Lumian again brought Ludwig to Dream Tutoring Classes.

While sending the child into the classroom, he discreetly observed the front desk, every teacher he encountered, and Anderson Hood with his Eye of Calamity.

Except for the latter, the mercury-colored river of fate corresponding to the others all showed a black color representing death at some point in the past. Some of these black patches had become blurred, while others were still relatively clear, flowing forward with the illusory river, getting further and further behind, becoming harder to see.

They are indeed reborn people... Lumian didn't engage in conversation with Anderson Hood, but stepped back and sat in his usual spot.

Just as he was about to contemplate how to handle this situation, he suddenly saw Zhou Mingrui, wearing a loose sky-blue T-shirt, walking towards him.

How dedicated, to still remember to come for Business English class after witnessing Zaratulstra being shot and observing Mr. Cui... Lumian mused, standing up to greet Zhou Mingrui.

As fellow employees of Intis Group who had met more than once, this was expected courtesy.

Seeing this, Zhou Mingrui returned the greeting.

Just when Lumian thought he would smoothly turn into the classroom, Zhou Mingrui stopped, right in front of him.

Zhou Mingrui looked around and asked, "Has Mr. Da resigned? I haven't seen him every time I've come recently.

"You know Mr. Da, right?"

"Yes, Da Nizi. I brought my child here to enroll after seeing the flier he handed out," Lumian answered simply.

He hadn't expected Zhou Mingrui to initiate casual conversation with him, and even ask about the Oracle Danitz.

Stimulated by the Zaratulstra incident, has Zhou Mingrui started to more actively explore the hidden anomalies around him, more boldly engaging with us problematic people, and thus discovered that Teacher Da from Dream Tutoring Classes hasn't appeared recently? This is good news! Hmm, there's also a downside, if he keeps investigating like this, who knows when my team and I might be kicked out of the dream without warning, just like Mr. Cui... Lumian's thoughts raced, forming a rough judgment.

Before Zhou Mingrui could ask further, he sighed and said, "Mr. Da didn't resign, he passed away."

"Ah?" Zhou Mingrui's gaze suddenly froze.

His shock and surprise showed on his face.

This was also the expected reaction of a normal person hearing such news.

"When did this happen? What happened?" Zhou Mingrui didn't hide his astonishment.

Lumian glanced towards the front desk.

"I heard Ms. Ai say that he seemed to have encountered a psychopathic killer and was strangled to death.

"At first, Ms. Ai and Mr. Anderson thought he was just missing, and because they didn't have much confidence in Mr. Da's ability to survive alone, they quickly reported it to the police. Later, after searching, the police found Mr. Da in the underground morgue of Mushu Hospital, in the form of a corpse."

Lumian's words were all information that Ms. Ai Nana had previously mentioned and could be found online, so he wasn't worried about being kicked out of the dream again because of this—after re-entering the dream, he planned to behave for two or three days in front of Zhou Mingrui.

"Killed..." Zhou Mingrui's eyes flickered as he fell into deep thought.

"Yes, the body was discovered in the underground morgue of Mushu Hospital," Lumian deliberately emphasized.

He was trying to guide Zhou Mingrui to notice that there might be problems with Mushu Hospital through normal conversation.

"The killer deliberately sent Mr. Da's body to the underground morgue?" Zhou Mingrui expressed his confusion.

Lumian shook his head. "It might not have been the killer, it could have been a passerby who discovered the body and sent it there."

"How is that possible? A passerby who sees a body would call the police directly." Zhou Mingrui increasingly felt that there was something fishy about this matter.

"But why would the killer have to send Mr. Da's body to the underground morgue of Mushu Hospital? Did he think it wouldn't be discovered if hidden there? What made him think that..." Lumian was responsible for raising questions, emphasizing Mushu Hospital, but not providing answers.

For him now, providing answers was too dangerous.

Zhou Mingrui nodded thoughtfully, then pointed to the Business English classroom. "I'm going to class now."

"Alright," Lumian sat down accordingly.

He leaned against the classroom wall, his thoughts gradually spreading:

The secret replacement of teachers at Dream Tutoring Classes and Star Tutoring Classes is really difficult to resolve...

If this were in the real world, I would find an opportunity to blow up the underground part of Mushu Hospital, completely eliminating the hidden danger. But in the dream city, with the underground part of Mushu Hospital being the psychological trauma of a great existence and an infiltration point for the power of other great existences, I'm afraid even the owner of Star Dream Provisions Store and Stianos wouldn't dare to venture there easily, even if they weren't restricted...

Using the Eye of Calamity to distinguish whether the target is a reborn person, should we kill all those who have been replaced, like Huang Jiajia, Ai Nana, and others, to eliminate them?

I'm confident I could cover up the traces and not be discovered if I kill one, but killing so many? Do they think the dream city's police department and Chief Yagates are dead? This would be openly challenging the dream's main consciousness, and I might be identified the next day...

Moreover, with Huang Jiajia and others being related to the identity of Gehrman Sparrow, if they all exit the stage of the dream city, it might bring about unfavorable changes, or cause the subsequent awakening plan to be doomed to failure from the start...

Report it? Without sufficient clues, it might end up like the previous report about Zaratulstra, with no response at all...

What clues could make the police investigate deeply and discover the abnormalities?

I hope the Major Arcana card holders can provide good ideas...

Hmm...

As Lumian's thoughts became more and more scattered, he caught sight of Zhou Mingrui coming out of the classroom with his phone, walking towards the restroom.

Lumian tilted his head, using his Hunter ears to eavesdrop on what Zhou Mingrui was saying from a distance.

He heard Zhou Mingrui ask in surprise, "Weren't you scheduled to come on Monday? Why has it been postponed to Wednesday?"

From the other end of the phone, a female voice faintly reached Lumian's ears.

"I thought about it, you have to work during the week and can't take me out, so I might as well just go directly to report in."

Zhou Mingrui was silent for a moment, then said, "I have annual leave."

"It's fine, you can take me out on the weekend." The female voice on the phone said cheerfully.

Zhou Mingrui sighed and said, "Alright then, what time is your train on Wednesday?"

Hearing this, Lumian roughly understood what was going on.

According to the information provided by the Major Arcana, Zhou Mingrui's sister Zhou Shasha had been admitted to a university in Yangdu and was about to come here to study.

Zhou Shasha will arrive in Yangdu next Wednesday? As one of the dream manifestations closest to Zhou Mingrui, what changes will her arrival bring? Lumian raised his right hand to rub his temples, feeling that one wave of events was following another without pause.

...

Star Dream Provisions Store.

Franca and Jenna, who had taken a taxi, walked into the dimly lit interior of the shop.

The former politely asked the shop owner if they could mail a letter, while the latter lingered in the entrance area, both examining the antiques on the shelves and observing the situation outside.

After getting the shop owner's permission, Franca turned to the shelf and dropped the letter in her hand into the silver-inlaid black mailbox.

As her gaze swept across, she noticed that the Pride Armor that once belonged to her was standing quietly on the edge of the inner side of the right shelf.

The surface of this silver-white full-body armor was somehow stained with patches and spots of dark red blood. Just seeing it gave Franca a feeling of rapidly weakening, as if her serious illness had returned.

It's become even more sinister... Franca didn't dare ask the shop owner what had happened to the Pride Armor, and quickly averted her gaze, walking towards the door.

At this moment, Jenna raised her hand slightly, discreetly pointing to the diagonal opposite side of the street.

There, perched on the branch of a street tree, was a white pigeon.

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Chapter 992: The Unknowing Questioner

[1,829 words]

Luo Shan sat in a café near the police station, monitoring Franca and Jenna's whereabouts using a white pigeon she had temporarily modified.

She had drawn her own mark on the pigeon, as well as a hidden miniature camera. By wearing sunglasses with a receiving device drawn on them, she could obtain the corresponding signal. At the same time, she could use the connection between a Painter and a painting to drive the corresponding mark, thereby directing the pigeon.

Of course, this had to be maintained within a certain distance.

After seeing Franca and Jenna come out of Star Dream Provisions Store, Luo Shan quickly had the white pigeon follow them.

As she followed, she found that the two targets were approaching the police station area, which was where she was.

Luo Shan's heart skipped a beat.

Fortunately, her anxiety didn't last too long. Franca and Jenna only came to this street and didn't actually walk to the café door.

Phew... Just as Luo Shan breathed a sigh of relief, she saw Franca and Jenna, who were already five or six steps away from the café, disappear into thin air simultaneously.

Wh— Luo Shan's pupils suddenly dilated.

The next second, two people sat down opposite her.

One was Luo Fu, the other was Jian Na.

Luo Shan's movements froze instantly, as if she had turned into a statue.

"Were you monitoring us?" Jenna asked in a friendly manner.

Franca put the two mirrors in her hand on the coffee table, creating a Mirror Maze.

"I-I wanted to see what you were really doing, if you were deceiving me, if you were bad people." Luo Shan's voice gradually rose.

It's still the aftereffects of the talk about the dreamscape... I wonder if the Mirror Maze can deceive a Reporter's ability to explore the truth? Probably not... How to guard against this kind of prying in the future? Communicate important things via phone and delete chat records afterwards using the Information Shredder? No, except for me, Lumian, Jenna, Anthony and Ludwig don't speak Chinese, phone communication is

done through voice conversion, which can also be heard... The Bottle of Fiction probably can't isolate it either, unless it's the Realm of Mysteries... Can we only communicate in places far away from a Reporter in the future? Franca thought of many things in an instant.

Suddenly, she had a flash of inspiration and looked at Luo Shan.

"You can follow us openly if you want, you can watch from the side if you want to see, it's just that some things will be more dangerous, we may not even be able to protect ourselves well. Um, if we're going to face this kind of thing, we'll tell you in advance, and you can weigh whether you want to follow or not."

Luo Shan didn't expect Franca and others to be so honest, and was momentarily speechless.

Franca took the opportunity to say, "We're going to a place next to confirm whether certain people have become more fake. Do you want to go?"

Confirm if they've become more fake? Luo Shan suddenly felt a bit scared, but she didn't want to deceive herself forever and not uncover the answer.

After a moment's hesitation, she said, "I'll go."

Franca laughed. "It's good that you have the ability to explore the truth, you can intuitively help us confirm, without us having to devise dangerous plans."

She didn't know yet if Lumian's Eye of Calamity could discover the problems with Huang Jiajia, Ai Nana and others, so she planned to use a Reporter's ability.

This way, they might even discover the aspects in which the fake people were fake, and thus obtain key evidence that could be reported to the police.

Moreover, Jenna had previously told Franca that since Luo Shan already knew the current world was a dream and was in a state of unwillingness to believe, full of doubt but unable to completely deceive herself, they shouldn't delay, lest she did something stupid because of it, or her mental state became problematic and was exploited by that evil god of the Fantasy Association.

Jenna felt that, having already chosen to be honest and truthful, they should continue this style. On the one hand, stabilize Luo Shan's mental and emotional state through psychological treatment, and on the other hand, let Luo Shan face the truth step by step under their control, confirm the facts, and not let her imagine, try, or do things blindly, which could likely bring greater disaster.

In other words, when problems had already appeared and couldn't be avoided, it was better to place them under one's own control and release them with precautions, rather than letting the problems develop on their own.

So, for something that could have been done with the Mystery Prying Glasses, they chose to ask Luo Shan for "help".

...

Outside Star Tutoring Classes.

Franca and Jenna brought Luo Shan to a white car that was unlocked and unoccupied.

Anthony, who had received a WeChat message from Franca, was already on standby nearby, ready to treat Luo Shan if she had a mental breakdown.

"This is?" Luo Shan didn't expect there would be such a car waiting by the roadside for them to use.

"Our companion drove it over; to convenience our observations," Franca explained simply.

Luo Shan asked in understanding, "Lumina who played cards with us?"

That's how Franca and the others had introduced her.

"Sort of," Jenna had no intention of letting the Spectator onto the stage.

After a while, they saw Huang Jiajia walk out of Star Tutoring Classes.

"It's her," Franca quickly informed Luo Shan.

Luo Shan raised her right hand through the car window, pinching the sides of her eye sockets.

She then saw the target person overlapping with windows, street trees, and cars.

She also saw a large number of invisible threads floating out from the target's body, extending towards the sky.

These threads were tied to the target's joints and organs.

With the pulling of these invisible threads, the target made corresponding movements, walking towards the nearest bus stop.

It's just like a puppet on strings... Luo Shan's hair stood on end.

When she had explored the truth before, she hadn't seen similar situations with people around, or rather, similar situations weren't obvious enough to be noticed by her.

Taking advantage of the time she had, Luo Shan observed the passing pedestrians.

She saw that these pedestrians also had a large number of invisible thin threads floating towards the sky, but these threads were all very loose, without the tension of pulling the human body to make movements.

"..." Luo Shan's body suddenly tensed, then slumped, leaning sideways against the backrest of the car's rear seat.

She ended her exploration and said as if sleep-talking, "It's indeed more fake..."

"What are the specific details?" Jenna tried to alleviate the emotional impact on Luo Shan by discussing business.

Franca sent a message to Anthony: "Closely monitor the target's state."

Luo Shan described in a floating voice the scene she had seen and the comparison between the target and normal people.

During this process, Anthony, who was in disguise, pretended to be a middle-aged man smoking by the roadside, drawing closer to Luo Shan, and quietly using Placate.

After Luo Shan finished speaking, she fell completely silent, not saying a word.

Jenna and Franca looked at her sympathetically, temporarily not starting a new topic.

They were waiting for Anthony's notification. Only when Anthony said it was okay would they speak, and only when Anthony said what aspects to talk about would they construct corresponding language.

"I want, I want to go to the North City Cemetery," Luo Shan finally spoke.

"Okay," Franca immediately agreed.

At the same time, she received a message from Anthony, who had turned his back and used voice input: "The target's emotional state has stabilized to some extent, but there are still remnants of negativity, pessimism, and despair."

"Don't talk about anything, any casual words in the current situation might stimulate the target. Only answer when she asks."

Franca forwarded these messages to Jenna, then started the car and drove onto the main road.

The car was silent again, with only the faint sound of the engine.

After the vehicle reached the North City overpass, Luo Shan, who seemed to have become a clay puppet, muttered to herself, "In reality—in that world outside, is there another me?"

"Yes," Jenna answered.

She strictly followed the Psychiatrist's instructions, only answering Luo Shan's questions without any expansion.

Luo Shan fell silent again.

Finally, the car arrived at North City Cemetery and stopped in the parking lot.

Luo Shan pressed the door handle, paused for a few seconds, and said, "I'll go in by myself, you don't need to follow."

"Okay," Jenna and Franca responded in unison.

Luo Shan opened the car door and put one foot out.

At this moment, she half-turned her body and asked with dark eyes, "Are you here to awaken Zhou Mingrui?"

"Yes." Jenna didn't hide it.

On this topic, she felt it necessary to say a few more words, so she added, "If Zhou Mingrui isn't awakened, everything will be destroyed when the apocalypse comes, including this dream.

"And the apocalypse is only a few years away."

Luo Shan looked at the seat cover in front of her with empty eyes, as if wanting to confirm details, "Why did Zhou Mingrui need to sleep?"

"To fight against an evil force," Franca explained concisely.

This was consistent with the core of the story she had made up before.

Luo Shan maintained her previous posture and asked subconsciously, "Has that evil force been defeated, so Zhou Mingrui can be awakened?"

Wh— Hearing this question, both Franca and Jenna were shocked.

They looked at each other, unable to answer Luo Shan's question for a moment.

Yes, if the Celestial Worthy's consciousness has been defeated, Mr. Fool could wake up on his own. If He hadn't been defeated, how would forcibly awakening him be essentially different from the situation before he went to sleep?

Or does the act of "awakening" itself symbolize the defeat of the Celestial Worthy's consciousness?

Mr. Fool wakes up while the Celestial Worthy is still asleep, will there be a change in the balance of power, with the scales of victory tilting towards Mr. Fool?

If this guess is correct, that's fine, but if it's wrong, does it mean our direction isn't right?

The Major Arcana have always focused on "awakening", but should we actually weaken the Celestial Worthy first?

"We're currently still in the stage of confirming the situation, we're not sure if that evil force has been defeated yet," Franca answered truthfully.

Luo Shan bit her lip and didn't ask any more questions.

She got out of the car completely and walked into the cemetery's attached flower shop, buying two bunches of white chrysanthemums.

She walked slowly forward, her figure gradually disappearing among the tombstones.

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Chapter 993: Important Person

[1,816 words]

At Xinhong District, in the rented apartment.

Franca recounted the results of Luo Shan's observations and the questions she raised, finally saying, "The more I think about it, the more I feel something is amiss. The Major Arcana clearly mentioned in their materials that Mr. Fool went to sleep to fight against the Celestial Worthy's consciousness, so why are they solely focused on awakening Mr. Fool instead of helping to weaken the Celestial Worthy? And we too, with sufficient background information, never considered this direction before. It's as if we've been bewitched, no, as if we've been hit with a spell of stupidity..."

At this point, Franca suddenly paused.

Everyone present instantly thought of one word: Fooled!

In the unspeakable silence, only Ludwig was completely unaffected, munching on his boiled corn.

After serious contemplation, Jenna said, "Perhaps the act of awakening Mr. Fool itself will weaken the Celestial Worthy and strengthen our advantage."

Lumian shook his head. "Even if this symbolism holds true, we shouldn't have completely overlooked the direction of weakening the Celestial Worthy to help Mr. Fool awaken."

"Does that mean this direction is correct? So the dream fooled everyone to prevent us from thinking in this direction." Franca suddenly became excited.

"Not necessarily," Anthony replied, "That Celestial Worthy is the being at the very top of the Swindler pathway. Initially fooling us to prevent us from considering the possibility of weakening Him might be to make us believe it's the only correct path after we've made some progress in our later explorations, causing us to rush headlong into it."

"The enemy's opposition indicates we're doing the right thing, but what if the enemy is deliberately opposing... Feigning weakness when actually strong..." Franca understood Anthony's meaning and said frustratedly, "How should we choose?"

"Why choose?" Lumian laughed, "Awakening Mr. Fool and weakening the Celestial Worthy are two things we can do simultaneously."

He stood up and began pacing in the small living room, speaking as he walked, "Let's re-analyze the possible goals Zaratulstra wanted to achieve with those actions:

"Contacting Zhou Mingrui was likely to find a way to make Zhou Mingrui drink the subsequent potion, become a Witch, thus creating a fixed, long-term Mirror Person, and to some extent shake Zhou Mingrui's self-perception;

"The merger and restructuring negotiations with the Intis Group were to obtain more money and resources, and using the mirrored Roselle to erode and influence Huang Tao was likely for the same purpose;

"Eliminating and replacing the dream manifestations related to Gehrman Sparrow's life experiences might be to weaken The World, indirectly weakening Mr. Fool..."

"These actions currently don't show any intent to awaken the Celestial Worthy, though accumulating money and resources could barely count..."

As Jenna, Franca, and Anthony nodded slightly, Lumian began to contradict himself, "No, creating a fixed Mirror Person for Zhou Mingrui could also be for the Celestial Worthy to gain more initiative through the Mirror Person, gradually gain the upper hand, and thus awaken. Eliminating the dream manifestations related to Gehrman Sparrow is to weaken Mr. Fool, but replacing them with his own people and taking away Jia Yu is to later confuse the real with the fake, making The World identity point to the Celestial Worthy instead of Mr. Fool? This is also a kind of awakening..."

"However, these awakenings all come with weakening Mr. Fool, the two can't be separated."

Lumian's point was that both weakening the Celestial Worthy and awakening Mr. Fool need to be done, and sometimes they are actually different aspects of the same thing.

Franca concurred succinctly, "But how can we weaken the Celestial Worthy?"

The Major Arcana card holders didn't know about the Celestial Worthy's past situation, nor did they mention which character in the dream city was closely related to the Celestial Worthy. Franca couldn't find a target to weaken the Celestial Worthy, there was no starting point.

"Currently, only Peng Deng is suspected to be related to the Celestial Worthy, but it can't be confirmed yet," Anthony said. "What can be confirmed is that Peng Deng definitely has a special status in the dream city," Lumian nodded slightly.

This conclusion was drawn from Anthony's encounter and Peng Deng's rental of the magic mirror Arrodes.

Lumian then said, "Actually, there is one place that can be confirmed to be closely related to the Celestial Worthy."

Seeing Franca and Jenna's thoughtful expressions, Lumian directly gave the answer.

"Mushu Hospital!"

"Without a close relationship, without a prior cooperation intention, the Celestial Worthy wouldn't send the corpses of Gehrman Sparrow-related dream manifestations to the underground morgue of Mushu Hospital, letting them 'reborn' there, and that kind of 'rebirth' would also cause the corresponding manifestation to completely become the Celestial Worthy's sole puppet."

"The underground part of Mushu Hospital..." Franca said, unable to help but draw in a sharp breath.

That was where the psychological trauma of a great existence materialized, the key node for other great existences to infiltrate their power, the place where the Celestial

Worthy created exclusive marionettes, a place that even Sequence 0 true gods dared not easily intrude!

Lumian chuckled in response. "I'll be contacting an important person from Mushu Hospital tonight to see if I can obtain any useful intelligence."

...

Late at night.

Luo Shan still chose to lie down on the bed, trying to enter deep sleep.

If the world doesn't explode, I won't take a holiday. Even if this is really a dream, before the dream shatters, I still have to go to work when I need to... Luo Shan murmured, half self-mockingly and half self-comfortingly.

Then, she closed her eyes, and after a long while, finally suppressed her troubled thoughts and emotions, falling asleep.

This time, after falling asleep, she didn't immediately enter her Shaman world to continue guarding the semi-transparent barrier, but became muddle-headed, just like when she slept before becoming a Beyonder.

She vaguely heard a voice echoing in her ears:

"Truth can become false, falsehood can become true. The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings..."

"Truth can become false, falsehood can become true. The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings..."

...

At the edge of Crimson Moon Hospital, in a secluded corner growing many mushrooms.

Lumian, transformed into a Demoness of Despair and dressed in a blouse, patiently waited for a while. He saw Grimm suddenly appear not far ahead with a person, as if walking into the real area from another world.

"Respected Child of God, this is Lu Yong'an, the dean of obstetrics at Mushu Hospital," Grimm introduced his companion, "She is also a child of the Mother."

Lu Yong'an appeared to be in her forties, with fair skin and a beautiful face, round like the full moon, looking gentle and motherly.

She was carrying a medical box and bowed slightly to Lumian, saying, "Praise the Mother, and praise you, Child of God."

The important person from Mushu Hospital that Lumian had previously said he wanted to meet was precisely this obstetrics dean, Lu Yong'an—Grimm was very true to his word. As soon as the one-week deadline was met, he sent a message to Lumian, reminding him that tonight he should go help Li Keji with reproduction, both mystically and scientifically.

Lumian hadn't rushed to abort the fetus in Li Keji's belly, precisely because he wanted to fool Grimm first, to avoid reaching the point of needing to put on an act to cover up. After this, he would have at least two to three weeks to perform the abortion.

Hearing Lu Yong'an's greeting, Lumian, with his long black hair, nodded slightly and said, "Let's go in and take care of business first."

He didn't rush to inquire about the internal affairs of Mushu Hospital from Lu Yong'an.

This had to be done slowly, with proper groundwork, thinking through which things the Child of God should already know and not need to ask about.

"Yes, Child of God," Grimm and Lu Yong'an responded in unison, their expressions turning serious.

Lumian walked towards them and grabbed their shoulders.

Then, he activated the black mark on his right shoulder, using Spirit World Traversal to appear directly in Li Keji's hospital room.

Li Keji, who had been touching his belly lost in thought, sat up straight, and the jellyfish-like mushroom on the ceiling sank down slightly.

Seeing Li Keji looking at him with slight surprise, Lumian winked his left eye at him, hinting that there was a reason for this and to play along for now.

Li Keji showed an expression of sudden realization. "You're here to help me?"

Hearing these words, Grimm couldn't help but turn his head to look at the Child of God's stunningly beautiful face:

When did she manage to deceive Li Keji?

Grimm and Lu Yong'an had both anticipated needing to use their abilities to control the target.

Lu Yong'an sat down beside Li Keji's bed with her medical box and began a serious examination.

After nearly a minute, she turned her head and said, "The fetus is very healthy and developing well and quickly."

Grimm immediately gave a thumbs up to the Child of God, praising again, "As expected of you!"

Lumian was already numb to this, nodding slightly, focusing intently on watching Lu Yong'an take out a syringe, draw some kind of drug, and give Li Keji an injection in the belly.

Then, Lu Yong'an's maternal radiance became even more obvious as she began to virtually caress Li Keji's belly with both hands.

Lumian saw Li Keji's belly begin to swell and enlarge at a visible rate. In just a minute or two, it looked like a six-month pregnancy.

"I can feel her heartbeat." Li Keji touched his belly again.

Lu Yong'an put away her instruments and drugs, and smiled at Lumian.

"Child of God, come again in two weeks and we can enter the stage of imminent birth."

"Excellent." Lumian nodded insincerely.

"I'll abort it shortly! The earlier it's aborted, the safer!"

"We'll be leaving now." Lumian gave Li Keji another meaningful look.

Then, he teleported back to the previous secluded corner with Lu Yong'an, who had walked back, and Grimm, who was already by his side.

Lumian didn't give Grimm and Lu Yong'an a chance to say goodbye and leave. He looked at the latter, slightly raising his chin, and said, "How are things going inside Mushu Hospital?"

He planned to ask vaguely at first, in the tone of a Child of God wanting to get feedback from his subordinates, and then selectively delve deeper based on Lu Yong'an's response.

Lu Yong'an replied with a kindly manner mixed with obvious respect, "The underground area is almost finished being renovated, and above ground it's still just us few and those who frequently enter and exit the underground."

The underground is almost "renovated"? Those who frequently enter and exit the underground don't count as people? Lumian raised an eyebrow.

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Chapter 994: Dean

[1,851 words]

Lumian thought of the Mushu Hospital orderly he had encountered before and the situations he had observed during his several visits to Mushu Hospital. He felt that those who frequently entered and exited the underground of Mushu Hospital might truly no longer be considered human.

More than this, what concerned him more was that the underground part of Mushu Hospital was nearly "renovated".

When that happens, what changes would occur?

What does this symbolize?

Amidst his swirling thoughts, Lumian wished he could go blow up the underground of Mushu Hospital right now and be done with it.

Unfortunately, leaving aside whether he had the ability to break into Mushu Hospital's underground and completely destroy it, just the fact that the above-ground part of Mushu Hospital was still relatively normal, with many patients and ordinary medical staff coming and going, prevented him from acting rashly.

There was no way to blow up the underground part without affecting the above-ground area!

That would turn into a full-blown terrorist attack, causing Lumian to be rejected by the dream's main consciousness to the greatest extent, likely preventing him from entering again afterward.

First think of a way to get Mushu Hospital to stop admitting patients for a few days and transfer away the inpatients? This would be very difficult... Lumian looked at Lu Yong'an and carefully asked, "Are there still corpses waiting for 'rebirth' in the underground morgue?"

"Not at the moment. No one has brought corpses needing 'rebirth' over these past couple of days," Lu Yong'an answered truthfully.

After Zaratulstra and Mr. Cui were kicked out of the dream, did the corresponding activities stop? This shows we're doing well... Theoretically, the Celestial Worthy should have more than just these few subordinates, and should have found a way or medium for subordinates to enter the dream city... Were the others kicked out before, like the Major Arcana and the former Lucky Coin holders? That's right, there's no reason why the Celestial Worthy would only recently have subordinates who could enter, no reason why in the past only the Celestial Worthy could kick people out and Mr. Fool couldn't... Lumian nodded slightly and changed his question.

"Who is the current dean of Mushu Hospital?"

He wasn't afraid of Lu Yong'an becoming suspicious because of this inquiry, as he had previously asked Xu Xinyang and secretly asked Grimm, and even Grimm, a child of the Great Mother, didn't know.

"You don't know?" Lu Yong'an looked at Lumian's face in surprise.

She then turned to Grimm and asked, "You didn't tell the Child of God?"

Grimm shook his head. "I don't know either. No one ever told me."

Lu Yong'an was stunned for a moment, then showed an expression of understanding.

"It's normal that you don't know. But it doesn't matter. The previous dean has left, and not knowing who it is doesn't affect anything. The new dean will arrive in a few days."

"Who is the new dean?" Grimm asked on Lumian's behalf.

Lu Yong'an shook her head. "It's not clear yet. We'll know when they arrive. Maybe it will be a surprise."

A surprise? For us, it's probably going to be a shock... Lumian made a sound of acknowledgment and said, "Have you been to the underground areas other than the morgue?"

He wasn't trying to pry specific information about Mushu Hospital's underground from Lu Yong'an, but rather intended to judge from her answer whether Beyonders blessed by the Great Mother could infrequently enter the non-morgue areas of the underground.

"I've been there, but can't go deep, can't go to B2." Lu Yong'an didn't think there was anything wrong with the Child of God asking this, after all, the underground part of Mushu Hospital didn't belong solely to the Great Mother, other great existences also exerted influence there.

Even children of the Great Mother can't go to B2? What's there? Lumian nodded thoughtfully and asked, "Are the Mother Tree's followers also doing something?"

As the Child of God of the Great Mother, he had to show a bit less respect for other existences.

"Yes, but I don't know what," Lu Yong'an took out her phone and said with a smile, "Child of God, shall we add each other on WeChat? If I discover any issues in other areas of the underground later, I'll tell you immediately."

She really knows how the world works... Lumian let Lu Yong'an scan his WeChat QR code.

Her WeChat name was just her real name.

Lumian didn't rush to look through Lu Yong'an's Moments. He casually said, "Have you found Zedus?"

Zedus was supposedly the true name of the Abscessed Hand, and the remnant consciousness in Omebella's remains had once shouted this name at Lumian.

Lumian was trying to probe whether the children of the Great Mother had heard of Zedus.

"Not yet." Lu Yong'an lowered her head, "Mother is very disappointed."

Zedus really is closely related to the Great Mother... Lumian stopped there, not asking further.

Seeing this, Grimm respectfully asked, "Child of God, starting tomorrow you're on the night shift rotation. If you don't want to work it, I can find an excuse to switch you to the morning shift."

"Night shift is fine," Lumian chose not to switch.

This way, he could effectively increase his activity time during the day and evening.

Then, he glanced at the bright moon high in the sky and said to Grimm and Lu Yong'an, "Head back."

"Yes, Child of God!" Lu Yong'an and Grimm responded in unison.

Lumian didn't see them off, but teleported away first.

About a quarter of an hour later, his figure appeared again in this secluded corner, and Grimm and Lu Yong'an were already gone.

Only then did Lumian take out his phone and start looking through Lu Yong'an's Moments.

The Moments of this obstetrics dean of Mushu Hospital mostly shared obstetrics and gynecology knowledge, instances of receiving thank-you banners, achievements of Mushu Hospital, and updates about her own children. There was nothing that particularly caught Lumian's eye.

Because she had set it to only show the most recent month, Lumian could only return to the top of her Moments and look at her background settings and personal signature.

The background was set to a blurry silhouette holding a baby, and her personal signature was: "Be a guardian for women and children."

All very fitting for her identity and nature... Lumian put away his phone and teleported to Li Keji's hospital room.

Li Keji wasn't surprised by this beautiful woman's return. Looking at her, he hesitantly asked, "Do we really have to abort it?"

As the fetus grew, his maternal radiance seemed to have intensified.

Lumian chuckled. "You must have already felt the frenzied absorption of your flesh and spirit by the child of the evil god, right?"

"Yes." Li Keji nodded honestly.

Lumian continued, "And don't you want to see what innovative qualities might emerge from the crossbreeding of the evil god's offspring and the mushroom?"

He was now very adept at grasping Li Keji's obsessions and weaknesses.

This was an Instigator.

Li Keji's eyes immediately lit up. "Alright, let's begin!"

Could you at least hesitate a bit to make me feel your maternal radiance is genuine? Lumian grumbled inwardly as he walked to Li Keji's bedside, extended his right palm, and said in a moderate tone, "It will be quite painful. Bear with it."

"Okay." Li Keji stretched out his arm, letting it hang in the air.

The fungal filaments hanging down from the jellyfish-like mushroom quickly floated over, wrapping around Li Keji's arm, their tips piercing into it.

"It has some anesthetic ability," Li Keji happily explained to Lumian.

Lumian didn't speak, letting his palm ignite with quiet and sinister black flames.

He then pressed his right palm against the surface of Li Keji's belly, and the Demoness's black flames immediately bored into it.

Li Keji's highly protruding belly suddenly began to writhe, as if something inside was struggling desperately.

Along with this struggle, Li Keji's face twisted slightly. Even with the anesthesia, he was experiencing unspeakable pain.

Meanwhile, the Demoness's black flames gradually dimmed and thinned. Even as Lumian continued to pour them in, they couldn't truly burn away the vile thing in Li Keji's belly.

Fortunately, Lumian had never thought from the beginning that the Demoness's black flames could achieve the goal, because one of his objectives was something that the Demoness's black flames, which only burned spirit and life, couldn't accomplish.

He used the Demoness's black flames first mainly to probe.

Suddenly, the quiet black flames in Lumian's palm became agitated, as if madness, violence, and destruction were being generated!

Flames of Destruction!

As the Flames of Destruction poured in, the clothes on Li Keji's belly abruptly burst into flames, as did his skin and flesh.

The fetus in his belly pushed upwards, as if trying to escape the burning of the Flames of Destruction, but currently unable to break free from the constraints of the mother's body, it ultimately collapsed back down.

Almost simultaneously, Lumian heard illusory sounds of weeping and screaming. He felt as if a vast green wilderness had appeared around him, where every flower and blade of grass first grew vigorously, full of life, and then was engulfed by sweeping black flames.

"Ah!"

Li Keji also screamed in agony, the pain of having his abdomen burned through was more than most people could endure.

However, Lumian had already used the Bottle of Fiction to seal off this hospital room, allowing only faint traces of Li Keji's voice to seep out.

This wasn't something worth paying attention to in the psychiatric ward.

Finally, the fetus in Li Keji's belly was burned to ashes, and these ashes, affected by the convection winds from the high temperature of the flames, swirled up into the air, flying towards the ceiling and scattering around.

"Completely eliminated." Lumian stepped back, preparing to take out a healing agent for Li Keji to drink.

Li Keji glanced at his charred abdomen and said with extreme disappointment, enduring the pain, "It's all burned away? There's nothing left?"

"I initially only wanted to burn its life and spirit, leaving the corpse, but as you saw, that didn't work," Lumian explained sincerely.

"Ah..." Li Keji waved his hand, directing the filaments of the jellyfish-like mushroom to move to his abdomen, absorbing the charred parts and promoting flesh regeneration.

Looks like I don't need to provide treatment... Lumian gave a deep look at the jellyfish-like mushroom that had descended.

After Li Keji's wound had healed and the pain had subsided, Lumian nodded slightly and said,

"Rest more these couple of days, then please speed up the pace of your research. My vegetative friend might not be able to wait too long."

"I can start again tomorrow!" Li Keji's enthusiasm for experimentation reignited.

"Thank you." Lumian politely left the room.

Returning to the rented apartment in Xinhong District, he lay down on the bed and fell into a deep sleep.

In his hazy state, he heard crying.

The crying voice was calling "Mommy" "Mommy", filled with intense pain, unwillingness, and resentment.

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Chapter 995: Dream?

[1,933 words]

"Mommy..."

"Mommy..."

Lumian heard crying calls coming from the surrounding darkness, shrill and pitiful, as if clawing at his heart and soul.

Suddenly, black flames that suppressed madness and destruction ignited on Lumian's body.

These flames spread to the surroundings, burning away the darkness and everything hidden within it.

The crying calls abruptly became piercing, then quickly dissipated.

Lumian let out a cold laugh.

"If you had called me 'Daddy', I might have felt a bit reluctant and affectionate, but 'Mommy'? Who are you trying to fool?"

Just as he finished muttering this to himself, the surrounding darkness shattered inch by inch.

Lumian then awoke, opening his eyes to see the ceiling with its hanging chandelier, hidden in the deep night.

Was I just dreaming?

The fetus in Li Keji's belly died at the hands of its 'mother', its resentment unresolved, it latched onto me, and I thoroughly burned it away?

Your 'mother' is Omebella, what does that have to do with me, Lumian?

Lumian grumbled a few words, reached for his phone, selected "Intis Group Grimm", and used voice input to say: "I heard the cries of my child, who encountered a disaster leading to death.

"Someone must have helped Li Keji abort."

After sending this WeChat message, Lumian copied the content and sent it to Lu Yong'an as well.

Within ten to twenty seconds, Lu Yong'an replied: "Should we go to Crimson Moon Hospital now?"

Lumian brought the phone to his mouth, shook his head and said, "It's too late, the matter is already over.

"Rushing over now could very likely lead us into a trap set by the enemy.

"Since the matter can't be undone, let's wait until tomorrow, or the day after, until we're sure there's no ambush around Li Keji, then go investigate the situation, find the culprit, and think of ways to remedy this."

"Wise of you, Child of God." Lu Yong'an replied in a formal tone.

At this time, Grimm also responded, expressing the same meaning as Lu Yong'an. Lumian chose to copy and paste what he had said.

After reassuring Grimm, Lumian was about to go back to sleep when he suddenly saw a new message from Lu Yong'an: "Child of God, I just saw someone standing outside the hospital from my window."

"Who?" Lumian understood that the reason Lu Yong'an mentioned this must be because she recognized the person, or they were very important.

After a few seconds, Lu Yong'an replied: "It's Zhou Mingrui."

Zhou Mingrui? Such a strong initiative, only learning about the Oracle's corpse appearing in Mushu Hospital's underground morgue during the day, and wanting to sneak in to investigate at night? Isn't this too rash? Or is it just a preliminary observation? Lumian became fully alert, all traces of sleepiness gone.

He brought the phone to his mouth again and used voice input to say: "Don't worry about it for now, notify me when Zhou Mingrui enters the hospital."

...

Outside Mushu Hospital, Zhou Mingrui, still wearing a sky-blue T-shirt, pretended to make a phone call while casually surveying his surroundings, focusing on the emergency center.

After learning about Da Nizi's death and confirming the relevant details through public reports, Zhou Mingrui felt that Mushu Hospital seemed to have significant issues, especially the underground morgue.

So, when night fell deeper, he took a taxi here, planning to pretend to seek emergency treatment while actually taking a tour of Mushu Hospital to see if he could discover anything.

He hadn't planned to investigate the underground morgue today; he didn't want to take potentially significant risks before gathering sufficient information.

While saying words like "okay," "no problem," "alright," "can do," and "that's it," Zhou Mingrui's gaze swept across the emergency center, across the patients and family members coming and going, but he couldn't see anything unusual.

This wasn't actually his first time at Mushu Hospital. He had come for treatment twice before, as it was one of the closest hospitals to Intis Group and his residence. It had only been open for a few years, so whether for emergency or outpatient services, there weren't many people, no need to queue for long, and no worries about not being able to make appointments online.

The district-level hospital closer to his residence, he felt, wasn't very reliable, while the other well-established hospitals were always overcrowded.

The only difference from last time is that Mushu Hospital's reputation is growing, and more people are coming for treatment... It's a good thing I recovered midway from having some health issues after listening to heavy metal and was thinking of coming here for treatment because there weren't many people... Zhou Mingrui recalled his experience of seeking emergency treatment half a year ago, as well as the incident a few weeks ago when he took sick leave to come to Mushu Hospital, but his illness got better before he even reached his destination.

Thinking of this, he suddenly had a realization.

That sick leave made me miss the formal meeting with Zaratulstra...

And I didn't actually enter Mushu Hospital...

My hearing that song 'Advance' wasn't a coincidence, the melody and sound of that song were mixed with mystical powers?

Does this mean that Zaratulstra and Mushu Hospital really have issues?

But when I came half a year ago, nothing happened, I didn't notice anything unusual...

Are the problems at Mushu Hospital gradually worsening?

As Zhou Mingrui muttered to himself, his gaze moved up from the emergency center to the entire building.

Suddenly, he heard his own heartbeat.

Thump!

Thump!

Zhou Mingrui inexplicably felt fear, making his heart feel as if it had been violently squeezed by an invisible hand, uncontrollably speeding up its beating.

Thump!

Thump!

He felt as if something he feared and dreaded most was hidden in that building, as if it were the source of his fear.

There really is a problem... Zhou Mingrui's pupils rapidly dilated.

Half a year ago, he had also come for emergency treatment at night, and had also looked at Mushu Hospital's main building, but at that time he didn't have any feeling that terrifying things were hiding inside.

Zhou Mingrui steadied himself, closed his eyes, and regulated his breathing.

When his heartbeat calmed down, he looked at the Mushu Hospital building again.

Thump!

Thump!

He once again experienced a sudden burst of fear, instinctively believing that deep inside Mushu Hospital were things he didn't want to face and was afraid to encounter.

Zhou Mingrui subconsciously wanted to turn and leave, but ultimately endured.

Just do a preliminary observation, just do a preliminary observation...

Avoiding won't solve the problem, avoiding won't solve the problem...

As he muttered to himself, Zhou Mingrui's right palm, not holding the phone, naturally hung down, clenching and unclenching, unclenching and clenching.

After about ten seconds, he hung up the phone, took a step forward, and walked towards the entrance of the emergency center.

...

In Room 2303 of Dechuang Garden.

After Franca and Jenna fell asleep, they quickly gained lucidity.

This was something that inevitably happened when Beyonders entered Luo Shan's Shaman world, and neither of them was surprised.

But in the next second, what met their eyes was not the frozen storm, wandering Astral Projections, and semi-transparent barriers, but a dimly lit corridor.

The walls of the corridor were painted white, giving off a slight green tinge under the dim light.

"Where is this?" Franca blurted out in astonishment.

Where has Luo Shan's Shaman world gone?

Amidst her surprise, Jenna thought of a possibility. "Could something have happened to Luo Shan? Because of confirming that Huang Jiajia and others were more fake?"

That would make Luo Shan further face the fact that this was a dream.

"But didn't Anthony say that Luo Shan's emotions had stabilized to some extent?"

"Did she experience some shock after going home?" Franca responded with confusion.

"Anyway, let's find Luo Shan first. This might be the Shaman world after some change." Jenna looked around and concentrated on listening.

Faced with a situation different from usual, Franca instinctively put her hand into her Traveler's Bag, preparing to take out her Beyonder items.

Suddenly, she paused. "No, that's not right!"

Seeing Jenna turn her gaze towards her, Franca said with a serious expression,

"The Traveler's Bag is still here, and the items inside are still there."

Jenna's gaze instantly froze, understanding what Franca meant: Only Astral Projections could enter Luo Shan's Shaman world to fight monsters, and Astral Projections obviously wouldn't carry a Traveler's Bag and corresponding items. Even if they did, it would only be something conjured by the dream, with no actual ability!

"This isn't Luo Shan's Shaman world? What exactly have we encountered?" Jenna furrowed her brow.

She tried to leave this place through Cogitation, to make her Astral Projection return to her body.

But this had no effect.

"We're not Astral Projections on an excursion, entering Luo Shan's dream or Shaman world. We've been directly transferred to this place," Franca gave her conclusion, "How is this possible? I didn't feel anything at all..."

Just as she finished speaking, she suddenly heard Luo Shan's voice coming from a room ahead.

"No, no, I refuse!"

A few seconds later, the door of that room was pulled open, and Luo Shan, wearing pajamas, rushed out.

Luo Shan saw Franca and Jenna, stopped in her tracks, and asked in surprise, "You're here too?"

Franca and Jenna first lowered their heads, examining their own clothes, finding that they were both wearing nightgowns, then Franca addressed Luo Shan, "Where is this? Why shouldn't we be here?"

"This is my dream... Did I dream about you?" Luo Shan looked bewildered and confused.

Franca and Jenna exchanged a glance, then carefully asked, "What did you dream about?"

"I dreamed that someone was whispering strange words in my ear, and I dreamed of many fragmented scenes. There was a pregnant woman with a big belly, it seemed like the flesh on her face and one eyeball had been clawed off, with head-like lumps growing on both sides of her shoulders. There was also a man whose heart had been dug out, and the cries of infants..."

"Finally, I dreamed of this corridor, dreamed that I was in a room, and a voice told me..." Luo Shan suddenly stopped as she recalled her dream.

"Told you what?" Jenna pressed.

Luo Shan hesitated for a few seconds before saying, "It said, said it could help me masquerade as the genuine article, replace the me outside, so that even if the dream shatters, I could live on truly..."

"I-I couldn't accept that, how could I, how could I harm an innocent person?"

Hearing Luo Shan's words, Franca and Jenna's pupils dilated simultaneously.

The former swallowed hard and asked, "Do you remember the strange words at the beginning of the dream?"

Luo Shan tried her best to recall. "It seemed, seemed to be 'Truth can become false, falsehood can become true. The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings...'"

At this moment, Jenna and Franca both seemed to turn into statues.

Franca suddenly "woke up" and said in a deep voice, "Quickly, let's confirm where this place is!"

"Isn't this my dream..." Luo Shan said softly.

"Are you usually this lucid in your dreams?" Jenna asked rhetorically while looking for identifiable signs.

"That's true..." As Luo Shan muttered in confusion, Franca and Jenna simultaneously discovered a bulletin board on the wall ahead.

The two strode forward, rushing over, and with the help of the dim light, they immediately saw large characters in a certain part of the bulletin board: "Mushu Hospital."

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Chapter 996: Psychological Trauma

[1,778 words]

Chapter 996 Psychological Trauma

Mushu Hospital?

Franca and Jenna suddenly felt as if they had been struck by lightning, a tingling sensation rapidly shooting up from their tailbones to the backs of their heads.

How did they end up at Mushu Hospital?

Was this real or fake?

Franca didn't need to take out a mirror and use Magic Mirror Divination to get an answer. Her spiritual intuition had already told her that this was most likely the real Mushu Hospital!

Although she didn't understand how she and Jenna had been sleeping peacefully in Room 2303 of Dechuang Garden and then unknowingly arrived at Mushu Hospital, she chose to trust her spiritual intuition.

Jenna had a similar judgment. After exchanging a glance with Franca, she stood still, closed her eyes, and quickly entered a Cogitative state, imagining herself standing on the edge of a cliff.

In her imagination, she leaped off, jumping towards a bottomless abyss.

She fell faster and faster, but there was no shattering of darkness, no waking up startled from a dream.

Jenna opened her eyes and slowly shook her head at Franca.

Her meaning was clear: here, they couldn't exit the dream city and return to the real world!

Hiss... Would the above-ground floors of Mushu Hospital have similar restrictions? This might be in the underground area of Mushu Hospital... Franca instantly came up with a new speculation.

Her already highly tense mental state drew even closer to its limit.

"What's wrong?" Luo Shan still looked bewildered.

Hearing Luo Shan's question, Franca suddenly had a series of thoughts:

Just now, Luo Shan said this was her dream...

But this is the real Mushu Hospital, quite possibly the underground part of Mushu Hospital...

Did her dream connect to this place, transferring Beyonders within a certain range here?

Why could it connect, why could it transfer us?

Wait, according to our previous judgment, every character in the dream city is constructed by the dream subconscious based on its own cognition and social relationships. Luo Shan is the same, and the dream subconscious is a blend of Mr. Fool's subconscious and the Celestial Worthy's subconscious. In other words, Luo Shan

is equivalent to a part of the dream subconscious, equivalent to a division of Mr. Fool's subconscious.

She developed psychological trauma from the shock that the current world is a dream city, which is equivalent to a part of Mr. Fool's divided subconscious developing psychological trauma, while the underground area of Mushu Hospital is where Mr. Fool's psychological traumas converge and manifest...

This connects everything together. Hmm, the psychological traumas manifesting in the underground area of Mushu Hospital should not only be from Mr. Fool, but also include those of the Celestial Worthy. More accurately, they come from the dream subconscious, which is formed by blending Mr. Fool's and the Celestial Worthy's subconsciouses. My goodness, will we encounter the Celestial Worthy's psychological traumas later?

However, this also has a good side. If we know what the Celestial Worthy's psychological traumas are, and can escape alive, we could deduce ways to weaken the Celestial Worthy.

Hmm... Purely having mystical similarities and close mystical connections is not enough for Luo Shan to bring me and Jenna to appear out of thin air in the underground area of Mushu Hospital. There needs to be a force to push, to utilize...

At first, Luo Shan heard 'Truth can become false, falsehood can become true. The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings This indicates that she has actually been targeted by some faction, the problem has been identified, but that faction wanted to fish or wait for an opportunity before taking action?

Zaratulstra's group? No, if it were them, Zaratulstra would have absolutely guarded against the possibility of Zhou Mingrui being invited to eat at the hot pot restaurant...

As thoughts flashed through Franca's mind, she didn't dare waste time on deep thinking and analysis. She carefully chose her words and said to Luo Shan, "This might be the underground part of Mushu Hospital, and it's not something you dreamed up, it's real."

Without waiting for Luo Shan to ask further questions, Franca made up a reason based on her recent speculation. "There's likely an enemy hidden in or near your room who, while you were sleeping, exerted influence and used your Shaman world to transfer us here out of thin air."

Luo Shan blinked and said, "No wonder at first it was like my usual dreams, but then I became more and more lucid..."

"Why bring us to the underground of Mushu Hospital? Is there a big problem here?"

As the two conversed, Jenna searched through her Traveler's Bag.

She originally wanted to make a phone call or send a WeChat message to try to call for help or contact Lumian, but she and Franca had put their phones beside their pillows before sleeping, not holding them tightly or carrying them on their persons. Therefore, they were both currently “phoneless”. novel.com

Jenna took out the Ice Mirror Charm with only one use left and held it in her palm—she had another Ice Mirror Charm that could be used four times, which Lumian had found an opportunity to remake for all team members after being kicked out of the dream the day before yesterday.

"I don't know, I'm only sure that it's very dangerous here, we need to leave as soon as possible," Franca replied to Luo Shan, looking back and forth. "Let's quickly find the elevator lobby and go up to the first floor by elevator or stairs."

Luo Shan's spirits also tensed up as she followed Franca's actions, surveying their surroundings.

At this moment, Jenna activated the Ice Mirror Charm to see if she could leave the current area through the mirror she carried.

But after being enveloped by the charm's light, she found that the world behind the mirror was deep and dark, giving her an extremely dangerous feeling.

She didn't dare to pass through the glass mirror surface and enter the mirror world.

"The mirror world is also abnormal," Jenna raised her head and said to Franca.

As she spoke, the Ice Mirror Charm in her hand turned into sparkling fragments, quickly scattering and disappearing.

"That's normal," Franca wasn't particularly surprised by this. "In a place like this, maybe we can only leave through normal means and predetermined exits. Let's go find the elevator lobby now."

Luo Shan first made a sound of agreement, then remembered her ability and asked with some expectation, "Do you have any paint and brushes? Pencils or pens would work too."

"You want to draw a door to get out?" Jenna understood.

"Yes." Luo Shan nodded heavily.

Franca frowned slightly and said, "Are you sure the door you draw will lead to the upper levels of Mushu Hospital or the entrance, and not to other areas of the underground part?"

"I can draw the door of my home, that way we can return home, but there's a distance limit. I'm not sure if the distance between Mushu Hospital and Dechuang Garden meets the conditions Luo Shan's voice gradually lowered.

Franca quickly made a decision.

"Let's first look for a real exit, first find the elevator lobby. If we can't find it, or if we're trapped, then we'll risk using your drawn 'door'."

Seeing Jenna nod in agreement, Luo Shan could only temporarily abandon the idea of drawing a door to exit.

After giving Luo Shan a fountain pen and a sharpened pencil, Franca turned around, partly relying on observing the environment and partly following her spiritual intuition, and walked towards the other end of the corridor.

Soon, the three saw a door, a double wooden door with glass.

Franca, walking in front, brought her face close to the glass on the door, trying to observe the situation behind it.

But beyond the glass was pitch black. Even with a Demoness's night vision, she couldn't clearly see what was hidden inside.

Franca felt as if her eyes were covered by a black cloth, rather than the corresponding environment losing light.

After performing a simple Magic Mirror Divination, Franca stretched out both hands and pushed open the large double wooden doors.

What lay ahead was not an extension of the corridor, but a dimly lit hall with similar double wooden doors at the far end.

What Franca, Jenna, and Luo Shan noticed first was not these, but the corpses hanging from the ceiling.

They were gently swaying.

As they swayed, some of the bodies half-turned, allowing Franca and the others to clearly see their appearances.

There was Ai Nana, the principal of Dream Tutoring Classes, Huang Jiajia, and other teachers from the Dream Tutoring Classes that Jenna had seen before.

"Mmph Luo Shan instinctively wanted to scream, but was quickly muffled by Jenna's hand.

"How is this possible?" Franca's scalp tingled.

She knew that the dream manifestations of Ai Nana and Huang Jiajia had essentially died and might have been hung up like the Oracle Da Nizi before, but she never imagined they would still be hanging, hanging together, densely packed like wind-dried cured meat.

"They're hanging here? Then who are the ones outside?"

"Didn't their corpses gain 'new life' and run out?"

"Lumian said their fates were also connected"

Jenna had similar questions, and she thought of a possibility.

"Manifestation of psychological trauma?"

Yes, the underground area of Mushu Hospital is where the dream subconscious's psychological traumas manifest. The psychological trauma created by Ai Nana and Huang Jiajia being hung up and the "rebirth" of corpses running out could exist simultaneously and occur in parallel... Franca accepted this explanation and had no intention of delving deeper into the truth right now.

She said to Jenna and Luo Shan, "Let's go through, to the door on the other side."

Luo Shan, encountering such a horrifying scene for the first time, was completely at a loss and could only choose to follow Franca and Jenna's lead, passing through where the hanging corpses were less dense.

Wind occasionally blew through the hall, causing the corpses to sway back and forth, sometimes swinging left and right, nearly brushing against Luo Shan's head several times.

Luo Shan used all her strength to keep herself from reacting excessively.

Finally, they "squeezed" through the hanging corpses and reached the double wooden doors representing the exit.

After going through the process and getting the same result as before, Franca once again stretched out both hands and pushed open the doors.

Ahead was a corridor, an extremely dimly lit corridor.

At the end of the corridor stood a blurry figure.

Franca and the others simultaneously raised their guard, carefully passing through the wooden doors and entering the corridor.

The scene before their eyes gradually became clear.

They could now clearly see that blurry figure: it was a giant mushroom, over two meters tall!

The top of the giant mushroom was blood-red, interspersed with white patterns. Its body was composed of countless similar small mushrooms, their patterns collectively depicting a handsome yet strange face. On each side, identical mushrooms extended out, forming slender arms.

Smack!

The double wooden doors behind Franca, Jenna, and Luo Shan closed.

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Chapter 997: Different Regions

[1,743 words]

Chapter 997 Different Regions

Seeing that bizarrely shaped giant mushroom person, even Franca, a veteran gamer, felt a sense of morbid curiosity and horror.

My goodness, what kind of monstrosity is this?

As expected of something evolved from a great existence's psychological trauma, who knows if it's from Mr. Fool or the Celestial Worthy...

As similar thoughts flashed through her mind, Franca and Jenna tacitly split to the sides, one hiding in the shadows, the other concealing her form.

Luo Shan had never cooperated with them in Beyonder combat before, and this was her first time encountering a monster without barriers separating them. Moreover, this wasn't the domain of her Shaman abilities, so she was momentarily at a loss.

She instinctively turned around, wanting to run back to the previous hall, moving so fast she left an afterimage in place.

However, although she chose the double doors behind her, she was shocked to find herself rapidly approaching the blood-red giant mushroom person with white patterns.

At the same time, Franca emerged from the shadows.

She felt the shadows she was hiding in strangely come alive, as if trying to control and erode her.

The next second, she and Luo Shan saw the giant mushroom person suddenly swell and grow larger, a giant lava sword burning with pale blue flames coalescing in its hand.

The giant mushroom person took a step closer, swinging down the great sword that seemed formed of red-hot lava.

Franca didn't dodge backward, but instead shot forward, lowering her body. Before the lava sword could strike, she darted past the scorching heat waves to the mushroom person's side.

Jenna's body quickly outlined against the ceiling position, holding a brass-colored revolver aimed at the giant mushroom's head.

Bang!

The giant mushroom person's sword strike hit the inexperienced Luo Shan, shattering this Painter like a mirror.

The Mirror Substitution that Jenna and Franca had previously made for Luo Shan finally came in handy.

The lava sword didn't stop after shattering Luo Shan, heavily striking the corridor floor and sending out pale blue sulfur fireballs.

Rumble!

Jenna had just pulled the trigger, firing a bright yellow bullet at the giant mushroom person's head, when she was engulfed by the chain reaction of explosions.

Most of the corridor, including Franca and the giant mushroom person itself, was affected by the explosion created by over a dozen sulfur fireballs.

Franca and Jenna's Mirror Substitutions were passively triggered, their bodies first thinning, then developing cracks, and finally shattering into pieces.

When the explosive wind in the narrow environment subsided, the figures of Franca, Jenna, and Luo Shan outlined at the giant mushroom person's original position, at the end of this corridor, next to the other set of double doors.

They saw that half of the giant mushroom person's head had collapsed, oozing dark red blood, white mycelium, and tiny spores. They saw its body similarly torn open by the explosion, revealing large wounds filled with both mycelium and flesh.

As the flesh writhed and the mycelium grew, the giant mushroom person's wounds rapidly healed.

Seeing this, Franca's scalp tingled. She turned around, pushed open the door, and rushed out of this corridor.

She felt that fighting in this narrow environment wasn't advantageous for them, while the terrifying mushroom person with its exaggerated self-healing ability and explosive methods was clearly more in its element!

So, she had to escape from here, firstly to try to shake off the giant mushroom person, and secondly to find a scene more suitable for Demonesses and a Painter to fight.

Jenna didn't hesitate, closely following Franca.

Luo Shan, who thought she would die, was surprised that the Mirror Substitution actually worked, and having gained experience, chose to imitate Franca and Jenna's actions.

The trio quickly passed through the open door, entering a new dimly lit corridor.

Behind them, the two halves of the wooden door swayed several times before finally closing completely.

Franca moved forward while vigilantly observing whether the giant mushroom person was pursuing them, but found that behind the door was dead silence, with no further movement.

"Uh... does each type of psychological trauma only operate in a fixed area?" Franca slowed her pace, making a guess based on her experience and imagination.

Jenna nodded, looking around and said, "Now we need to be alert to the psychological trauma in this area?"

"What psychological trauma?" Luo Shan looked confused.

"Monsters similar to that mushroom person just now," Franca explained simply.

Luo Shan's eyes turned slightly, and she blurted out, "Monsters transformed from Zhou Mingrui's psychological trauma?"

Very smart... Franca pondered for a moment and said, "It also includes the psychological trauma of evil forces."

Luo Shan was silent for two seconds, about to say something more when she suddenly started coughing.

"Cough cough cough She paused and said, "Why do I feel like I've suddenly fallen ill?"

Disease? Can that mushroom person also create mystical pathogens? Jenna and I are both Demoness of Affliction with some resistance to Disease abilities. Brief contact won't infect us, but Luo Shan can't resist, showing symptoms? The symptoms appeared very quickly, this isn't at the level of Sequence 7... After Zhou Mingrui was stimulated, did the power level of the dream city change, starting from the underground part of Mushu Hospital, with no corresponding manifestation in the outside world yet? Jenna vaguely understood the reason and took out a bottle of healing agent from her Traveler's Bag.

She didn't rush to provide treatment for Luo Shan, but pondered and asked, "Can you draw efficacious medicine for yourself?"

Even if the drawn medicine had a limited duration, it could truly cure diseases—as long as all the mystical pathogens were eliminated before the effect wore off, it would work!

At this time, Franca had also figured out the reason and muttered, "That mushroom person is too terrifying!"

"What kind of monster is this exactly!"

Luo Shan already felt her forehead burning up. She shook her head and said,

"I don't know exactly what this disease is, nor do I know what medicine to draw to cure it."

"Then drink this." Jenna handed the healing agent to Luo Shan.

She and Franca always maintained a state of having two bottles of healing agent on them, with previously consumed ones either coming from Lumian or being replenished by him.

After experiencing the substitute's death, Luo Shan now fully trusted Franca and Jenna. She took the healing agent, immediately unscrewed the cap, and gulped it down.

In just about ten seconds, she blinked and said, "I think I'm fine now, the illness is gone..."

"It's really amazing!"

"Your ability to draw is also amazing," Franca said humbly, pointing to the end of the current corridor, "Let's continue forward, we need to find the elevator lobby quickly, otherwise who knows what we'll encounter"

She was still shaken by that giant mushroom person.

Jenna and Luo Shan felt the same, quickening their pace to follow behind Franca.

They had just taken two or three steps when the double doors at the end of the corridor suddenly swung open.

Franca and Jenna reflexively used Invisibility, then considered how to help Luo Shan hide.

Luo Shan had somewhat adapted to the current situation. Using a pencil, she quickly drew a simple, inconspicuous, childlike doodle of a door on the side wall in just two seconds.

This door had no markings and wouldn't lead anywhere. Luo Shan placed her palm on the handle and yanked it backward sharply.

The door, just drawn on the wall, miraculously opened, revealing a dark area about the size of Room 2303's bathroom.

Luo Shan hid inside, then carefully closed the paper-thin door.

The wall surface was left with only a few faint, barely noticeable pencil marks resembling a door outline.

By this time, the double doors at the end of the corridor had fully opened, and an orderly wearing light blue clothing and a white mask slowly entered the current area, pushing a transfer bed.

Franca held her breath and turned her gaze towards the orderly and the transfer bed.

She saw that the orderly's eyes were both empty and wooden, yet seemed to hide deep malice. She saw that the surface of the transfer bed was covered with a thin blanket, but there was no patient or corpse sleeping on it.

What made the back of Franca's neck go cold was that the thin blanket appeared to be in a bulging state, yet there was clearly nothing underneath it.

Covering an invisible object? Franca and Jenna pressed their backs tightly against the side wall, trying hard to increase the distance between themselves and the orderly and the transfer bed.

Amidst the sound of wheels rolling over floor cracks, the orderly maintained a slow, stiff posture, pushing the transfer bed past Franca and Jenna, towards the double doors leading to the corridor with the giant mushroom person.

Only when this transfer bed had pushed open the doors, slowly left the current area, and disappeared from their sight did Franca and Jenna end their Invisibility and return to the middle of the corridor.

Luo Shan also opened the door on the wall and nimbly leaped out.

She didn't forget to casually "close the door".

"How did you know it was safe to come out?" Jenna, who was about to knock on the door, asked.

Luo Shan raised the pencil in her hand and said with a smile, "I drew a peephole inside."

"Mm, let's continue looking for the elevator lobby." Franca took the lead without hesitation.

Just as they reached the exit at the end of the corridor, that set of double doors suddenly swung open.

It had opened again, when Franca, Jenna, and Luo Shan were less than three meters away from it.

...

Mushu Hospital, Emergency Center.

Based on his experience from the last hospital visit, Zhou Mingrui described the symptoms of acute gastroenteritis and successfully obtained a lab test order from the doctor.

He took this order and turned into the right passageway, heading towards the emergency blood drawing area.

While waiting for his number to be called at the blood drawing area, he clutched his stomach, pretending he could no longer hold on, and quickly left the area, entering the first-floor lobby and walking towards the nearest public restroom.

During this process, he naturally looked around, seeing if he could find any odd details.

He hadn't discovered anything in the emergency center before.

The nearest public restroom was adjacent to elevators 6 to 10. In the dim light, Zhou Mingrui quickly circled to the elevator lobby.

He pressed both "Up" and "Down" simultaneously, observing the elevators' operation.

Soon, two elevators arrived on the first floor, their doors opening almost simultaneously.

Zhou Mingrui glanced left and right, finding nothing unusual about the upward elevator, but the downward one gave him a feeling of leading to hell, to the source of fear.

Is Mushu Hospital's problem underground? Zhou Mingrui silently mused to himself.

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Chapter 1000: Gaze

[1,835 words]

Chapter 1000 Gaze

Jenna looked at the smile on Franca's face and listened to her calm words tinged with self-mockery. She suddenly felt a lump in her throat.

Her gaze swept over the monster children about to break through the newest ice wall, over the collapse that had already swallowed the transfer bed and the orderly. She bit her lip hard and said, "Okay

The rest of her words got stuck in her throat, as if ice had melted into hot water.

She could only tell herself that future problems would be solved in the future, and that they would surely find a solution!

Franca estimated the time and began preparing the Despair potion using the black eyeball from the reanimated corpse and the corresponding supplementary materials. Jenna allowed the wet feeling to spread from the corner of her eye to the edge of her face while focusing on blocking the approach of the monster children.

She no longer created her own Disease, leaving these oddly-shaped targets all to Franca.

After the monster children were born, she had also been quietly spreading mystical pathogens.

Luo Shan, who was bewildered and inexplicably terrified by the conversation between the two, also reined in her thoughts and began adding various patterns to Jenna's ice wall to enhance its defense.

In the burst of light, the monster children were unable to break through the ice wall in the shortest time and advance further.

Behind them, the floor tiles of the corridor, the walls on both sides, and the ceiling above kept collapsing. The bottomless dark abyss was getting closer and closer to them.

After a while, some of the monster children began to cough violently, coughing so hard that they slid down from the surface of the ice wall. Others became rigid and could no longer move smoothly.

Those crowded outside the ice wall, separated from Jenna and the others by several meters, were finally caught up by the collapse.

They surged forward like a tide but couldn't get past the bodies of their siblings.

They began to fall towards the dense darkness hiding unknown terrors.

Strong feelings of despair emanated from them, rapidly spreading to their companions clinging to the ice wall surface as their conditions worsened.

Now! Franca raised the bottle, bringing the deep purple potion bubbling with rosy bubbles to her lips.

She drank it without hesitation.

The potion had no taste, or perhaps Franca could no longer distinguish its taste.

She only felt her spirit and thoughts rapidly falling into a lightless, enclosed darkness, plummeting towards an unknown depth.

Something seemed to be calling her there.

Trier, inside a luxurious villa.

Franca, sleeping on the bed, still had her eyes tightly shut, but her hair eerily began to float, gradually growing longer, darker, and thicker.

Madam Judgment, standing guard in the villa's living room, instantly sensed something and Blinked into Franca's room.

Looking at the transformed Franca, Madam Judgment didn't rush to act. Instead, she took out a charm made of gray-white dragon scales, activated it, and made it ethereal.

"There's been a change in the dream. Two of Cups was forced to advance to Demoness of Despair within the dream," Madam Judgment's words combined with the ethereal charm, quickly becoming transparent and merging into the night sky.

At this moment, Madam Judgment felt a certain gaze, a gaze from the Traveler's Bag, from an unknown place, a gaze upon Franca.

Dream city, Mushu Hospital, B2.

Franca's consciousness and spirit floated and fell within the enclosed darkness. She felt countless invisible threads of intense despair extending from the outside world, following their mystical connections to grasp her body.

At the same time, she saw two brilliant starry lights.

Those were the people she cared about, and who cared about her, the anchors that let her know who she was!

The groggy Franca gradually regained clarity, vaguely sensing a gaze full of resentment, hatred, and expectation watching her from somewhere in the deep darkness.

Suddenly, her Traveler's Bag outside the spiritual world began to vibrate, a vibration she could clearly perceive.

It was the Primordial Demoness figurine carved from white bone that was noticeably trembling.

At the same time, Franca discovered an indescribable gaze from above directed at her, penetrating through layers of mirror worlds!

Her hair instantly turned completely black, floating in the air like tentacles, with their tips swelling into spheres, as if about to open into numerous eyes.

Franca's face became even more beautiful, emanating a charm that even made Luo Shan, a girl who preferred the opposite sex, unable to look away, her heart pounding, like a moth throwing itself into the fire.

Franca struggled to open her eyes and spoke in a voice that seemed to pluck at the strings of the soul, "It's done

Jenna stopped maintaining the ice wall and activated the Ice Mirror Charm she had been holding.

In the crystalline light, she felt the surface of the mirror in her other hand ripple with a faint glow, losing its rock-solid texture.

They really could pass through and leave via the mirror world!

The barrier had been broken!

Moreover, Jenna discovered that the dangers previously hidden in the mirror world had also disappeared.

This was beyond her expectations. She had originally thought that the Primordial Demoness's gaze could break through the obstacles and connect to the mirror world, which would have been impressive enough. She never imagined it could actually dispel the hidden dangers.

This was also Franca's confusion.

She struggled to tell Jenna and Luo Shan, "Both of you... go first

She was still fighting against the potion's impact, transforming her body, and temporarily unable to move.

If the mirror world hadn't suppressed this advancement to Sequence 7 level, she wouldn't even have been able to speak at this stage!

Jenna didn't hesitate. She gave Franca a deep look, grabbed Luo Shan's arm, and plunged into the compact mirror in her hand.

The compact mirror then fell to the ground as the surrounding ice wall completely collapsed.

However, the monster children closest to Franca had all been infected with severe illness and were no longer able to approach or attack. f

In the mirror world, Jenna led Luo Shan through a surreal tunnel, heading towards a corresponding mirror guided by their spirituality.

In the blink of an eye, they reached a new area behind the mirror, able to leave the current world.

Jenna suddenly sensed something and turned her head to look into the depths of the mirror world.

It seemed that some dangerous entity had awakened slightly there, instantly filling the entire mirror world with a sense of terror.

Silently, the mirror world completely collapsed.

"Franca Jenna's pupils dilated as she softly called out her companion's name.

The scene before her eyes meant that Franca would temporarily be unable to escape via the mirror world, and by the time the mirror world recovered, the Primordial Demoness's gaze would likely have ended, and the force isolating the inside from the outside would reappear!

Blood trickled from Jenna's lips as she endured the pain invading her mind. Before the terrifying collapse of the mirror world could rapidly spread to them, she pulled Luo Shan and emerged from the mirror surface.

She knew that blindly returning would only lead to them getting lost in the spatiotemporal turbulence deep in the mirror world, which would be of no help in rescuing Franca.

She planned to go to the first floor of Mushu Hospital and take the elevator back to the underground area!

At this moment, Franca, still in the process of advancing, also discovered the collapse of the mirror world.

She then felt violent tremors like an earthquake at the bottom of the dark abyss.

It was as if certain entities hidden in the dark abyss had been stimulated by the collapsing force of the mirror world and were reacting.

With these tremors, the corridor beneath Franca's feet that had not yet been affected by the collapse suddenly gave way, carrying her and hundreds of monster children into the bottomless dark abyss.

Dammit! Franca hadn't expected this development.

The despair of those monster children became even more intense, solidifying into substance. Franca was also uncontrollably enveloped by the emotions of despair.

This helped her through the final stage of her advancement, causing her floating thick black hair to fall back around her, no longer abnormal, and restoring some of its flaxen color.

Gritting her teeth, Franca used the Demoness's feather-fall technique to slow her descent, allowing her some degree of control.

She chose to move away from the intense psychological shadow she had sensed earlier, that thing resembling a giant shroud, which would surely make her wish for death.

She drifted towards other areas, taking a gamble.

What if the psychological traumas in other parts of the abyss, though intense, aren't fatally dangerous?

As a human, one must hold onto some hope, not give up entirely and fall into complete despair!

...

Jenna emerged from the metal mirror surface of the elevator lobby doors with Luo Shan, immediately seeing the female version of Lumian who had just lifted her gaze from the shaking ground.

She wasn't surprised to see Lumian here and blurted out, "Franca is below, not at B1!"

"The mirror world has collapsed!"

Lumian's eyes instantly narrowed.

He didn't ask for details but said directly, "Go to the emergency center and find Zhou Mingrui. See if you can get him to help and go to the underground area.

"As for the rest, leave it to me. I'll handle it."

Zhou Mingrui is at Mushu Hospital now? Both Jenna and Luo Shan were shocked.

Before Jenna could speak, Lumian added in a deep voice, "I had anticipated scenarios where we might have to enter the bottom of Mushu Hospital to attempt sabotage and made some preparations.

"Everyone has their own task. Finding Zhou Mingrui is equally important!"

As he spoke, Lumian had already reached the elevator and pressed the down arrow.

Jenna's vision suddenly blurred.

She didn't stubbornly insist, but gave a terse response and pulled Luo Shan towards the emergency center.

She knew they couldn't put all their eggs in one basket. She knew she couldn't be selfish now. She knew that without godhood, even if she went to the bottom of Mushu

Hospital, she probably couldn't be of much help and might even burden Lumian and Franca.

She wished she didn't know these things.

At this moment, she felt her own weakness due to the intense pain, and because of her weakness, she felt even more pain, giving rise to an extreme desire and motivation to change this situation.

Her Affliction potion was fully digested.

Lumian entered the elevator and pressed the "B2" button.

As the elevator began to descend, Lumian looked at his stunningly beautiful reflection in the metal mirror surface with a grim expression.

When the elevator stopped and the doors opened, he quickly stepped out and looked towards the area outside the elevator.

What met his eyes was a darkness as black as an abyss with no visible bottom.

Lumian's gaze instantly froze.

Suddenly, a voice sounded from a dark corner of the elevator lobby. "Child of God."

Lumian abruptly turned his head to see a person standing in the shadows by the emergency exit.

It was Lu Yong'an, the dean of obstetrics at Mushu Hospital and a bestowed of the Great Mother.

Lu Yong'an's face was shrouded in darkness. She looked at Lumian and said in a low voice, "To save someone from there, one can only beseech the Mother's help."

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Chapter 998: Tremor

[1,731 words]

Chapter 998 Tremor

Zhou Mingrui stared at the downward elevator until its doors closed.

He suppressed the urge within him, choosing not to take the elevator now to explore the underground area of Mushu Hospital.

He needed more intelligence.

Zhou Mingrui withdrew his gaze and walked towards the elevator lobby exit, intending to go to the nearby public restroom as he had pretended earlier.

Suddenly, he looked towards a corner to the side, as if something was hidden in the darkness there.

Zhou Mingrui stared for a while but found nothing unusual.

He continued walking diagonally forward, turning into the public restroom.

After a few seconds, he hid in the shadows, melting into the darkness, and circled back to this area to quietly observe.

After patiently waiting for nearly five minutes and confirming there were no potential observers in the corresponding corner, he returned to the public restroom, feigning the appearance of having just finished his business, and slowly walked out towards the emergency blood drawing area.

It wasn't until Zhou Mingrui's figure entered the brightly lit area that Lumian's image, with flowing black hair and striking beauty, reflected on the metal elevator doors of the surgery-specific elevator in the lobby.

He wore a light gray T-shirt, a jacket slightly lighter than black water, and off-white trousers that were a bit short due to his height, revealing the edges of his socks.

Strong spirituality, keen intuition, this doesn't seem like just a Sequence 9 Assassin... Lumian sighed softly.

Of course, he knew Zhou Mingrui couldn't be merely a Sequence 9 Assassin.

Earlier, he had hidden in that corner using Invisibility. If Zhou Mingrui had made any move towards the hospital's underground area, he would have immediately tried to stop him. Who knew, he was almost discovered by Zhou Mingrui.

Fortunately, he wasn't just a Hunter and a Demoness. With a Blink, he transferred his position, hiding completely within the metal mirror surface formed by the elevator doors.

Lumian walked out of the elevator, about to stealthily approach the emergency center along the largely unlit lobby, when he suddenly felt a vibration under his feet.

It was like a subtle earthquake, or as if a not-too-violent explosion had occurred underground.

Lumian stopped, lowered his head, and stared at the stone-tiled floor.

Has something changed in the underground area? Lumian pondered to himself.

...

Seeing the wooden doors swing open before them, Franca pulled Luo Shan, her feet sliding, quickly hiding in the shadows cast by the dim light to the side.

Then, she merged with the shadows, letting Luo Shan press against the wall behind her, using herself as a “shadow” to provide better cover.

Meanwhile, Jenna used Invisibility.

In the blink of an eye, before the wooden doors were fully open, the three had completed their concealment.

This time, it was again an orderly wearing light blue clothing and a white mask pushing a transfer bed in.

But unlike before, there was a patient covered with a thin blanket lying on the transfer bed.

The patient was in her twenties, wearing a loose blue and white checkered hospital gown, her golden long hair docilely spread to both sides, her forehead neither wide nor narrow, smooth and beautiful, her eyes a jade green, her demeanor melancholic and serene.

The most noticeable thing about her was her abdomen, which was greatly swollen, seeming to be over seven months pregnant.

Pushing a patient... there are no wards or examination rooms in the underground area... Franca pondered inwardly.

Of course, she knew that in a place where the dream subconscious’s psychological trauma and the Mother Tree of Desire’s abyssal symbol merged, rationality was a scarce element.

The foreign pregnant woman lying on the transfer bed might well be a psychological trauma of Mr. Fool or that Celestial Worthy!

Luo Shan, shielded behind Franca, only saw the foreign pregnant woman after the transfer bed had passed their hiding spot.

Her gaze suddenly froze.

That was, that was the woman she had just seen in her dream!

Although at that time one of her eyes had been gouged out, hanging near the socket, her face covered with very deep, fleshless wounds, and head-sized bloody tumors growing from both shoulders, Luo Shan still recognized her at a glance.

Luo Shan bit her lip, not letting herself make any sound of surprise.

Just then, from the highly swollen belly of the pregnant woman on the transfer bed came the cry of an infant.

"Waaa!"

Franca instantly bristled.

What the hell are you crying for when you're not even born yet?

This cry caused the latent fear in Franca, Jenna, and Luo Shan to explode simultaneously, uncontrollably causing them to make extra movements.

Franca consequently emerged from the shadows, and Jenna could no longer maintain her Invisibility state.

In a flash, the orderly with empty and wooden eyes turned to look at Jenna, and the foreign pregnant woman on the transfer bed also sat up, looking towards Franca and Luo Shan.

Let's go for it! Franca gritted her teeth and concealed her form.

Her idea was to temporarily repel the orderly and the foreign pregnant woman, then seize the opportunity to escape to the next area through the open double doors.

Based on their previous experience, the "monsters" in the current area would not leave their own "territory".

The next second, the whites of the orderly's eyes became more pronounced, a cold aura emanating from his body as he took a large step towards Jenna.

Jenna once again vanished, causing the orderly to grasp at empty air.

Immediately after, her figure quickly outlined behind the orderly, thrusting the sharp dagger in her hand towards the orderly's back.

Pfft!

Her dagger seemed to strike metal and ironwood, only piercing the clothing, unable to penetrate the skin.

Jenna wasn't shocked. She let the quiet, vile Demoness black flame appear on the surface of the dagger, quickly infusing into the orderly's body.

With a whoosh, the orderly, feeling increasingly inhuman, burst into Demoness black flames from the inside out. He silently wailed as his spirituality and life began to rapidly fade.

On the other side, the first thing Franca did was also use Invisibility, while Luo Shan strode forward, darting out over ten meters in an instant.

Franca appeared in front of the transfer bed, a mirror now in her hand, reflecting the image of the foreign pregnant woman.

Almost simultaneously, she pressed her palm, covered in quiet black flames, towards the mirror surface.

Throughout this process, the foreign pregnant woman's reactions seemed rather slow, just like an ordinary person.

She then saw black flames erupting from her belly, hearing the baby's cries becoming more pronounced.

She let out a shrill and agonized scream, her figure instantly disappearing from the transfer bed.

But when she reappeared in Franca's planned escape direction, the evil black flames were still burning on her body, growing stronger.

Plop! Plop! Plop! The foreign pregnant woman's flesh seemed to melt away, falling to the ground piece by piece.

Feeling her aura rapidly dissipating, seeing the orderly collapse to the ground motionless, Franca actually felt a sense of unreal bewilderment.

Is it resolved just like that?

Was that giant mushroom person from earlier actually an exception, and the "monsters" in Mushu Hospital's underground area are also suppressed at Sequence 7?

No, I shouldn't think like that, raising a flag is bad...

Before Franca could correct her thoughts, she saw the foreign pregnant woman fall, her abdomen tearing inch by inch, as if something was trying to burrow out.

At the same time, the pieces of flesh that had fallen to the ground from the foreign pregnant woman also underwent abnormal changes.

Some merged with the floor tiles, transforming into womb-like shapes, giving birth to square-shaped infants with eyebrows and eyes. Some touched the transfer bed, causing the bluish mechanical bed surface to suddenly bulge, sprouting one after another small beds with human heads and wheels for limbs. Some splattered onto the ceiling, causing the energy-saving lights to suddenly brighten, producing dozens of children with human bodies and light bulb heads...

Franca and Jenna instinctively retreated seven or eight steps towards the direction of the mushroom person, seeming to have been stunned.

Is this the psychological trauma of a great existence?

As expected of a great existence's psychological trauma!

Don't come over here!

I don't want to give birth!

In her terror, Franca drew out the iron-black Inevitable Gun.

She found that the foreign pregnant woman was not completely dead yet, still producing more flesh, and those pieces of flesh were wriggling, seeking new wombs or fathers, constantly giving birth, constantly reproducing.

Moreover, the foreign pregnant woman's abdomen had completely torn open, and the fetus inside was about to crawl out.

Franca forced herself to calm down, aimed at the foreign pregnant woman's abdomen, and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

A bullet exuding a dim blue-green color shot out, passing through the numerous, oddly shaped infants, accurately hitting the target, burrowing into the foreign pregnant woman's abdomen.

Certain Death!

The cry of the baby in the foreign pregnant woman's belly suddenly became intense and resentful, but it ceased abruptly in the blink of an eye.

Similarly, the foreign pregnant woman stopped secreting flesh, and those that had already separated also withered after giving birth to a new fetus.

Thankfully, Certain Death worked... Seeing this, Franca secretly let out a sigh of relief.

Just then, she, Jenna, and Luo Shan felt the earth tremble.

The tremor only lasted for a second, but Franca and the others saw the new corridor outside the double doors collapsing inch by inch. The walls, rooms, and ceiling there were also falling into an abyss of dense blackness with no visible bottom.

This collapse slowly spread towards the current area.

Franca and Jenna sensed something, one looking up towards the ceiling, the other turning to look at the area where the giant mushroom person was, blocked by the wooden doors.

Franca discovered that the ceiling above them was also falling, but instead of crashing down on them, it was falling directly into the seemingly bottomless dense darkness. Jenna saw that the area where the giant mushroom person was also began to collapse, the collapse spreading towards where they were staying. f

Does killing that foreign pregnant woman trigger a change in the underground area?

No, this might be the true appearance of Mushu Hospital's underground area now, a dark abyss containing various psychological traumas... What we walked through and saw earlier was just a disguise influenced by the dream city, with corridors and some rooms symbolizing safe zones...

Franca suddenly had this realization.

"What, what should we do?" Luo Shan finally overcame her terror.

She had first needed eyebleach from the sight of hundreds and thousands of monster infants and their birth process. It shocked her mind before she realized that she and the others seemed to have nowhere to go.

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Chapter 999: Opportunity

[1,835 words]

Chapter 999 Opportunity

Seeing the collapse gradually spreading towards their area and hearing Luo Shan's question filled with obvious terror, Franca and Jenna exchanged a glance before decisively telling Luo Shan, "Quick, draw a door that can lead to the outside world!"

Clearly, they could no longer continue forward to find the elevator lobby and emergency exits.

"Okay!" Luo Shan nodded vigorously.

She turned around, holding a pen in one hand and a pencil in the other, and began sketching on the wall.

At this moment, Franca and Jenna noticed that the monster children born from the foreign pregnant woman and various objects were all surging towards them.

They seemed to fear falling into the bottomless abyss and were desperately trying to avoid it, to the point of forgetting their goal of attacking enemies.

Being close to Jenna and the others, the monster children quickly reduced the distance between them to two meters. Some of their eyes once again reflected the figures of Franca, Jenna, and Luo Shan, with their desire to attack growing fierce and violent.

Just then, a thick "ice wall" appeared before them.

A translucent layer of ice in the shape of a hemisphere enveloped Franca and the others inside.

This was created by Demoness of Affliction Jenna.

Seeing the densely packed monsters, some square-shaped, some like small beds, some with light bulb-shaped heads, crawling on the surface of the hemispherical ice wall, trying various ways to break through this barrier, Franca felt her fear of clustered objects and humanoid creatures about to explode simultaneously.

She condensed quiet and sinister Demoness black flames around her, waiting for the moment the first layer of ice wall would shatter.

In just seven or eight seconds, the beautiful crystalline ice wall made a crisp shattering sound under the attack of numerous monster children.

Black flames quickly flew out from around Franca and Jenna, passing through the rapidly expanding cracks, igniting nearly twenty monster children.

They burst into flames all over, wailing and rolling on the spot, obstructing many of their siblings' advance and igniting those around them.

Seizing this opportunity, before the hemispherical ice wall completely collapsed, Franca and Jenna joined forces to create a second layer of ice wall, only ten centimeters apart from the previous one.

"It's done!" Luo Shan's voice rang out.

While continuing to delay the approach of the monster children, Franca and Jenna expectantly glanced at the pattern on the wall with their peripheral vision.

It was a vivid door outlined by pencil marks and blue ink, with a doorplate at the top bearing the numbers "1502".

This was the door to Luo Shan's home, almost identical to what Franca and Jenna remembered, except for the color difference.

The current one was closer to a sketch!

Luo Shan pressed her thumb to the position corresponding to the door lock, making the fake door on the wall emit an unlocking sound.

Then, she turned the handle and pushed open the door she had drawn to her own home.

The light behind the door was dim, outlining all the items in room 1502, but they appeared unusually illusory.

As the illusion gradually solidified into reality, Luo Shan's joyful gaze suddenly froze.

She saw her windows collapsing, her balcony collapsing, all of them falling towards an abyss filled with dense darkness!

The door Luo Shan had drawn and the passage she had established also collapsed inch by inch, just like the surrounding environment.

"It doesn't work" Luo Shan uttered, almost in a delirium.

She turned her gaze, filled with undisguised despair yet brimming with hope, towards Franca and Jenna, hoping they could come up with a new solution.

At this moment, the nearest collapse had already swallowed the original corridor, causing the double doors separating the two sides to sway and fall.

This was already inches from Franca and company.

Through the gaps between the monster children, Franca could see more clearly the bottomless dense darkness, and something seemingly hidden in its depths.

That figure, apparently wrapped in a robe, or perhaps the robe itself blown up by the wind.

Even just vaguely glimpsing the outline from a distance, the fear in Franca's heart exploded without warning.

The skin on her face became semi-transparent, and the flesh beneath began to writhe, as if it had gained a certain life of its own.

Instinctively, reflexively, Franca averted her gaze, withdrawing her line of sight.

She suddenly had a realization.

What she had just seen was the thing Mr. Fool's subconscious or the Celestial Worthy's subconscious feared most, their strongest psychological trauma!

It was clearly not subject to the dream's suppression of power levels. If they couldn't escape and fell into the abyss along with the collapsing corridor, falling towards that place, death might be the gentlest and most beautiful outcome.

Franca shook her head violently, shaking off the small amount of "glue" that was clouding part of her thoughts.

As Jenna used a third layer of ice wall to block those monster children, she took out the Ice Amulet and a mirror.

She said to Jenna and Luo Shan, "We'll go through the mirror world. No matter how terrifying the hidden dangers in the mirror world are, they can't be more horrifying than the psychological trauma at the bottom of this abyss!"

Of two evils, choose the lesser!

"Okay." Jenna didn't object, and Luo Shan, lacking experience, chose to trust her two companions.

The Ice Amulet in Franca's hand rapidly lit up with a crystalline glow.

The next second, Franca found that the glass surface of the mirror had somehow already turned pitch black, as solid as rock, impenetrable.

"We can't get in... it's different from before the collapse Franca felt a surge of uncontrollable despair.

Were they really going to fall into that bottomless abyss and face the strongest part of a great existence's psychological trauma?

"Can't get in?" Jenna's action of shooting Demoness black flames to ignite the monster children noticeably slowed for a second.

Luo Shan was suddenly dumbfounded, her mouth half-open as she said, "Is there really no way at all?"

Hearing these words, Jenna gritted her teeth and created another hemispherical ice wall.

The surface of the ice wall was quickly covered with various monster children, densely packed, now less than a meter away from Franca and the others.

The collapse of the corridor had also reached this area.

Franca's thoughts raced, her eyes flickering twice as she said, "I still have a way!"

As she spoke, she took out the black eyeball left behind by the reanimated corpse Panatiya and other supplementary ingredients from her Traveler's Bag:

"I'll advance to Demoness of Despair now!

"It's perfect timing, I've been using Disease to secretly influence the monsters in this corridor, which can save a lot of time."

The monster children crawling all over Jenna's ice wall and their companions behind were all within three meters of Franca, numbering close to a thousand.

"It's useless, even a Demoness of Despair is now suppressed to Sequence 7 level, at most Sequence 6, it can't forcibly open a path to the mirror world!" Jenna instinctively refuted Franca.

She wanted to stay calm, but was overwhelmed by the monster children breaking through the ice wall, barely managing to establish a new hemispherical ice wall sixty centimeters away from them.

Franca, while using the black eyeball condensed from the reanimated corpse's Beyonder characteristics to create more virulent viruses, drank a bottle of healing agent and reminded Jenna, "Quickly drink a bottle too, Luo Shan already had one earlier."

Then, Franca explained rapidly, "The important thing is not me advancing to Demoness of Despair, but that every Demoness advancement draws the attention of the Primordial Demoness. I need Her attention!"

Seeing Jenna drink the healing agent, Franca helped maintain the defense line and asked in return, "Does Mr. Fool know about the Primordial Demoness?"

"Definitely." Jenna answered without hesitation.

Mr. Fool's avatar had dealings with the Demoness Sect many times, he must be aware of the existence of the Primordial Demoness.

Franca glanced at the corridor that had already collapsed to the transfer bed and said to Jenna and Luo Shan, "Let's move towards the center; buy more time."

The collapse progress on both sides of the corridor was about the same, but Franca and the others were clearly closer to one side.

Without waiting for Jenna and Luo Shan to respond, Franca suddenly withdrew the force maintaining the ice wall and ran at her fastest speed towards the middle section of the corridor about ten to twenty meters away.

Luo Shan ran even faster.

After the three had determined their positions, Jenna once again condensed an ice wall to block the pursuing monster children, while Franca continued to spread mystical pathogens around.

She explained quickly, "Since Mr. Fool knows about the Primordial Demoness, there must be a manifestation corresponding to the Primordial Demoness in this dream—we just haven't discovered it yet, and true gods can directly enter the dream city.

"When I advance here, my real self will also advance. Based on our experience, no matter what state the Primordial Demoness is in, whether the situation is good or bad, She will turn Her gaze towards this.

"As a true god, She won't have difficulty discovering that my consciousness is in a real dream, and will likely project Herself in, using Her inherent dream manifestation to truly observe me advancing in the underground area of Mushu Hospital.

"She certainly won't risk descending here, nor does She have the feelings or motivation to save me, but as the ruler of the mirror world, Her mere gaze will likely open a channel between the mirror world and this area, and possibly cause the hidden dangers in the mirror world to temporarily disperse!"

"This can't be guaranteed." Jenna blurted out, her tone anxious and confused.

This place was a product of the fusion of a great existence's psychological trauma and the Mother Tree of Desire's abyssal symbol, and more great existences had projected some power into it. Even if they were all suppressed to mid-low Sequences, could the Primordial Demoness in a poor state break the blockade on the mirror world with just Her gaze?

"There's no such thing as a 100% successful plan, but not trying guarantees failure."
Franca quickly responded.

Jenna fell silent, biting her lip before saying with a trembling voice, "This will prevent you from leaving the dream, and if the dream ends soon, you will die because of it

Franca, waiting for the mystical pathogens to take effect, was silent for a moment before saying through gritted teeth, "We'll deal with future problems in the future!

"If we don't survive now, there won't be a future!"

"But Jenna's voice suddenly choked.

Her mind tried to grasp something, but couldn't hold onto anything.

Franca interrupted her, her expression complex as she mocked her own past naivety and love for fantasy, "After killing the reanimated corpse, obtaining the Beyonder characteristics and supplementary ingredients, knowing that all ritual requirements in the dream city would be lowered to Sequence 7 level, I was thinking, is this, is this giving me an opportunity? When everyone is in a desperate situation, with no other options, to stand up like a hero, consume the potion, break through in the face of danger, forcibly advance, reverse the outcome, save everyone, save the world

At this point, Franca's expression suddenly settled.

She calmly looked at Jenna, revealing a bright smile.

"Now, the opportunity has presented itself."

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