

Menu 321

Chapter 321: Response Measures

The person outside the door was Giselle.

The female pastry chef, clutching a bag of food and a newspaper, immediately flashed a smile upon seeing Jason open the door, her face already red from the cold.

"Good morning, Jason."

"Your breakfast."

"And the newspaper."

The female pastry chef said as she handed over the food and newspaper to Jason.

Jason took them and immediately took off his coat, draping it over the female pastry chef's head in a hooded fashion, and after fastening the buttons, only her eyes and part of her nose were visible, making her look quite odd.

However, the female pastry chef did not refuse.

Looking at Jason, who was close at hand, her face turned even redder, and she clung to Jason's coat as if she wanted to hide her entire face.

Huh?

This didn't seem to be Jason's coat.

Similar in color and style, but the material was much better.

Immediately, the female pastry chef guessed something.

Anger and murderous intent surged in her heart again.

A voice told her to kill the other person.

But she suppressed it.

To her, it was just the usual jealousy.

Plus, she hadn't rested well.

She should have waited here for Jason.

With that regret, the female pastry chef glared fiercely at Hannibal, who, in return, responded with a smile. Then he turned around and took out a coat to drape over Jason's shoulders.

"It's cold, wear mine."

As he said this, Hannibal smiled at the female pastry chef again.

The female pastry chef exploded with anger.

Kill him!

Kill him!

How dare he snatch my man!

The voice inside her roared with rage again!

The female pastry chef was initially infected by this boiling killing intent, but when the words 'my man' emerged from her heart, she blushed with shame once more, and her entire body began to sway where she stood.

"What's wrong?"

Jason asked in astonishment.

"Nothing, nothing."

"Where are you going, Jason?"

"Let's go together."

The shy female pastry chef shook her head repeatedly, her speech becoming inarticulate as she immediately changed the subject.

Jason thought for a moment and eventually nodded.

There was no other significance, only that he owed her a debt of gratitude for the food she had provided in the past and now in his hand. It was only fitting that he ensured the female pastry chef's safety.

With a wave to Griffin in the distant corner, Jason led the female pastry chef onto a public horse-drawn carriage by the road.

The food in his hand made him slow down his plans to patrol Newdeth City on foot.

After all, eating in the wind is bad for the stomach.

As for whether he had already had breakfast?

Yes, he had.

But from the dining table to the front door, he had already digested it.

Crack!

"Giddyup!"

With a flick of the reins, the carriage slowly set in motion.

Griffin watched the public carriage disappear into the distance. Then, he headed straight for 'Hannibal's Clinic.' At this time, Hannibal hadn't returned to his room but was also watching Jason and the female pastry chef's carriage leave.

Upon seeing Griffin approaching, Hannibal put on a polite smile, yet he did not move.

He was not used to letting anyone other than Jason enter his room.

Patients were exceptions.

But they were confined to the living room.

Griffin was an acquaintance but definitely not on the same level as Jason.

After all, Jason was one of a kind.

And this guy here?

There were countless others like him on the streets.

"Can we talk?"

Griffin asked in a low voice.

"One hour for seven dollars. If it goes over 45 minutes, it counts as a second hour,"

Hannibal said with a smile.

Griffin blinked, somewhat taken aback.

"I mean to talk."

Griffin emphasized.

"Yes, to talk."

"One hour for seven dollars. If it goes over 45 minutes, it counts as a second hour."

"I'm a psychologist. That's the standard fee," Hannibal said, smiling unchanged.

Griffin's breathing quickened, and he felt like punching that smiling face, but remembering what was weighing on his mind, he managed to hold back. Grinding his teeth, he said, "Alright, let's start with five minutes."

With that, Griffin tried to force his way past Hannibal and into the house.

But...

He couldn't push through.

Hannibal's robust figure stood immovable, while Griffin staggered backwards from the collision.

Facing Griffin's astonished and confused look, Hannibal maintained his smile.

"At least one hour to begin," the psychologist declared.

"One hour?!"

"You crook!"

"I... wait, fine, one hour it is!"

Griffin could no longer hold back and started yelling loudly, but when he saw Hannibal about to close the door, he quickly gave in.

Hannibal extended his hand from the gap in the door.

"What does that mean?"

Griffin was startled.

"Pay first," Hannibal said.

"Don't you trust me? Worried I'll stiff you?"

Griffin roared as if deeply insulted.

"Yes," Hannibal nodded.

"You!"

Griffin wanted to say something more, but Hannibal was preparing to close the door again.

This forced Griffin to pull out his last bit of money from his sock and hand it to Hannibal.

Hannibal did not accept it; instead, he frowned and stepped aside.

"Put your money in the water bowl at the door," Hannibal directed.

"It just came out of my sock, not through a plague!"

Griffin glanced at the water bowl on the cabinet next to the door, which contained a few coins. His decent memory brought him back to the time of the plague and the way the shops on Fishbone Street dealt with money: a bowl full of water placed on the counter.

People believed this could effectively drive away the plague.

Griffin didn't know if it worked or not.

But in his memory, the number of deaths hadn't decreased by much.

Similarly, the money in the bowl often went missing.

"It's the same principle."

Hannibal said it indifferently.

Griffin didn't argue anymore.

He tossed the money into the bowl, then, under Hannibal's signal, sat in the armchair in the hall.

Hannibal glanced at the clock hanging nearby, clearly noted the time, and then said, "We can begin now."

"Is this place safe?"

"I mean from more special attacks."

Griffin lifted his right hand, his five fingers sliding back and forth as if he were sketching an octopus.

"Safer than most parts of Newdeth City," Hannibal said with certainty.

It was not an empty boast, but the truth.

His house had undergone special modifications, giving it considerable resistance to various kinds of attacks, including those from the "Mystical Side."

Phew!

After Hannibal spoke these words, Griffin let out a breath of relief.

At that moment, he seemed to fully relax.

He slumped into the armchair, his face revealing evident fatigue.

"I feel like something is following me; he, she, or it—I can't be sure what it is. In any case, this entity is constantly siphoning my memories."

"I feel like I've forgotten a lot."

"But my memory hasn't shown any discrepancies."

"I still remember the jar I buried at my home on Fishbone Street when I was six."

"But I just can't recall what it is I've forgotten."

"Do you understand how I feel?"

Griffin spoke somewhat incoherently.

"Many people have your condition."

"Can you be more specific?"

Hannibal, possessing all the qualities of a qualified psychotherapist, showed no derision and didn't express disbelief; on the contrary, he took detailed notes.

"More specific?"

"Probably after meeting Jason and Giselle," Griffin replied after thinking hard for a moment.

"Before that, everything was normal."

"But since I acted as a mediator once, everything started becoming abnormal."

Griffin continued to describe what had transpired in detail.

Hannibal, on the other hand, continued to take thorough notes.

The two engrossed individuals did not notice that the door, which should have been shut, suddenly opened.

The female pastry chef appeared at the doorway.

She walked in slowly.

She looked at the two men with a blank expression.

The icy coldness in her eyes was like staring at two corpses.

She raised her hand.

The black mist reemerged, filling the entire room once again.

The writing in Hannibal's notebook swiftly vanished, turning into other records, but the handwriting was identical.

Their memories disappeared along with it, replaced by others.

Having done all this, the female pastry chef turned and left.

Creak.

The door closed.

Hannibal and Griffin seemed to awaken from a dream, as if coming to.

"You said your memory has been declining lately?"

"I believe it's the anxiety and insomnia that are causing it," Hannibal said, flipping through his notes as he always did, making his final summary.

"Is that so?"

"Probably those damned people."

"The 'Ghost Squad' are really annoying."

Griffin sat up, mumbling to himself.

Then, Griffin headed straight for the exit.

Hannibal escorted Griffin to the door.

As usual, like he did with patients, they waved goodbye to each other.

Only, when Hannibal closed the door and glanced at the wall clock unintentionally, he was taken aback.

Then he turned and walked to the hallway cupboard's water bowl to look at the coins inside.

No! No! Something's not right!

Hannibal picked up his recent notes again, carefully examining every word.

It was indeed his handwriting.

Then, he flipped to the next page.

Through the imprint of the pen on the paper, something became apparent.

Without any hesitation, he rushed into the bathroom. Looking at himself in the mirror, he whispered, "You didn't find anything! You didn't find anything! You didn't find anything!"

"When the snap of the fingers sounds, you will forget what you just discovered."

"When Jason says how delicious it is, you will remember what you just discovered."

Snap!

At the sound of the snap, Hannibal in front of the mirror was startled and then returned to normal.

"Wonder if Jason will come back for lunch."

"What to prepare for lunch?"

Hannibal turned and walked towards the bathroom door.

He didn't notice that behind him, in that mirror, the female pastry chef's shadow flashed and then disappeared as he turned.

"Ah!"

On the carriage, the female pastry chef suddenly let out a cry of pain.

"What's wrong?"

Jason, who was reading the newspaper, turned to look.

"Don't know, suddenly my head felt like it was pricked by a needle."

"It hurts a lot."

"Probably because I haven't rested well," the female pastry chef said with a strained smile.

Jason frowned, considering whether to arrange for the pastry chef to rest when the carriage, which had been traveling smoothly, suddenly stopped.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Is this Mr. Jason?"

The carriage door was knocked on, followed by a polite inquiry.

Jason replied promptly,

"No."