

## 48 Hours 1041

### Chapter 1041: Human Resources Department

“Wait a minute, what kind of goods are you producing?”

When they passed the customer service department, E-Goat could already feel that something wasn't quite right. However, when he saw the excessive number of servers below, the feeling only became even stronger. It wasn't until Qiu Ming introduced it to the design department (no matter how slow E-Goat's reaction was) that he finally guessed what kind of goods Morgan produced.

“Clones? Is this place your clone production base?”

To E-Goat's surprise, Qiu Ming shook his head.

“No, it's not.”

“If it's not a clone production facility, then what is it? Could it be a large-scale live-action online game?”

Qiu Ming didn't say anything. Instead, he swiped his card and entered the design department.

Unlike the previous two places, the department had a different style. The first thing they could sense when they entered was silence. Probably to serve creators, it was designed as a glass room, able to automatically adjust the opacity of the glass until it was completely invisible from the outside. In addition, special soundproof glass was used. Even if the noise levels hit 100 decibels, it could not be heard from the inside.

In addition, the E-Goat also saw a few playwrights looking for inspiration. They pulled out a video of a block from the server before carefully looking at the lives of everyone inside. “Try to filter out any usable material.”

E-Goat even saw a huge video room on the other side of the corridor. There were thousands of screens playing the living conditions of all the residents in the neighborhood.

“Such level of video surveillance definitely illegal, right?” E-Goat's expression changed slightly.

“No, it's not against the law,” Qiu Ming rebuked. “Everyone in the video has been recorded voluntarily. They have all signed an agreement of voluntary information collection.”

“How could there be such a thing? I've never heard of it.”

“There are many things you've never heard of,” Qiu Ming said. “However, they're all real.”

“I know that Morgan is producing and selling clones. It's no secret.” E-Goat forced himself to remain calm. “I've just never seen the production process... So, is that how their memories are written?”

“No, their main memories are written according to the needs of their customers. What they're doing now is just integrating them into society as perfectly as possible without self-awareness and other people in society. After that, they'll have to conduct a consistency test to ensure that their life experiences don't conflict with others in the same living area.”

“Is it really that troublesome to write a clone’s memory?” E-Goat asked. “I’ve heard that most clones directly use a fixed template. In any case, if there’s a problem, we just need to rewrite it.”

“Well, the situation you mentioned does exist, but it’s usually handled by the Shengtang Morgan Tower outside.”

“Then, are you producing types two clones here, like Xu Qian, for instance, who doesn’t have a locator or a code on the back of her neck and looks just like an ordinary human?”

“According to your understanding,” Qiu Ming nodded.

E-Goat was a bit anxious. “Are you doing this deliberately? You brought us to visit each department. We don’t care about your production of clones. We just want to take Xu Qian away as soon as possible!”

“I’m just trying to help you understand the situation you’re in before you meet Xu Qian. I’m not lying. This is indeed the fastest and safest way to meet Xu Qian. You just need to be a little patient.”

As Qiu Ming spoke, he led Zhang Heng and E-Goat through the glass cubicles, either bright or dark. He then pointed to a gray door. “This is the quality inspection department, but since we’re in a hurry, we won’t go in. You should be able to guess what’s inside anyway. In short, it’s a test of the product’s personality, skills, and emotional fluctuations.”

“To be honest, I think you guys are jerks. There’s not much difference between a clone and an ordinary person, right? It’s just that one is born from a machine incubator, and the other from natural birth. We all have the same physical and DNA structure,” E-Goat said, “But you treat the former as a pure commodity and tamper with their memories wantonly.”

“Well said, but I have to correct one point. We have never forced anyone to do anything,” Qiu Ming spread his hands.

The three of them had unknowingly approached the transparent tunnel they had seen before. After passing through two doors and an escalator, without Qiu Ming’s introduction, E-Goat had already seen the sign in the distance.

It read: Human Resources Department.

E-Goat couldn’t help but start to worry again. They had already passed through many departments and seen many employees working here. However, other than the trouble they had encountered with the twins at the front desk, the work ID on their chests hadn’t been exposed yet.

Everyone who worked there seemed to be quite busy. They didn’t seem to have the time to care about other people, let alone other departments. However, the human resources department was definitely the department that knew its employees best in any company.

If Zhang Heng and E-Goat were to have entered recklessly, they might be recognized as not being employees here. However, Qiu Ming didn’t seem nervous at all. “Don’t worry. The human resources department manages the existing employees on the ninth floor. This place is mainly responsible for recruiting new employees.”

“Recruiting new employees?” E-Goat initially thought that Qiu Ming’s so-called recruitment of new employees was just a small-scale job fair, but when he walked in, he was shocked.

There were at least five to six hundred people sitting in the waiting room, and there were actually as many as twenty of such waiting rooms. In other words, more than 20,000 applicants had already come for the interview today.

“How many vacancies are there in your company?” E-Goat asked Qiu Ming.

“That depends on which department. Previously, the departments you saw were all recruiting very few people, mainly because there were very few internal changes. Still, there has been a department that has been very short of manpower.”

“What department?”

“The city residents department,” Qiu Ming said leisurely. “The job seekers you’ve seen are all applicants who have applied to settle down here in New Shanghai 0297. Of course, when they start their jobs, they have to sign a corresponding labor contract. There are all kinds of rights and obligations, but the most important point is that they have to be willing to accept memory rewriting. The main reason is to improve their professional skills according to the requirements of the companies, as well as to improve their personalities and erase their original memories. The reason for the latter is that research has shown that only people who truly believe they are city dwellers can be more productive.”

“What the hell are you talking about? Are you out of your mind?!”

E-Goat’s eyes bulged in horror.

#### **Chapter 1042: The Future of Mankind (Part One)**

“Unfortunately, I have to undergo a mental stress assessment every year. So far, my mental state is not bad,” Qiu Ming shrugged.

E-Goat looked at the group of calm applicants in front of him. Then as if rushing to grab the last straw, he asked impatiently, “So they are actually clones and not real humans, right?”

“I think there’s no need to worry about the production method that brought you into this world because there is no difference between a clone and an ordinary person,” Qiu Ming said. “A while ago, severely declining fertility rates aroused the concern of all parties. As a result, in collaboration with several pharmaceutical giants, the federal government launched an artificial reproduction program. They decided to use machines to simulate the human uterus to breed babies to increase the population. You are actually right. There are no physical and genome differences between natural childbirth or a new human born of a machine. Thus, since the beginning, the federation has decreed that these two kinds of people be given same political and survival rights.”

“Are you kidding me? Why are clones and ordinary people treated so differently in New Shanghai 0297 then?” asked E-goat.

“Don’t you get it yet?” Qiu Ming sighed. “In New Shanghai 0297, the so-called clones are still ordinary people. You just have to treat them as different occupations. They’ve been artificially segregated by us to meet different labor needs. However, there is no difference in the nature of the people who engage in these two occupations. Let me put it this way, have you ever bought luxury goods?”

“What do you mean?”

“There is a huge difference between the price of a luxury shirt and an ordinary shirt, but there is no difference in the material used. It’s just that one of the shirts has a luxury company’s logo printed on it. Similarly, the clones of New Shanghai 0297 are the same as ordinary people. Whether it’s the locator or the code on the back of the neck, it just serves as a logo to convince the people living here that their values are different. It’s that simple.”

“Then only can the clones’ memories be rewritten? Is that a lie?”

“It was like that at the beginning,” Qiu Ming nodded. “Clones, or new humans, hatched by machines, were raised by the federation. Regarding this, there have always been experts who have expressed some concern. This was because these people had shared a similar living environment since childhood, and they were raised together as well. They were worried that the individuals would become too identical due to this kind of social behavior that they grew up in.

“In addition, people have been arguing about how to raise them. The first batch of new machine-hatched humans was just like ordinary people. They received all kinds of education since they were young, but they lived together and were separated from their families. Apart from the overly similar problems mentioned before, there were also character defects brought about by the absence of the original family. In addition, the cultivation cycle was very long, and the investment in education was also huge. It also cost the taxpayers a lot of money. It didn’t take long before civil protests arose, and the federal government’s finances began to crumble.

“At this time, some large corporations like Shengtang Morgan offered to set up a fund to support the artificial reproduction program. In this way, the federal government wouldn’t need to invest more public funds, and the population problem could be solved. The two sides hit it off, and everyone was happy. Not long after, these big corporations came up with a new training program.

“Memory coding?” Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows.

“That’s right. This technology was successfully developed under such circumstances. In the beginning, it was to solve the problem of the machine-hatched-homo-evolutions becoming too similar due to prolonged exposure to identical living environments. At the same time, the first mate reduced the investment in education. Memory coding could give the homo-evolution different personalities and memories, making them just like ordinary people, unaffected by similar growth backgrounds.

“After that, the corporations thought that since they had achieved this, they might as well go one step further and compile their skills. Through this, when they leave the cultivation base and enter society, they’d be able to find better jobs.”

“What was the result?” E-Goat asked.

“The result was, of course, a great success,” Qiu Ming said. “At least, that was the case at first. The artificial reproduction program was initially sponsored by these large corporations who were very familiar with their own employment needs. Of course, they knew what skills needed to be compiled for the new humans that were hatched by machines, especially for certain high-end specialties. There has always been a shortage of jobs in the talent market. Everyone was fighting over people, but they were still unable to meet their employment needs.

“However, when memory coding technology appeared, this problem no longer existed. Other than some special professions that relied heavily on inspiration and talent, high-end talents that were purely technical could be mass-produced. Moreover, the new humans that were hatched by machines were also humans. Of course, there would be some very talented and inspired people among them. In addition, they would have a firmer grasp of basic knowledge, in turn accelerating their development.

“Very soon, many of the management and technical backbones of the companies on the market were occupied by these new humans. Moreover, many of them had better personalities and were more obedient. They were even willing to work overtime. As a result, the boss naturally knew what to choose. By the time the ordinary people reacted, they would realize that their supervisor or their immediate boss had already become a new human.”

Qiu Ming paused, “But on the other hand, the emergence of these new humans did accelerate the development of the economy and technology, giving human society unprecedented prosperity. This was a period of abundant talent reserves that had never been seen before in history. Even though many ordinary people had begun to protest at that time, feeling that high-end employment opportunities were being crowded out and it was getting harder to get promoted, these objections became powerless in the face of rapid economic growth.

“From the perspective of the federation, it is impossible for them to reverse the course of history, stop the artificial reproduction program, and allow mankind to return from this once-in-a-thousand-years golden era to the primitivity of inefficiency and retardation. A backward productivity rate will inevitably be replaced by advanced productivity, just like the unemployment wave caused by the emergence of machines. This is the social consensus in itself.

“Humanity has already experienced three industrial revolutions. Well, this is the fourth. More and more voices cried out in this manner. At the same time, they criticized those who were protesting. They felt that they were just maggots, blinded by envy. They were not willing to properly learn and hone their skills to become better. Instead, they were jealous of others. This was simply the fury of the incompetent. In addition, the federation has been sparing no effort to promote coexistence between ordinary humans and new humans. Soon, the voice of opposition became much smaller, and the entire human society began promoting memory coding technology more and more.”

### **Chapter 1043: The Future of Mankind (Part Two)**

Outside the waiting room was a huge station square.

The tunnel that the three of them saw on the hillside led to this place. E-Goat also saw an endless stream of lorries at that time, but when they walked in, they saw that what came out of those lorries weren't goods but teams upon teams of people.

Qiu Ming continued to talk about the previous topic.

“In the beginning, memory encoding technology was applied to ordinary people. Some rich people or top middle-class families hoped that their children could win at the starting line. Therefore, when their children were very young, they secretly used memory encoders to compile many skills for them, some even giving them the character and qualities of leaders.

“As expected, the children whose memories were re-encoded immediately stood out among their peers, far surpassing them. When they grew up, whether it was starting from scratch or taking over the family business, they would quickly soar, defeating one competitor after another and completing the crazy accumulation of wealth.

“It’s like the golden finger that has opened up life,” Qiu Ming sighed.

“Along with their success, the upper class has also set off a memory coding craze. More and more people decided to let their sons and daughters accept the memory coding, even if it wasn’t to let them become winners in life. At least, they didn’t want to lose at the starting line.

“At the same time, the middle and high-end skill talent market has finally become saturated due to the continuous influx of new humans. The demand for this part of talent from various companies and enterprises is becoming lesser. Thus, big groups like Shengtang’s Morgan have finally adjusted the direction of cultivating new humans, from the technical backbone to the production of hard-working blue-collar workers who don’t complain at all.”

E-Goat’s eyes widened when it heard this. “Wait, what about those ordinary people?”

“That’s a good question. Just as you guessed, as the major corporations changed the direction of cultivating new humans, companies began to hire a large number of new blue-collar workers in the labor market to replace the lazy and inefficient ordinary workers. More and more people lost their jobs and lived on welfare. Many families broke down because of this. Although some lucky people were not immediately fired, they knew that if this continued, they would lose their jobs sooner or later.

“By relying on primitive learning methods and carrying all kinds of flaws in their personalities, they failed to compete with the new humans for jobs. What’s even more tragic is that they know that when their children grow up, there is a high chance that they will repeat their mistakes. At the same time, they are not the only ones who have this kind of trouble. The next generation of new humans who are doing well now will also face the same trouble.

“And there is only one way to solve this problem.” Qiu Ming paused, “That is to accept the memory code and do what those rich people have already done to their children. “It doesn’t matter who the first ordinary person to accept the memory code is. In short, in order to survive, to support their families, and to avoid being maggots of society, more and more ordinary people choose to walk this path and accept the memory code, just like the once popular craze for external beauty.”

“If beauty can change a person’s flaws in appearance, then the memory code can change a person’s flaws in the soul. Laziness, selfishness, arrogance... these can all be fixed. But more precisely, it can even be fine-tuned according to your occupation. The workers in the assembly line can become more tolerant of boredom, and management of a company can become more charismatic.

“In the beginning, their strategy did work. As long as they were willing to make up their minds and add a sum of money, ordinary people could use memory coding to become more powerful than the Homo-evolutis. But soon, the Homo-evolutis also realized the challenges they were facing, and they too began to spend money to recode their memories, giving them a more perfect personality and a stronger ability to work.

“Things started to get crazier and crazier. Everyone was like an app update, constantly updating themselves through the memory encoder. The competition was endless, and the conglomerates were aware of this. At this point, the population growth rate had already returned to normal. No, it should be said that not only did it return to normal, but it far exceeded the planned growth rate. However, due to the prevalent culture of reducing labor costs, the conglomerates never stopped their artificial reproduction plans.

“In order to settle the remaining explosive population, the major groups have also begun to look into space. New Shanghai 0297 was built under such a background. You can consider the vast majority of the residents here employees of the Shengtang Morgan conglomerate. After applying for a job in this new city, they perform memory rewrites according to various companies’ requirements before they work. You don’t have to feel sorry for them losing their original memories, because the vast majority have already experienced dozens of memory rewrites. They have long forgotten what their original memories are.

“The rewriting of their memories before starting a job is actually for their own good. It can help them integrate better into their new job and life. Whether it’s a clone or an ordinary person, they actually only have one common identity here, which is the means of production, the most perfect means of production.

“Of course, considering that the products produced must be sold, they will also play the role of the consumer at the same time. Whether it’s the division of the five layers of space or the continuous rolling advertisements, they are all to stimulate their consumption. Only when consumption and production are constantly increasing, can society prosper.”

When E-Goat heard this, he felt as if he had fallen into an ice cellar. He could even hear his teeth grinding. “But what’s the point of all this? What did we gain from this process, other than becoming less and less like ourselves?”

“Good question.” Qiu Ming snapped his fingers, “But who asked the wheel of history to move forward forever? Perhaps we should’ve made another choice. Back when the artificial reproduction project had just begun, humans would choose to close Pandora’s box and strangle everything at the source. Unfortunately, there were no ifs in this world. Once productivity began to develop, those who fell behind would inevitably be eliminated.

“This isn’t something an individual can stop. You can’t, I can’t, and not even Shengtang Morgan’s board of directors. This is because Shengtang Morgan has many equally powerful competitors. As far as I know, certain people on the board of directors have even experienced over a hundred memory recodes.

“I’m actually very envious of you. After your memories are rewritten, you can live in this city without any doubt and believe what you want to believe. But for the people in other departments of the company, we don’t even know what to believe,” Qiu Ming said, “It’s like... if what I’m telling you now is the truth, or is there another version of the truth? I don’t know. I spent a long time stopping myself from thinking about this problem. I sincerely hope that you won’t experience the troubles I’ve endured.”

#### **Chapter 1044: The Soil of Lies and the Flower of Truth**

Before the trio left for the valley, Qiu Ming had warned Zhang Heng and E-Goat more than once that they should stop pursuing the matter before it was too late.

Therefore, before E-Goat even entered, he had already imagined many terrifying scenes.

For example, a heavily armed team waiting behind the gate to take them down, or Shengtang Morgan hiring a group of scientists to secretly carry out some bloody human experiments. They could've even locked up a group of extraterrestrial creatures in the base without public knowledge.

But no matter what kind of speculation it was, it was not as crazy and dark as what he had seen with his own eyes. Clearly, E-Goat had only seen the most common company structure along the way, each and every one of the extremely ordinary departments, but with all of it pieced together, and the final truth revealed, E-Goat felt his world spin.

He looked at the people coming out of the van. Each of them looked healthy, but in places where his eyes could not reach, their souls had long been riddled with patches.

E-Goat couldn't even see their faces because they all seemed to look the same. What horrified him the most, though, was that he knew he was one of them.

Once he realized this, it was hard for him not to think about a question. If all his memories had been written, what was he initially like?

E-Goat tried his best to recall, but his head felt like it was exploding when he thought about it. No matter how hard he racked his brain, he still could not remember anything. What was even sadder was that even if he recalled any bits and pieces, he couldn't be sure if that was the real him or remnants of old memories left behind after a memory was coded.

He did not know where he came from nor where he should go. His past had been marred by countless upgrades, and he was oblivious as to what sort of lie he would be living in the future.

E-Goat didn't even know if his feelings for Xu Qian were real or fake. The latter was the woman he had loved so much, but if even he was fake, how credible then were those feelings?

He stood in the middle of the station square, stuck in a daze.

When Qiu Ming finished his speech, he was also silently observing E-Goat and Zhang Heng. E-Goat's reaction was within his expectations. Qiu Ming saw an amalgamation of fear, pain, confusion, and disbelief in his eyes.

This was not difficult to understand because E-Goat's worldview had collapsed entirely at that moment. Qiu Ming knew that his heart must be filled with questions, but he did not know who could answer them.

This was how most normal reacted.

On the other hand, Qiu Ming could not understand Zhang Heng. Although there was surprise on his face, such a revelation was like witnessing a traffic accident on the road. No matter how tragic the scene was... it never really affected the passing cars.



This made Qiu Ming feel a little incredulous. After realizing that he had been living a lie and had long lost himself, it was impossible for anyone to be as indifferent as Zhang Heng.

If possible, Qiu Ming really wished to pry open Zhang Heng's skull to read his memories and see what he was thinking.

"Xu Qian is just ahead."

After waiting for a while, Qiu Ming said again, "We'll be there soon after passing through the station, but I don't know if you guys still want to keep looking for her."

Qiu Ming's words confused E-Goat even more. Other than the fact that he couldn't determine if his feelings for Xu Qian had been pre-coded, if Xu Qian's identity was also fabricated, then was he saving her so she could keep being a version of herself that wasn't true?

E-Goat, however, didn't expect Zhang Heng to remain relentless.

"Take me to her."

This time, it was Qiu Ming's turn to be surprised. "Even after knowing everything, you're still prepared to take Xu Qian away?"

Zhang Heng nodded. "I don't care what this world is like. A promise is a promise. I've come to an agreement with her to help her investigate her matter. Now that I've more or less understood the situation, it's time for me to report to her. As for whether she's willing to leave with us, it's her own choice."

"What an admirable professional attitude," Qiu Ming said. "What About You?" he asked, turning to E-Goat.

E-Goat seemed to be in a lot of trouble. He thought for a full minute before finally gritting his teeth, saying, "The voice of reason beseeches me to turn around and leave this damned place. But I don't know which ba\*tard wrote my memory, so I've never been rational when it came to Xu Qian. So, yes, I still want to see her."

"I've underestimated you," Qiu Ming applauded. "After realizing that your personality and memory might have been encoded, you persevered."

"What can a dog really do," E-Goat moaned in self-depreciation.

"Actually, you don't have to be so pessimistic. The memory coding work that we carried out was completed before you entered New Shanghai 0297. Other than a small number of residents who played the role of clones, most people's memories weren't adjusted after that. Xu Qian came to New Shanghai 0297 after you, so all of your memories and feelings about her hadn't yet been written. You might have actually fallen in love with her," Qiu Ming said.

"You mean to say that I became an a\*s licker voluntarily?" E-Goat's expression was complicated. "So, is this good news or bad news?"

"This means that even from the soil of lies, real flowers can bloom," Qiu Ming went on.

“But I still don’t understand. Since Xu Qian is not a clone, why did you take her away?” E-Goat asked.

“Think of this as an internal shift in the company. We monitor everyone’s performance. For people whose performance continues to decline, the company will consider changing their positions. Of course, since Xu Qian is a public figure, it will be more troublesome to deal with her. This is what I have been doing all along. In order to facilitate management, under normal circumstances, for some special positions, we will set a goal in advance when encoding the employee’s memory.

“This goal will be the employee’s deepest desire. In order to achieve this goal, the employee can accept such sacrifices as giving up his career and moving out of his original place of residence. I am good at dealing with female employees who have love and marriage goals. In addition, I have colleagues who are good at other types of work. After minimizing the impact, we will hide it from the public and send them to other unconnected cities.”

### **Chapter 1045: Seeing Xu Qian Again**

“How many cities are like new Shanghai 0297?” E-Goat frowned.

“I can only say that there are far more than you know. In order to facilitate management, each group will divide the city into different living circles, but I’m not clear about specific situations. I’m just like you, an ordinary staff of Shengtang Morgan’s New Shanghai 0297 branch,” Qiu Ming said as he led Zhang Heng and E-Goat through the crowd at the station.

The three of them took the escalator to the fourth floor. There were no more candidates here. Only some staff members in blue uniforms drove forklifts in and out, transporting some two-by-one-meter metal boxes to the station downstairs. Two security guards were also standing outside the door.

Qiu Ming showed his work ID before the three of them were let in. He then pointed to a small house in front of them. “Xu Qian is there. You came at the right time. If you had come any later, her memories would’ve been rewritten, molded into someone that can adapt to the next job. After that, she will be put into one of those boxes that you saw and sent to other cities. Then, you will never see her again.”

Although the road from the door to this place was not too far, E-Goat felt like he had been walking for several years. He looked at the door in front of him with mixed feelings.

Zhang Heng didn’t rush him. He just stood at one spot and waited quietly. E-Goat took ten seconds to calm himself down. Then he took a deep breath and opened the door with the bracelet he wore.

The room was much larger than he had imagined. In fact, it looked more like a hotel suite than a prison cell. Xu Qian was sitting on the sofa, watching a soap opera projected on the screen.

She had even made herself a cup of longan-red date tea and was hugging her knees. Because she was so focused, she didn’t even notice that someone had entered the room.

When E-Goat saw this, he let out a sigh of relief. Although Qiu Ming had previously assured him that Xu Qian wasn’t hurt, he wasn’t completely relieved until he had personally confirmed this.

For E-Goat, the despair and helplessness he felt in the short span of twenty minutes had already surpassed the sum of his memories. However, when he saw the figure on the sofa... when he saw Xu

Qian's long hair draped over her shoulders and the tip of her small nose, he felt the warmth of the world that he hadn't felt for a long time.

At this moment, E-Goat didn't even bother about whether his feelings for Xu Qian were real or fake. It was as if he had returned to every lonely and long night. He had dutifully stood in front of the projection just to see the face in front of the camera... he had listened to her talk about all the trivial things that she had encountered that day.

"I bought Patchi's chocolate today. It was really delicious. I ate one in the morning, and I was filled with vitality all day!"

"AH, KGC team lost again. Seriously, they clearly had a wonderful performance in the early stages, but they were unable to hold on to this advantage."

"Ay, I don't know where... but I heard a song in the afternoon... but I can't remember the name. It should go like this..."

"Last night, I had a dream about a panda, but it kept chasing me. But I'm not bamboo, so who knows how to interpret dreams? Can you tell me what this means?"

.....

This time, E-Goat was the same as before. He didn't know what to say. He turned to Qiu Ming and Zhang Heng for help, but they didn't respond. It was apparent that they were waiting for him to speak first. Qiu Ming even gestured for him to open his mouth.

But it was then that E-Goat became nervous again. His mind was a mess.

Although the process was completely different from E-Goat's fantasy, it was, strictly speaking, a rescue borne of true love.

E-Goat was like the prince riding a white horse in a fairytale. He vanquished demons and ghouls all the way to the castle where the princess was kept. This was probably the most glorious moment in his life. The blood on the dragon-slaying hero hadn't dried yet, his sword glistened with a cold light, but he did not know what to say to begin the reunion.

Should he be saying, "Do you know how many difficulties I've had to overcome in order to find you?"

No. This kind of affectionate confession sounded like he was taking credit for something.

Or, "Do you know that our memories are actually fake?"

But it seemed a little too depressing to get straight to the point.

He might as well just say, "I'm here." The three words were short and concise, but she might feel it was a little too pretentious.

After thinking for a while, E-Goat finally mustered up his courage and blurted out, "What... What movie are you watching?"

"..." Qiu Ming covered his face, unable to bear to watch the carnage happening before his eyes.

Regardless, Xu Qian's attention was finally pulled back from the projection. Noticing the three new people in the room, she didn't immediately answer E-Goat. Instead, she looked around at the three of them.

When she saw Qiu Ming, Xu Qian had a complicated expression on her face, as if she didn't know whether to hate or thank him. Then, she turned her eyes to E-Goat. Her gaze moved slightly, but she didn't say anything. She just nodded at the latter and finally looked at Zhang Heng. Looking confused, she asked, "Who are you?"

"A friend of yours that's come to fulfill our agreement. But it seems that you already know what happened to you," Zhang Heng said.

"It's you!" Xu Qian yelled in surprise. "Aren't you supposed to be dead? The news said that you died in the fire!"

Because Zhang Heng's disguise was so good, Xu Qian didn't recognize him at all. In fact, even now, she was still skeptical.

"I'm sorry. I was involved in some things before, and it's only now that I'm done. I immediately rushed over to see you," Zhang Heng explained.

"After reading the news, I sent you a lot of messages, but I didn't receive a single reply. That was when I was in my most panicked and helpless state. I even hated you a little," Xu Qian paused and continued, "But after I learned the truth about all of this, I actually didn't care. Even if you were by my side at the time, it wouldn't have changed the outcome, right?"

"To make up for my negligence, this time, E-Goat and I have deliberately come to take you away from here."

"Leave? Where?" Xu Qian asked back, "I can't be a broadcaster anymore, and I've lost my previous life. Even if I escape, nothing will get better. There is no place for me in New Shanghai 0297, but the good news is that other jobs are waiting for me elsewhere."

"But by that time, your memory will be rewritten, and you won't be yourself anymore. You'll forget everything here," E-Goat pleaded.

"Anyway, this isn't the real me."

Xu Qian didn't seem to care.

"I don't know what you were like in the beginning, just like I don't know what I was like in the beginning. But now, we really exist," E-Goat blurted after holding it in for a long time.

#### **Chapter 1046: Qiu Ming's Distress**

E-Goat was forced to say the previous sentence, but when he found that everyone was looking at him, he suddenly became nervous again. "That... I, I just said it casually, you don't have to take it to heart," he muttered bashfully.

"No, you're right," Qiu Ming nodded. "I didn't expect you to figure out this problem in such a short time. It made me look at you in a new light. Humans are indeed a species with infinite possibilities. Even if

your memory has been rewritten to become a nerd with Super High Network technology, you don't always live according to the established path. For example, falling in love with Xu Qian, or breaking into the Shengtang Morgan's secret headquarters... saying such words that completely deviates from your character..."

"Morgan has also done a lot of research in this area, and they finally found that even the most excellent memory encoding could not prevent such things from happening. You can control a person's past through memory encoding, thus affecting his present. You can never, however, fully control his future. The company had to even set up a special department to deal with such things."

However, to everyone's surprise, Xu Qian shook her head and insisted, "I'm sorry, I Can't go with you."

"Why?"

E-Goat couldn't understand what he was hearing.

"Because I don't want to live on the run every day for the next few days. I don't know when I'll be caught. I've already experienced enough fear... I live in fear every minute and every second. Maybe you don't believe me, but when Qiu Ming found me, the stone in my heart fell. Although I'm still afraid and don't know what will happen to me next, at least I don't have to worry about when the sword of Damocles will fall."

Xu Qian looked into E-Goat's eyes. "I'm very touched that you rushed all the way here to save me. I regret that I didn't get to know you well before. When I really realized this feeling, I had no time left. You've done all kinds of things for me all this time. At least, let me do one thing for you. I won't go with you and become a burden to you. If I do, Shengtang Morgan will also target you."

"I don't care," E-Goat insisted resolutely.

"But I do care. I really do. Don't think that your life isn't important because your current memories are made up. You can start a new life anytime. As far as I know, the next job for a declining productivity employee won't be as easy as it is now. No matter what, your life is pretty good. You shouldn't have given up everything for me... and yourself."

Xu Qian turned to look at Zhang Heng. "You've helped me a lot too. At least you'll be able to let me see the truth when it comes. Even though it's only for a short while, this is probably my most sobering period since I entered New Shanghai 0297. Unfortunately, I'm afraid I won't be able to pay you the money I promised you."

"So this is your final decision?" Zhang Heng asked.

"That's right," Xu Qian nodded. "I've made my decision."

E-Goat wanted to say more, but Xu Qian pointed at the paused projection. "I want to finish watching this movie. Can you accompany me?"

E-Goat looked at Qiu Ming reflexively, then at Zhang Heng. When he finally confirmed that Xu Qian was talking to him, he couldn't help but feel flattered. Nervously, he walked to the sofa and chose the seat on the right-most side, then sat down with his hands in front of his knees, staring straight ahead.

"Why are you sitting so far away? It's not like I'm going to eat you up," Xu Qian said from the side.

E-Goat then shifted slightly and moved to a spot one body's length away from Xu Qian. Unexpectedly, Xu Qian directly stood up and sat beside him. E-Goat's body instantly stiffened. What was even more unexpected was that Xu Qian actually leaned her head on his shoulder.

Due to their extremely close proximity, E-Goat could even smell the shampoo's fragrance on Xu Qian's hair.

Qiu Ming and Zhang Heng looked at each other. Then, Zhang Heng took the lead and walked out of the room. Qiu Ming followed behind and conveniently closed the door.

When they were outside, Qiu Ming took out a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and handed it to Zhang Heng, only to be refused by the latter.

Thus, Qiu Ming took a cigarette and put it in his mouth. After lighting it with a lighter, he smiled. "I have a headache right now."

"Is it because your ex-girlfriend is watching a movie with another man in the room?"

"..."

"It's not because of that. I'm only getting close to Xu Qian because of work. I don't have any other motives," Qiu Ming said. "What's troubling me now is whether or not I should pretend not to know who you are."

"Hmm... then why don't you continue pretending?" Zhang Heng asked calmly.

"Because I don't want you to think that I'm some self-righteous fool. I don't want things to develop in a direction that I don't want," Qiu Ming confessed. "You can even handle the Emergency Response Team. There's no reason that you don't know that I've already discovered your identity."

Although Xu Qian and E-Goat did not mention Zhang Heng's name throughout their conversation, Qiu Ming, who had been paying attention to Xu Qian all this time, naturally knew about Xu Qian's newly hired clone bodyguard. Furthermore, as an employee of Shengtang Morgan New Shanghai 0297 branch, Qiu Ming naturally knew about the fire that happened on the second floor that night.

Zhang Heng's incredible fighting strength had already attracted the company's attention, but there was no clue from his entry file. He was like most job seekers who had come to new Shanghai 0297. They had no personality or characteristics but were just pure production material.

However, as the investigation delved deeper, more and more doubts began to surface. The interviewer, for instance, didn't think much of Zhang Heng that day, and the surveillance video pulled up according to the date found no trace of Zhang Heng from the beginning to the end. To make matters worse, the security company that hired him, G7z, had no other traces other than a file. He was like a ghost that had magically materialized in New Shanghai 0297.

However, because Zhang Heng had later died in the fire on the second floor, Shengtang Morgan could not continue the investigation.

Qiu Ming had initially thought that the matter would end here. Although he was very curious about Zhang Heng, he was not so curious that he had to get a result. Zhang Heng's abnormality had to be something Shengtang Morgan's top management should be worried about. It had nothing to do with an

ordinary employee like Qiu Ming. Never would he have thought that his great luck would bump him into a big prize this time.

#### **Chapter 1047: The Prodigal Son and the Strongest Clone**

“Are you afraid?” Zhang Heng asked.

“It would be a lie to say that I’m not,” Qiu Ming said with a wry smile. “At first, I thought that this matter could be resolved peacefully. If it had been someone else, I would have had the confidence to convince the other party not to kill me afterward. But with you, I don’t have any confidence at all. Previously, due to work, I did some research on you, and I came to the conclusion that I couldn’t see through you at all.”

Qiu Ming paused for a moment before continuing, “No wonder you didn’t react much when I told you the truth about New Shanghai 0297. Did you already know about this? “Speaking of which, how did you get into New Shanghai 0297? What is your purpose? No, forget it... don’t tell me. I want to live longer.”

“I promised you that if you cooperate, I won’t kill you,” Zhang Heng said calmly.

Qiu Ming didn’t say anything. He took two more puffs of his cigarette. From the look on his face, he obviously didn’t believe Zhang Heng’s promise. Thus, he had been weighing his options.

After about five minutes, Qiu Ming seemed to have made up his mind. “Are you working for Mr. G now?” he asked again.

“Yes?”

“Mr. G and I have known each other for a long time. When he was still in the emergency response team and was known as the strongest clone among them, I gave him a USB drive with a movie in it.”

“Symbolic exchange and death?”

“You know about the movie,” Qiu Ming said. “I was born in a rather famous family. One of my uncles was a board director of Shengtang’s Morgan, and he didn’t have many material worries since young. In addition, I’m not the successor of the family’s main force, so I don’t have that much competitive pressure. Therefore, although I’ve received a lot of memory coding, most of it was skills, and I didn’t do too much in terms of character. This also allowed me to keep some bad habits unique to young people.

“At that time, I had just come to work in new Shanghai 0297. My job was to supervise my brach’s regular operations, especially the day-to-day running of the place, reporting to the board of directors, and so on. In fact, the management of the department would also write to the headquarters on a regular basis, so this was just an idle job to dismiss a young, ignorant and incompetent man like me. The power was not big or small, but it was easy enough.

“In the beginning, everything here was very new to me, especially when I saw so many people having to sign contracts with the company in order to survive. They then have to play a role in the city, living another identity without knowing anything. It was quite interesting. In fact, compared to the lifeless world outside where everyone was exactly the same, this place is more like a real, breathing world. What do you think? Doesn’t that sound a bit ironic?

“... it seems a bit far-fetched to say that it will be the New Shanghai 0297. Everyone here believes that one can not choose one’s birth, but hard work can change one’s fate. However, in reality, everyone’s

birth has been artificially chosen. Whether you become a beggar on the first floor or a senior executive on the third or fourth floor might have just been a slip of the staff's mind.

"For those who find it really hard to choose, we might as well roll the dice and make that decision for them. Even if it's a role that has already been assigned, I can use the power in my hands to change it. Once, out of mischievousness, I threw a beautiful girl who was supposed to be sent to an entertainment company to be the wife of a 300-pound butcher. I have to admit that doing so gave me a strong sense of satisfaction. I was like a god, able to manipulate the lives of others at will.

"But no matter how good a game is, a time will come when I will get bored. And as time goes on, I get less and less pleasure from playing games manipulating someone's fate. At the same time, I get a lot of resentment from some of my branch managers because I'm always messing around. I didn't take it to heart, though, because I was craving new thrills at the time.

"In the end, I shifted my attention to Mr. G. At that time, he didn't go by that name. He was the captain of the emergency response team and was deeply convinced that he was a clone. Therefore, he didn't dare to betray the person who gave them the task because the emergency response team had been treated quite well. In order to allow the team to learn and grow, they wouldn't erase their memories on a regular basis. Therefore, I watched Mr. G work hard for Shengtang Morgan, wiping his ass everywhere for such small benefits. If there were specific situations that were more dangerous and difficult to deal with, the company's people would throw these at him and let him solve the troubles.

"I thought he was cute and stupid, like a dog, and gave him the USB drive on his birthday. To be honest, now that I think about it, I don't know why I did it. It was probably just for fun. Baudrillard's theory has been banned by the federation. His books and movies have been destroyed. I found the movie on the USB drive from my family's collection. I didn't expect Mr. G to see so many things from this movie.

"In short, because of me, he became suspicious of his own identity. He finally managed to reach the fifth floor, killing his way up here. This is the first time since New Shanghai 0297's establishment that an outsider has entered this place, an incident which resulted in the death of more than 60 employees in the base. If you are familiar with the style those guys above work, you should know that no matter what, they will find a scapegoat as quickly as they can, then push all the responsibility onto that person.

"Unfortunately, it was my turn to play this role. I gave Mr. G the flash drive, which ultimately led to this disaster. The board of directors considered this an extremely frivolous and irresponsible act. My uncle was very disappointed in me and announced on behalf of the family that he would sever all ties with me. My status as a special agent was also revoked, and I became the most ordinary employee. However, the irony was that the culprit who caused all of this, Mr. G, had a good attitude after his arrest, and the board of directors happened to need someone to help them manage the hierarchy and reduce costs. Therefore, in the end, he actually changed his status and was directly incorporated into the management department.

"After that, he went to the first floor alone. I didn't expect that within a few years, everyone would know his name there. After a few years, people began to call him the underground emperor of the first floor. He brought a special order to the first floor, and the management was very satisfied with his performance."

## **Chapter 1048: Dogs and Wolves**



“But in recent years, the situation has started to change,” Qiu Ming said. “Someone on the first floor secretly spread Baudrillard’s theory, and it was found out by the management of the branch, so they went to Mr. G for accountability. Mr. G promised to investigate, and a few weeks later, he handed over the disseminator. But it was said that those unlucky fellows had become corpses because of their fierce resistance upon their rearrest. The management couldn’t get anything out of them. After that, Boubaudrillard’s theory still spread everywhere on the first floor.

“Mr. G’s explanation was that it was very difficult to completely kill a theory. Even if you killed all the spreaders, the people behind you might continue to spread it. However, Mr. G also promised to try his best to contain the development of the situation, so the management accepted his way of handling things.

“However, things did not go smoothly after that. According to the management’s statistics, more and more people began to hear about Baudrillard’s name on the first floor in the past few years. Although Mr. G handed over more and more corpses, it at least showed that his efforts had little effect. Thus, the management gradually lost patience with Mr. G.

“If it weren’t for the fact that the first floor had been managed so well by Mr. G over the years, the second floor might have fallen into chaos after losing him, and the cost of management would have increased significantly. The management should have taken Mr. G down by now, but the relationship between the two sides has deteriorated and become tenser and tenser. The police force controlled by first-floor management has had many conflicts with Mr. G’s people. The management knows what Mr. G is planning, and it’s only a matter of time before the two sides completely fall out.

“Some time ago, there was news that Mr. G had ordered something from a smuggler on Earth. This made the management very nervous. Since you’re involved in this, you should know very well that if you’re standing here now, it means that Mr. G has gotten what he wanted.”

“What are you trying to say?” Zhang Heng asked.

“What I’m trying to say is that you don’t have to worry about me telling the company’s management that you’re still alive because we’re actually on the same side,” Qiu Ming said. “Mr. G woke up because of me. Of course, courtesy of this incident, I was severely punished, demoted to a recycling specialist. I didn’t blame Mr. G for that, though. In fact, after he took over the first floor, the two of us still kept in close contact.

“These contacts were kept from the management. Otherwise, how could he have so accurately gauged the management’s tolerance? He kept wandering on edge but was only verbally warned. Until this incident, the management couldn’t agree on how to deal with him.”

“You’re taking massive risks by doing this, right? Why are you helping a person who demoted you?” Zhang Heng continued to ask.

“I told you before—when I was still a special agent, I played all the games I could think of. I was starting to get tired of this city until I gave the USB drive containing “Death and Symbolic Exchange” to Mr. G. Everything that happened after that made this world interesting again. I wanted to see what kind of fruits this tree I planted with my own hands would bear.

“On the other hand, even though I’m tired of my previous job, it’s still a little infuriating to just let someone take me down like that. I have to admit that there’s a part of my personal grudge in this. After all, I’ve kept many of my bad habits, and I can’t continue to contribute to the development of this beautiful city.”

After Qiu Ming said that, he turned to look at Zhang Heng with anticipation.

However, the latter’s reaction was beyond his expectations. Zhang Heng shook his head and said, “Unfortunately, I’m not on your side.”

“You’re not on Mr. G’s side either. Could you be a mole planted by the management?” Qiu Ming’s expression changed slightly. “This explains why you could appear in New Shanghai 0297 without anyone noticing.”

“Stop guessing. I’m not a member of the management, either,” Zhang Heng replied calmly. “I only care about my own business and am not on anyone’s side. I only work for Mr. G because I have a deal with him.”

“We are both quite similar then,” Qiu Ming heaved a sigh of relief.

“No, I’m different. I Won’t change someone else’s life just to satisfy my own bad taste. I won’t treat such things as a sport.”

“In this era, it’s rare to see people like you who still have a bottom line and moral sense.” Qiu Ming was surprised. “When you can’t even be sure whether you’re yourself, there naturally won’t be any moral restrictions. You can only confirm that you’re still alive through stronger and stronger stimuli.”

“Is Mr. G like this too?”

“No, Mr. G is different. His self-control has always impressed me. When you know that the world you live in is full of lies and deceit, it is not easy to maintain self-control. This must mean that his heart holds an even more grandiose goal. To be honest, he grew at a really amazing rate. When I gave him “Death and Symbolic Exchange,” I originally wanted to see how the strongest clone would collapse mentally.

“However, to my surprise, he quickly accepted his situation and turned Baudrillard’s theory into his most powerful weapon. He used it to unite his followers and gave them faith. He is a natural leader.”

“Since you are his ally, then you should also know his plan to rebel against the management?” Zhang Heng asked.

“I’m afraid I’ll have to disappoint you. I don’t know what his plan is. In fact, even if he told me himself, I’m not sure if I can believe him. Just like how I can’t see through you, ever since he became the uncrowned king of the first level, I can’t see through him either. But what I can tell you is that he must have a deep motive, much more profound than everyone thinks.

“The biggest mistake this management idiots have done these few years was to underestimate his ambition. They thought that he was just like how he was in the emergency response team back then, a dog that would be satisfied wagging its tail everywhere after we threw it a piece of meat. Little did they know that his appetite had changed a long time ago. Dogs were originally domesticated from wolves.

When its owner could no longer feed it, it would stir up the wolf's nature hidden in its bones. In order to fill its stomach, it wouldn't even mind eating its own owner."

### **Chapter 1049: Escape**

Forty minutes later, E-Goat walked out of the hut where Xu Qian was.

His eyes were filled with sadness as if he had lost his soul.

Qiu Ming looked behind E-Goat and found that he was the only one. He looked stunned. "Where's Xu Qian?"

"Didn't she say that she decided to stay?" E-Goat choked.

"I'm not deaf. I heard what she said. How did you persuade her?"

"..."

"Wait, brother, did you really watch the rest of the movie with her?" Qiu Ming asked suspiciously.

"I couldn't say anything about the atmosphere at that time. She was leaning on my shoulder. We were very close..." E-Goat replied weakly.

"I finally know how all the sad and beautiful love stories are developed," Qiu Ming sighed.

"So... Should I have done something?" E-Goat asked humbly.

"What else?" Qiu Ming patted E-Goat's shoulder. "I've been dealing with women because of my work, and I'm quite experienced when it comes to these things. Most women can make decisions in a hurry because of their emotions. The key is to master the skill is to persuade her."

"How do I master this kind of skill?" E-Goat almost pulled out his notebook.

"There's no need to go through so much trouble," added Zhang Heng. "Just knock her out and take her away. Anyway, it's too late for you to learn now. In the near future, New Shanghai 0297 will probably undergo a drastic change. By then, her worries will probably be gone."

"Is that true?" E-Goat couldn't help but jump in joy when he heard that. However, his expression quickly became nervous again. "But how are we going to get her out of here?"

"Don't worry, I'll solve this problem," Qiu Ming said. "Isn't that why you brought me along?"

Qiu Ming's plan was very simple. Xu Qian was such a big person, and she was in a coma. There was no way she could be carried out of the house like that. Therefore, a container that could store her would be required, and one that was inconspicuous as well. The metal boxes transported by the forklift truck were the most suitable because they were meant to transport people who were transferred to other cities.

After confirming the plan, the three of them split up. Zhang Heng returned to Xu Qian's house and was responsible for knocking her out. E-Goat followed Qiu Ming to drive the forklift truck and carry the metal boxes. Then, the three of them regrouped outside Xu Qian's house. They put the unconscious Xu Qian into the metal boxes.

These special metal boxes were prepared initially for long-distance transportation of living people, so there was no need to worry about oxygen. Then, Zhang Heng drove the forklift with the metal boxes into the freight elevator at the side and went down to the station below.

After waiting for about ten minutes, E-Goat and Qiu Ming slipped down from the top. At this time, Zhang Heng had already found a truck without a driver. He put the metal box containing Xu Qian on it, and E-Goat went into the cargo box to accompany Xu Qian, while Qiu Ming took his place in the passenger seat.

After Zhang Heng started the car, Qiu Ming spoke.

“This tunnel leads directly to a hidden dock. Shengtang Morgan built it to dock the spaceship used to transport job seekers. In addition, these metal boxes will also be sent to other cities.”

“I don’t plan to leave New Shanghai 0297 for the time being. We’ll get off midway,” Zhang Heng said.

“That’s what I plan to do as well, but this tunnel was built to connect the dock and the base. It’s completely sealed off, and there’s no other exit in the middle.”

Zhang Heng didn’t say a word. He waited quietly for Qiu Ming to continue.

“But the good news is that there’s a maintenance point for this tunnel every certain distance. Normally, the maintenance point is locked, but a very serious traffic accident happened a few days ago. Thus, one of the maintenance points was opened, and we can leave from there.”

...

Half an hour later, the car arrived at the place Qiu Ming had mentioned.

As expected, there was a sign that was being repaired. Zhang Heng parked the car in front of the sign, but then he realized that the gate of the maintenance point was actually closed.

Qiu Ming’s expression changed slightly. “Normally, the maintenance cycle for an accident of this level takes three days. It’s only been two days, so there’s no reason for it to be repaired so quickly.”

E-Goat was carrying Xu Qian out of the metal box. When he heard this, he poked its head out of the car and asked anxiously.

“Then what do we do now?”

Qiu Ming also looked a little helpless. “If we can’t leave here, then we can only think of other ways to leave. However, the problem is that it’s very difficult for us to drag the unconscious Xu Qian through so many departments. Furthermore, to leave through the main door, everyone needs to verify their fingerprints, work ID, and electronic ID.”

Zhang Heng then pointed at a piece of glass in front of Qiu Ming and asked, “What if we just break it into pieces?”

“This is made of special explosion-proof glass, and it has a certain degree of elasticity. Even a car won’t be able to break it. Of course, if we’re prepared, it’s not like we can’t cut it.”

“What can we use to cut it open? A laser knife?”

“Military laser knives can be used, but we don’t have that kind of equipment on hand.”

“Who said that?”

Zhang Heng returned to the car and took out some Lego blocks to form a military laser knife. He then inserted the Infinite building block into it. When he appeared in front of Qiu Ming and E-Goat with the real military laser knife in his hand, they were dumbfounded.

“Where did this thing come from? is your real identity Doraemon, and do you have a four-dimensional pocket?!”

Zhang Heng did not answer. He had already picked up the laser knife and cut the explosion-proof glass in front of him. It took him about 15 minutes to finally cut a small opening that could allow one person to pass through. Meanwhile, E-Goat had also carried Xu Qian out of the metal box.

The four of them passed through the small opening that Zhang Heng had cut and drilled out of the tunnel. Even when they saw the sky above them, the E-Goat still could not believe that they had really escaped from the secret base of the magnificent Tang Corporation.

Xu Qian, who was lying on the ground behind him, was breathing steadily and was sleeping soundly. E-Goat’s arm was a little numb, but he still did not move, fearing he would wake Xu Qian up from her sleep.

Zhang Heng and Qiu Ming had already started to search for cars in the surroundings. Finally, Zhang Heng found an extended antique oil truck in a manor and drove the four of them to the station.

It wasn’t until the shuttle left the fifth floor that the four of them were truly out of danger. Zhang Heng used a fake ID to open two guest rooms on the second floor, one for E-Goat and Xu Qian, and the other for Qiu Ming and himself.

“When can I leave?” Qiu Ming asked Zhang Heng carefully in the guest room.

“Wait until the change happens,” Zhang Heng said. Although Qiu Ming had always been very sincere and had been very cooperative, Zhang Heng still didn’t fully trust him. Because of his previous promise, however, he did not kill Qiu Ming.

### **Chapter 1050: A Great Commotion**

The four of them spent the next few days in the hotel.

Xu Qian woke up that night. After realizing the situation she was in, she reacted rather calmly. However, she looked at E-Goat in a rather complicated way.

She had initially chosen to stay in the base because she didn’t want E-Goat, Zhang Heng, and the others to be implicated. However, now that she had been brought out, there was no point in going back. Xu Qian still looked a bit lost, though. She could no longer be a live streamer, and although Shengtang Morgan had yet to issue her warrant for arrest, they must have already discovered Xu Qian’s escape.

Xu Qian didn’t know if someone was secretly tracking her whereabouts, and was oblivious to what awaited her in the future. Although E-Goat had promised her that something big was about to go down in New Shanghai 0297, Xu Qian wasn’t sure how this matter would impact her life.

After all, for New Shanghai 0297's residents, the Shengtang Morgan conglomerate had always been like an unshakable behemoth. Xu Qian thought that there was nobody that could shake Shengtang Morgan's dominance through resistance, especially after seeing what happened in that secret base,

In fact, at this time, like Xu Qian, most citizens knew nothing about what would happen in the future, especially on the upper floors. Everyone still commuted every day to make a living, busy with their families and careers. Everything seemed the same as before.

One day, people suddenly found that Shengtang Morgan had issued a blockade order on the first floor.

From this moment on, all the central shuttle stations no longer sold tickets to the first floor to individuals. At the same time, the central shuttle on the first floor also stopped selling tickets to the other floors.

The situation suddenly became grim. Most people didn't know what happened. They only noticed that the police on all floors had begun to assemble and head to the first floor in teams.

The next night, the media received photos and videos from the first floor.

In a video that quickly spread on the internet, a group of rioters with guns ambushed two police security squads. Both sides exchanged fire, and the scene was very bloody. In the end, at least ten rioters were killed. There were also casualties on the police side. One of the policemen was unlucky when he peeked behind the explosion-proof shield and was hit in the eye by a stray bullet. Rioters then dragged another officer into a building.

Five minutes later, when the police stormed into the building, the officer had already been killed.

Riots. This was an extremely unfamiliar term to the residents of new Shanghai 0297. Since the city's inception, it was the first time that such a thing had happened. Although the security situation on the first floor had always been quite bad because of the high levels of poverty, there were violent incidents from time to time, but the most serious was the gang war. It had never escalated to the level of a riot.

Many people were shocked by the cruel scenes shown in the video. At the same time, the media also condemned the rioters.

Qiu Ming turned off the television.

During this period, his life was not very comfortable. In order to avoid investigation after the Shengtang Morgan crackdown, Zhang Heng ordered everyone not to leave the hotel unless there was an emergency. Three meals a day were ordered and delivered by drones. E-Goat wasn't in such a bad state—he could share a room with the girl he loved.

According to Qiu Ming's observation, there was psychological progress between the two over the past few days. Nothing, however, physically happened. But no matter what, sharing a room with a beautiful girl was a happy feeling.

In contrast, Qiu Ming was miserable. Zhang Heng did not do anything excessive to him. He just lived a normal life, eating, sleeping, and did not even restrict his activities. However, the scary thing was that Qiu Ming realized that no matter what he did, he couldn't hide it from Zhang Heng.

Even when he woke up in the middle of the night, Zhang Heng looked like he was fast asleep. His movements were light enough, standing silently beside Zhang Heng's bed and observed him for ten minutes to make sure that the latter wouldn't wake up. Then, he tiptoed to open the door before lighting a cigarette in the corridor.

The following day, when the two of them were having breakfast, Qiu Ming saw Zhang Heng putting the ashtray in front of him without saying anything.

In the end, Qiu Ming couldn't help but say, "I don't smoke in the morning."

Zhang Heng nodded and took a sip of tofu pudding with fried dough. "I know, but since you smoke three cigarettes a day, why don't you finish it earlier? You'll sleep better at night. I don't care anyway."

Qiu Ming broke out in a cold sweat. He had caught his smoking habit when he was twenty years old, and he hadn't changed it using memory coding until now. However, he only smoked two cigarettes during the day, with the third cigarette when he got up in the middle of the night.

In other words, since Zhang Heng knew that he smoked three cigarettes a day. He also knew that he had snuck out to smoke in the middle of the night. However, Qiu Ming had been observing Zhang Heng at that time, and he clearly remembered that the latter was still in a deep sleep. Qiu Ming even searched the entire house for Zhang Heng's hidden surveillance camera, but unfortunately, he couldn't find anything.

However, after this incident, Qiu Ming didn't dare to take any chances. He knew that no matter what he did, he couldn't hide it from Zhang Heng.

In addition, he also noticed how disciplined Zhang Heng lived his life. Even if he could not leave his room, he would still exercise regularly every day. Qiu Ming had once suspected that Zhang Heng was also from some emergency response team, a commercial spy sent by other groups to New Shanghai 0297.

However, this period of close contact had overturned Qiu Ming's conjecture. Zhang Heng obviously did not serve any organization or organization. As he said, he was only loyal to himself. Not only was he different from the role-playing residents of New Shanghai 0297, but he was also completely different from the management and even the board of directors of Shengtang Morgan.

Qiu Ming did not know how such a person could exist in such an era, or if he had any scientific skills. If it was not through memory coding, how did he get it? There were too many mysteries about this man, and Qiu Ming found himself somewhat fascinated by Zhang Heng's past.

"The photos and videos were spread online by Mr. G's people," Qiu Ming said. "Shengtang Morgan has chosen to seal off a layer of space to prevent this matter from expanding. I understand the thoughts of the management team very well. They're not worried that this will get out of control, but if the loss is too great, then their financial statements for this quarter will become very ugly."