

48 Hours 261

Chapter 261 Charity Organization

It would be unwise for them to return to the shopping mall for now, so Zhang Heng brought Hayase Asuka to a different restaurant for their hotpot. After that, he helped her pick the fermented tofu, tea, and white wine that her family wanted. She also purchased some gifts for her two nephews and an off-season short-sleeved shirt for herself as well.

Seeing Hayase Asuka's voracious retail appetite was enough to prove that women could be like a runaway Hexie bullet train when it came to shopping. It was already dark when she was finally done. After having some ramen for dinner, Zhang Heng sent her back to her hostel. Once she was safe, he returned to his dorm.

The final exams of each course were scheduled differently and not all students had their semester breaks at the same time. At that time, even the last batch of students was done with their finals, and the hostel was left with the university's interns like Zhang Heng and Ma Wei. With most of the students gone, the campus was eerily silent at night.

After a while, Zhang Heng saw a familiar face under the streetlamp. It was Shen Xixi. He hadn't seen her after their unpleasant dinner not too long ago, and his last memory of her was when she got into a black Mercedes. Coming from a well-heeled family, she didn't need to work for the university during the breaks, so Zhang Heng was surprised that she was still around campus. Standing by her side was the young man who picked her up with the Mercedes. It seemed that they were in a heated argument.

"I can't accept your proposal! We can't just make an innocent person take such great risks."

"This can't be considered as a risk. We will stay near her and jump in if anything happens. I will personally guarantee her safety."

"Guarantee her safety? You? Or Yang Zihe? Forget it. Until now, we still can't figure what the hell that thing is or how we're supposed to deal with it. We can't even protect ourselves, much less protect her!"

"Tell me what we should do then? We'll never figure out how to deal with that thing if we don't get close to it. As we speak, it might have already killed someone innocent. I told her... I told her this would be a dangerous mission. She agreed to do it, and I promised to pay her good money to make up for the risks she would have to face."

"No! She has no idea what she's about to come across..."

Suddenly, Shen Xixi paused as she noticed Zhang Heng walking toward her. The young man attempted to taunt Zhang Heng by cocking his eyebrows, only to be met by Shen Xixi's frown. During the last gathering, the young man was supposed to pick Shen Xixi up at a spot further away from the restaurant. She had never thought he would actually drive all the way there and take the initiative to open the door for her.

The circumstances of that time were critical and hence, Shen Xixi didn't say a word about it. She'd heard about the rumor going around the university. Though they were unpleasant, she never bothered explaining herself even if it could explain her sudden disappearance from the university or not returning to the dorm at night. However, that didn't mean that she was okay with the rumors. Now that it had

spread throughout the university, her purpose was achieved. That said, she wished to keep them they were, especially in front of Zhang Heng.

Though she harbored no romantic sentiments toward Zhang Heng, she had to admit that he left her with an excellent impression. Many friends had deserted her due to the recent incident, and only a handful would still talk to her without being judgemental.

“Let’s end it here tonight,” said Shen Xixi to the young man.

“Okay. I will send you a WeChat message later.”

The young man nodded and stopped glaring at Zhang Heng

“Wang Yu. I believe that we should try to calm down tonight. Let’s figure out some other way to deal with this matter.”

Wang Yu raised his eyebrows, sensing that Shen Xixi wasn’t too happy about the whole thing. From the first time they met, her emotional maturity left a deep impression on him. Whatever the situation, Shen Xixi would always prioritize the feelings of those around her.

When he noticed that she wasn’t too happy, he instantly stopped doing anything that would aggravate the situation. He simply walked towards the parking lot. Once Wang Yu was gone, Shen Xixi turned around and looked at Zhang Heng.

“I’m sorry. I feel like having some milk tea. Would you like to come with me?”

Zhang Heng could see that Shen Xixi was definitely in a foul mood so he didn’t reject her offer. They both walked out of the university to Coco’s, a milk tea shop near the bus terminal. Shen Xixi purchased two cups of milk tea and handed one with less sugar to Zhang Heng.

“I think you’ve changed a lot.”

Both were merely acquaintances, and Shen Xixi didn’t know too much about Zhang Heng. So, she came up with a random statement and quickly moved the conversation to the young man that she was with.

“Wang Yu. I got to know him from a charity organization,” said Shen Xixi while planting a straw into her cup.

“Charity organization?”

“Yes, but whatever we do seems to be unpopular around here. We specialize in studying and dealing with extraterrestrials that invade the country. You know about them, right?”

“I’ve heard about them in my high school biology class.”

“These beings bring catastrophic effects to our ecosystem. Not only do they affect the economy, but they would eventually cause the extinction of all life on this planet. We believe that the very survival of humans may be threatened with them around. Our country is a good example of the damage these extraterrestrial beings can bring. Although the government is trying to solve the problem once and for all, the workforce is sorely lacking, which is why organizations like ours offer assistance to them.

Residents would typically report any sightings to us, or they would enquire about it online. When we

have enough information, we will travel to the affected locations and provide them with a free identification service.”

“Sounds like you’re doing something very meaningful.”

Whatever Shen Xixi told Zhang Heng explained her argument with Wang Yu. However, she still kept a lot of details from him, such as the type of extraterrestrials they were dealing with or why would anybody’s life be at risk from dealing with them. There was also a possibility that Zhang Heng didn’t hear any of it, considering that there was some distance between them earlier. Nevertheless, Shen Xixi didn’t want to dwell on the topic further, not wanting to indulge in it after her brief explanation.

Chapter 262 Bicycle Repair

With the new year fast approaching, those yet to return to their respective hometowns each had their own worries.

Shen Xixi and Zhang Heng were just ordinary friends – although exchanging WeChat contacts since their camping trip together, they rarely talked to each other. After briefly explaining about the nonprofit organization she had joined and her daily activities, their conversation quickly switched to the finals.

This, however, was Zhang Heng’s blind spot. To him, the exams that had taken place a week ago were a thing of the past, a good ten years ago, to be exact. He couldn’t recall much of its details, and so, he merely played along, nodding at everything she said without much comment.

Shen Xixi noticed the polite obligation in his responses. Still, since they rarely interacted with each other, there weren’t many different topics they could touch on other than the final exams. It was starting to get awkward, and although Shen Xixi had only finished half of her tea, the two decided to part ways. Somehow, she looked hesitant as she turned to leave. In the end, after a short pause, she quickly blurted, “Be careful.”

“Be careful?” Zhang Heng stopped in his tracks.

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Realizing how vague her statement sounded, she began to explain, “Yes, I mean, since many people will be on the move during Spring Festival, you should be careful on your way back.”

Zhang Heng nodded. “You too,” he replied.

Zhang Heng was back in his dorm room that he left a long time ago, and Ma Wei hadn’t yet returned from his tutoring job. After turning on the lights, he set his backpack down and sat at his desk. Out of habit, he took out a piece of paper and a pen, and tried to organize the information he gathered from this round of the game.

Because of the lengthy duration of the game this time around, Zhang Heng had a lot of time to burn after completing its main task, using most of it to improve his skills (mainly language), and also to confirm some of his conjectures. Other than what he had told the bartender, Zhang Heng really wanted to know where Moresby and that wall that swallowed the old lady had come from. He was also curious if the game items with supernatural powers had anything to do with them. What secrets lurked within this mysterious game he was involved in?

Discounting Moresby's Bones, Betty's Shell was the sixth game item Zhang Heng found. As of now, it was also the most powerful one – able to change the weather at sea. At the same time, it was unlike the other game items he had, seeing how perilous it was to use.

Was the sailor on the carrack truly lost in greed and anger like what Seth said? Zhang Heng was still skeptical about it. However, there was one thing he was sure of – these game props were all related to ancient myths and legends. Aside from the unidentified Shadow Moment and Shadow Key, the Rabbit's Foot was a symbol of luck in many folklores. The necklace Simon gave him was connected to the Tapio, the Finnish mythical forest god. The Moresby creature, according to the old man in the Tang suit, was the guardian of a tribe from the remote Papua New Guinean islands called the Alkiz.

The Paris Arrow he carried with him originated from a Greek legend, and when he was on the Black Sail quest, he encountered an ancient god that he suspected to be part of Celtic mythology. Unfortunately, that ancient god, Betty, was weak and drained when they met. Later on, Zhang Heng attempted to help her by expanding her pool of believers, but for some reason, she was unable to regain full strength. In the end, he was unable to communicate with her on a deeper level. But then again, during the auction, Zhang Heng saw game items that looked very much like Louis Vuitton handbags, and even iPhones. Also, the game item 'Escape Dagger' that sold for a hefty 2000 game points, looked, and sounded very much like a popular prop from another game. It seemed as if the conclusion he'd drawn wasn't complete. Zhang Heng subsequently circled the words 'folklore' and 'myth,' then wrote a question mark next to them. Then on a blank space, he wrote Shen Xixi and Huang Yu's name, noting at the end that they too might be players themselves. He put down his pen just as Ma Wei walked into the room. Ma Wei removed the gray knitted gloves from his hands and rubbed his fingers, all red from the cold, and he was surprised when he saw Zhang Heng.

"Hey, you're back!"

Zhang Heng closed his notebook. "Yeah. How did it go today? Is the tutorship going well?" Ma Wei shook his head. "That kid is tough to manage. His father is an executive in an organization, and the mother is a branch manager of a bank. They have two houses on the third ring road and one each in the fourth and fifth. I told him that since his family is so well-to-do, he just needs to study hard. With his parents paving the way for him, he can easily succeed in whatever he wishes to do. Guess what he answered me with? He said: my family is so rich that we can never finish spending our money. Why do I need to be successful anyway?"

"That seems right in some kind of way."

Ma Wei sighed. "The kid's parents are very busy. They constantly entertain their clients and are only home very late. It was always just him and his nanny. The nanny, on the other hand, wouldn't discipline him, and he's always eating imported junk and snacks. He's only thirteen, and he's already 120kg! I also heard his schoolmates calling him the devil incarnate. His mom hired me to help him with his homework for one hundred and fifty yuan per hour. If he shows any improvement in his mid-term and final exams, she will pay me a hundred for each subject."

"So, how were his results?"

"It's the same as before. No progress at all," Ma Wei sighed, looking very glum. After all, when he was discussing his employer's pay, the particular topic motivated him a lot. It was evident that the little fatso

had a weak foundation, meaning that there was lots of room for improvement. For this, Ma Wei had put in a lot of effort, even filling up a notebook with various learning strategies. Alas, the plump little boy sneered at the notes he was given, saying, "What's the use of learning? Look at you. You're so good at it, yet, instead of getting somewhere, here you are tutoring

me."

Those words hurt Ma Wei deeply, but he never mentioned it openly. In fact, if it wasn't for the handsome salary, he would have chosen to tutor someone else. This was especially true after the little plump thing recently grew fond of a girl, and his mind was completely distracted, constantly thinking of ways to win her over. Ma Wei could already tell that the boy's results would only worsen come the next semester.

Ma Wei picked up a thermos next to his bed and poured himself a cup of warm water. Then after a moment's deliberation, he turned to Zhang Heng. "Oh, by the way, do you know how to repair bicycles?"

"Why?"

"The chain felt a little loose when I was riding back yesterday," said Ma Wei. "It felt like I was peddling air." "I'll take a look at it with you," Zhang Heng replied. Back when he was in Tokyo Drift, he had learned how to modify cars, and considering how much simpler the transmission of a bicycle was, repairing it shouldn't be much of a problem for him.

Zhang Heng took out a flashlight from his drawer before grabbing a screwdriver that had been left by someone. Then, he went downstairs with Ma Wei to where the bicycle was parked.

Chapter 263 Aren't You a Little Smug?

The street lights outside the hostel had been turned off for a few days now, and most of the building's residents had already returned to their hometowns for the Spring Festival. Only a few dorms were still lit, and the building's surroundings were unusually dark at night. Zhang Heng turned on his powerful LED flashlight, which shone brightly with a white glow. Following Ma Wei's directions, he found the parked bicycle. It was a Flying Pigeon* bicycle Ma Wei purchased from a senior from his hometown. It appeared worn and rusted and seemed to have done more than a couple of miles under its belt.

Every year during graduation season, the new graduates would set up stalls in front of the hostel building to sell the items they no longer needed at reasonable prices. It was then that Ma Wei purchased this two-wheeler for less than a hundred yuan, thinking he could eventually sell it off to the freshmen when his turn to graduate arrived. It was excellent value for its price, and the robust machine reliably ferried him back and forth from his part-time tutoring job. Zhang Heng took a quick glance at the vehicle and found that its chain was indeed loose, just as Ma Wei had reported.

The solution to this problem was actually rather straightforward. All he needed to do was loosen the nut holding the rear axle and pull the rear wheel back to tighten up the chain. He would finish up by replacing the nut and screws with brand new ones. Since Zhang Heng could fix the minor problem there and then, he crouched down and went straight to work. Ma Wei, who was walking up from behind him, wore a peculiar smile on his face. Zhang Heng focussed on fixing on the bike, and Ma Wei stood outside

the flashlight's beam, so unless Zhang Heng had eyes at the back of his head, he wasn't able to see the expression on his friend's face.

Ma Wei appeared to be hopeful and happy like a birthday boy unboxing his presents at a party.

Zhang Heng was already reaching for the rear axle but suddenly, he stopped halfway. Without warning, he dropped the torchlight in his hand, and grabbed Ma Wei by the wrist. "Well, you're a smug one, aren't you?" Ma Wei's face fell. Before he could say anything, Zhang Heng was already on his feet, pushing the screwdriver hard against his throat.

"God damn it! What is the meaning of this? Such a reaction is unwarranted if you don't want to fix my bike, huh?" growled Ma Wei as his face darkened.

"I should be the one asking you that," replied Zhang Heng. "Why have you been following me? What is your purpose? That Kumamon back at the mall... that was you, right? How did you disappear from the fitting room? Why are you pretending to be my friend? Where is the real Ma Wei? Did you hurt him?"

'Ma Wei' thought about the question for a bit, but before 'he' could come up with a lie, he felt a sharp pain on his wrist.

The imposter gasped and gritted his teeth. "Ow! Ow! Ow! It hurts. So, you're not only violent towards boys, but you're also unfriendly towards girls! How ungentlemanly of you..."

Zhang Heng was taken aback. "Are you that drunk girl from the public toilet?" Throughout the years, Zhang Heng had experienced many battles, some big and some small. Nevertheless, all of them happened in the game. In the real world, the only time he laid a hand on someone was last night, and there were no other witnesses at the scene, either. The drunk girl on the ground had also disappeared when he was chasing down the group of bastards who ran from the toilet. Now that he thought about it, it was an uncannily similar incident to what he experienced at the mall.

Ma Wei's imposter didn't answer him. Instead, he said, "How did you find out that I wasn't actually your friend?"

"I don't know how you did it, but your appearance and voice are impeccable. Your mannerism of him is slightly flawed, but it's not too bad. You made a grave mistake, though. It seems you don't truly understand who Ma Wei truly is. Due to the environment that he grew up in, Ma Wei is very insistent on being independent. He's always ready to offer his assistance but rarely troubles anybody for help. Simple things like fixing his bicycle; he would have done it himself. Even if he were to ask for my help, he would've only done it after several failed attempts. Moreover..." Zhang Heng paused. "... he doesn't like drinking warm water. He only drinks it only after it has cooled a little. Ma Wei would never have poured it out of the thermos and drink it straight away."

There was of course a third reason that Zhang Heng didn't reveal. Ever since he completed Black Sail, his temperament had changed drastically. After knowing each other for more than a year, even if Ma Wei didn't comment about the changes, he would have at least looked slightly shocked.

When Ma Wei's imposter walked in, Zhang Heng noticed that his expression barely changed. The imposter greeted him as if they'd already met. This was because the two had already met last night.

That was when Zhang Heng began to be suspicious of this 'Ma Wei.'

“Huh, if it wasn’t for the lack of time, I wouldn’t have made such an amateurish mistake,” pouted the imposter. To be honest, seeing a guy do that was kind of strange. I didn’t do anything to your roommate. I just brought his wallet and bicycle back first,” the imposter continued, indirectly admitting that he had actually come for Zhang Heng.

“Do we have anything against each other?” Zhang Heng’s brows furrowed.

“What do you think? Last night, I came out for some fun, and when I finally had the stage set up, caught myself five little fishes, and was about to have a good time, you came along and scared them away. You wasted all my effort,” the imposter moaned.

“If you wanted it so bad, then why didn’t you spend your money at the clubhouse?” Zhang Heng chided coolly.

The imposter became speechless. After about a minute, he snapped out of it and said, “I think you’re mistaken. When I said ‘a good time,’ I didn’t mean...”

Zhang Heng cut her off. “...also, even if I had accidentally ruined your plan, didn’t you already get your revenge back at the mall? We’re already even. So, why are you still coming after me?”

“Even? We’re far from even. You don’t react to being duped like a normal person.” Ma Wei’s imposter looked unhappy. “Just thinking about it makes my blood boil.”

Zhang Heng’s eyes widened in surprise. Back in the mall, he could sense that the other party didn’t have any malicious intent towards him. Even though she had used the Kumamon costume to steal Hayase Asuka’s wallet and passport, she eventually returned those things and even left a note along with it. There seemed to be no ill intention in the whole affair. There was more of a mischievous vibe to *it*.

Of course, if Zhang Heng were to be arrested by the mall cops, she would have been even more pleased. “You sound like you love these pranks but you still care a lot about how it ends,” Zhang Heng observed. “Why? Does it have any importance to you?”

Chapter 264 You Should Wait Here

When she was posed with the critical question, Ma Wei’s imposter refused to utter a word, adamantly refusing to answer Zhang Heng. At the same time, his body and face were changing as well. Within ten seconds, she transformed from Ma Wei to the girl in the toilet last night. Some physical traits of hers had changed too. The tattoo on her arm was gone, and the purple wig and fake eyelashes were no longer on her. Given a choice, she would have definitely not revealed her true self. There could be only one explanation to her transformation then – a limited time for her disguise.

Was it some game item? Zhang Heng wasn’t sure. When one received a game item in the quest, the system would typically send the player a notification. Back in the real world, however, a player would not receive any notifications. However, a person could only carry so many things at one time, and Zhang Heng would be able to identify the game item if he carefully checked them one by one.

A game item that enabled the player morph into a completely different person within a limited time. A piece with such caliber would be at least C-grade, able to be sold for thousands of game points during an auction. Previously, when Zhang Heng got pranked by the Kumamon at the mall, he suddenly felt that

the method the mascot had used was awfully familiar. Now, he finally remembered where that feeling came from.

In between the third and fourth round of the game, Zhang Heng had some free time and attended a year-end auction. Other than getting to know different players and gathering information, he managed to purchase the Paris Arrow and Shadow Key. He even got to witness a dramatic event unfold before him right before the auction ended.

The mysterious lady with shades who entered the auction center managed to make a fool out of some influential individuals. After that, she went as far as to spend a whopping 100,000 game points to purchase the only B-grade game item auctioned that night – the Dreamland of Death. The method she used to fool the three significant factions was similar to that of the woman standing in front of Zhang Heng

Even though their looks, age, and sizes differed from each other, there was a strong possibility that the two were actually the same person, considering that their morphing skills were similar. Even if they were separate individuals, there must be a particular connection between them. However, this had nothing much to do with Zhang Heng. Even if he could prove that the person in front of him had something to do with that mysterious woman from the auction, he had no intention to stick his nose into what happened there.

Zhang Heng had, in fact, grown more cautious about the woman after all that. After she made a scene at the auction, she managed to successfully flee the place unscathed. Zhang Heng was now worried that the woman or her allies were still holding a weapon of mass destruction, one like the Dreamland of Death.

Things were beginning to get more complicated, and Zhang Heng extended his arms again to search the imposter. Suddenly, he thought of something, and his fingers stopped midair.

“What’s wrong? Finally remembered that I’m a lady, huh?” asked the Ma Wei’s imposter with her eyes blinking.

Zhang Heng suddenly asked her a random question. “What would have happened if I collided with the bicycle just now?”.

“It doesn’t really matter anymore. It didn’t happen anyway. What a shame. I was waiting for a good show.”

“I don’t care what evil plans you have in mind, but I believe that it would have activated the moment I collided with the bicycle. In other words, you might have other traps on you, triggered once when I touch your body. That’s why you weren’t nervous even after I captured you. With your morphing abilities, you knew that I would definitely search your body. By that time, the second trap would be triggered, and you’d once again flee without a trace.”

“Must you always be this careful? Your life must be boring as hell.”

“Of course. Now that you realize that there’s no way out, you’re putting on a show to confidently bluff your way out. Perhaps you’re attempting to draw me into thinking that you have an ace up your sleeve. You did this to stop me from searching your body.”

“Which outcome do you think would happen?”

“We shall know soon.”

Zhang Heng glanced at his watch just as Ma Wei’s imposter was trying to swallow what he said. One hour and forty minutes were left before midnight. Once the hands of the clock stacked on each other, Zhang Heng would get to enjoy his extra 24 hours. By that time, he would have enough time to study the fake Ma Wei and the items she possessed.

“Since you don’t want to turn yourself into a murderer and kill me, not to mention that you didn’t dare to search me as well, does that mean I can leave now?” “If I let you go, will you cause me trouble again?”

“Of course not. It’s pointless anyway. You are such a boring person. Even if you stepped into my snare, you’re not going to react. I should look for others instead.”

“Great. Wait here.”

“.....”

Zhang Heng had no intention to let down his guard. However, he did move the screwdriver away from her neck. On the other hand, the imposter was still attempting to figure out how to escape the situation, intently looking at her surroundings to find a way out. Suddenly, she came up with an idea when she saw two people coming out of the study room.

Just as she was about to call out Zhang Heng as a pervert, she felt an excruciating pain stabbing her stomach. Zhang Heng pulled his arm back and moved away from the woman. “Baby, are you okay? I told you not to overeat the spicy hotpot, didn’t I? Let’s go to the hospital now, eh?” said Zhang Heng while squatting down in front of her. When the two boys saw the woman clutching her stomach as she crouched down, they thought something terrible had happened to her and instantly approached to see if they could lend a hand. However, being single guys, they were a little disappointed when they heard overhead the conversation between ‘the couple.’ Knowing that there was no chance to be knights in shining armor, they had no intention to linger around. After looking at her face, they felt the major predicament of every single man in the world hitting them hard. Why was it always somebody worse always getting the pretty girls? Why did the pretty girls never notice them?

Ma Wei’s imposter was in so much pain that she couldn’t close both of her legs. At the same time, she gave Zhang Heng a thumbs up. Zhang Heng noticed that it wasn’t safe for him to keep waiting here. After all, the dorms were just above him. Although few were still in the university right now, students that couldn’t return to their hometowns would sometimes hang around the area. “Let’s go. We need to go somewhere else.”

“Shi... how did an asshole like you manage to get a cute Japanese girlfriend?”

Ma Wei’s imposter rubbed her stomach vigorously as she talked to him. The fact that he still clutched her hand tightly to make sure that she wouldn’t escape had made her really angry. “Stand up straight if you can walk. And Hayase Asuka is no more than a friend.”

Chapter 265 Is This Necessary?

“Just a friend? Based on the assistance I provided you with, that girl didn’t see you as a normal friend.”

After a while, something crossed her mind, and Ma Wei's imposter started to take pleasure in Zhang Heng's misfortune. "Oh. Now I know why you won't fall in love with her. You are worried that it might become a long-distance relationship once she returns to her country, just like the couple from the movie, Raincoat. They both loved each other a lot, but they were forced to watch each other marry someone they didn't truly love. After going their separate ways, they could only see the raincoats that they gifted to each other to reminisce on the sweet memories buried deep within their hearts..." Zhang Heng tapped on the woman's shoulder and pointed at the well-lit building in front of her.

"Do you know what that place is?"

"Yeah. I know what that place is. That's a 24-hour grocery store." "All I need to do is to spend two RMB to buy some duct tape, and I'll be able to enjoy silence once again."

Zhang Heng brought Ma Wei's imposter to the edge of a large field. Usually, the place would be open at six in the morning until ten at night. However, since the final exams were over, and most students had returned to their hometowns, the field closed earlier than usual. This didn't stop Zhang Heng from entering it, though. Using his student card, he slipped into the crack of the door of the office and attempted to break in.

"I never expected you to be this sort of person. It appears you're not as noble as you make yourself out to be. From what I'm seeing, you must have done a lot of unethical stuff in your university."

Zhang Heng didn't bother explaining himself to the woman. He had learned these skills with the extra 24 hours that he had every day, and most of the time, he was a law-abiding citizen. It was rare that he would break any rule set by the university as well.

After fiddling with the card for a while, Zhang Heng managed to enter the office, grabbing the key that opened the fence that guarded the field. Once they walked past the entrance, the woman calmly took a good look at her surroundings. "Is this field new? Looks like a good place to me. Speaking of which, I have a friend who studies at your university as well. Some time ago, she even brought me to taste the cafeteria's famous braised chicken."

Zhang Heng wasn't interested in her babbling and brought her to a wall located on the west side of the field. It appeared that there wasn't a soul around them right now. Situated opposite the field was the three-story university gym, and at this hour, all its lights were off. A residential area was directly beyond the wall, and its residents could see the field clearly. However, since the two were standing below the tall wall, it was considered a blind spot. Now that Zhang Heng locked the gate leading to the field, it was practically impossible for the woman to pull any tricks on him. "Is this even necessary?"

As a gust of frigid wind blew at Ma Wei's imposter, she couldn't help but shudder in the cold. It was hard for her to keep pretending she didn't have a care in this world now that she was in a semi-enclosed space with Zhang Heng. From what she saw, no one would come to her rescue if something awful were to befall her. Besides, the field was surrounded by darkness, an entirely different environment from where she was earlier. Previously, she wasn't worried that Zhang Heng would've hurt her. Right now, she wasn't so sure anymore.

After a short while, the woman attempted to negotiate with Zhang Heng.

"Oy! Let me go, and I will give you a game item. What say you?"

“So, you are a player as well?”

“I’m not a player, but I used to be one. Due to personal reasons, I’m not allowed to enter the quests anymore.” “Huh?”

The woman, however, had no intention to dwell on the topic. Zhang Heng guessed the reason for her banning had something to do with the auction incident some time ago. All the while, Zhang Heng had felt that the mysterious woman’s godlike metamorphosis skills were too overbearing. Not only did she manage to fool the leaders of four factions, but she even managed to cheat the software. It was as if she was a bug in the system. Until now, he still couldn’t figure out how she did it.

“You’re such a mean person! You’re the one who spoiled my plan first! I admit that I pulled a prank on you when I saw you at the shopping mall. I even went as far as helping you impress your Japanese girlfriend. The way she looked at you when you came after me... it was nothing short of amazing. Hehe! As a girl, I can tell you that you’ve managed to capture her heart. It’s time to move on, bro.”

Ma Wei’s imposter gave Zhang Heng’s shoulder a pat as she talked to him. Nevertheless, even after the awkward bout of laughter, she noticed that he showed no reaction at all.

“I’m really curious. Other than lies, what are you made up of? I know that you had your eyes on me since I was at the pharmacy. You’ve been plotting against me ever since, right?” Zhang Heng said.

“What pharmacy? I rented a Kumamon outfit on that day, and I spent my entire day at the shopping mall. Well... I did go to a couple of shopping malls that day, as a matter of fact. When I saw you and your girlfriend at the Xidan mall, I bought her a rose. After that, some asshole came to mess with me. Oh right, where’s the Kumamon costume? I paid 200 RMB as a deposit. I’ll need it back.”

Even Zhang Heng had to admit that lying was indeed a talent. When the average person told a lie, their bodies would typically make small and subconscious movements that would give them away. However, lying seemed to come naturally as eating and drinking to the woman. Zhang Heng failed to spot any flaws from the way she behaved. She wasn’t that old anyway, so how could she have so quickly mastered the fine art of deception? Could she have practiced it since she was a kid? Was she a pathological liar?

Just as Zhang Heng was about to say something, the same sensation he had at that pharmacy of someone spying on him surged through his body again. This time, he could sense the evil intent behind it. As for the imposter, she was still staring at him innocently.

Suddenly, Zhang Heng extended his hand, seeming as if he was about to grab her chest. The woman was terrified this time, on the verge of screaming out loud. Seconds later, he rudely grabbed her shirt by the collar and pulled her abruptly toward him. “Brother! I have HIV!!!”

Unable to hold back any longer, she screamed as loud as she could. Right before the two collided into each other, Zhang Heng let her go, and she fell hard on the running track. The skin on her palms was grazed when she used them to support herself. She then took in a deep breath.

She winced in pain, and there was a tear in her eye. “Fuc... are you sick in the head?! It looks like you’re addicted to torturing people, you sadist!”

It was then when she saw something terrifying. The solid wall that she stood beside earlier began to melt like chocolate under a flame.

Chapter 266 Run

“What the hell?!” exclaimed Ma Wei’s imposter in disbelief and horror. Zhang Heng, on the other hand, was already in grave danger.

Having witnessed how the wall engulfed an old lady before, he instantly noticed it moving and managed to pull the clueless girl away from danger. If that was his first encounter, he wouldn’t have been certain, but now, Zhang Heng confirmed that since it hunted its victims so strategically, whatever that thing was, must have some sort of higher intelligence. When the wall began to ripple like boiling water, it caught Zhang Heng’s attention. He swiftly shoved the woman away before the oozing black fluid could reach her. However, the creature was actually feigning an attack, as its real target was actually Zhang Heng. The curious creature seemed to be able to control how fast it melted, where the wall’s corners dissolved more quickly than its body.

Unbeknownst to Zhang Heng, the black liquid had already wrapped around his feet when he grabbed the collar of the woman. He had seen how efficiently the thing hunted, taking less than ten seconds to completely engulf the old scavenger. He knew he was running out of time.

Even at this juncture of life and death, Zhang Heng remained as calm as a millpond. He turned away as he threw the woman aside, then quickly tried to pry the creature away from his feet. However, as he suspected, the beast could switch forms freely between solid and liquid. After wrapping itself around Zhang Heng’s ankle, it instantly hardened and became as hard as concrete. Now, Zhang Heng felt as if his left foot was encrusted in plaster, and he was completely stuck in place, unable to move an inch.

This was also the same reason why Zhang Heng couldn’t save the old lady. Now, it was his turn. He realized that this wasn’t something he could possibly fight against. The black liquid spread like wildfire, running up his ankles, unhindered.

In a blink of an eye, the tar-like substance had engulfed his calf. If this were to continue, he would soon be dragged into the wall alive, a horrible way to die, to say the least – not something anybody would want to endure. To Zhang Heng’s greatest surprise, Ma Wei’s imposter had a little more loyalty than expected. Although scared to death, she didn’t run even after getting back on her feet. Instead, she shouted at Zhang Heng, “What’s its weakness? What should I do?!”

In response, Zhang Heng simply stared at her, pointed to the direction of the field’s exit, and said, “Run!”

Had this been a Qiong Yao opera, Ma Wei’s imposter would have been deeply moved by Zhang Heng’s oh-so-sacrificial, tough-guy act. She would have been tugging on Zhang Heng’s other thigh, crying and screaming at the top of her lungs, begging, “No, I’m not leaving you! If one must die, then we die together!”

However, this was hard reality, not some stage show. After staring Zhang Heng in the eye, she hesitated for a moment before turning around to run toward the gate as fast as her legs could carry her.

At a time like this, there was no time for second thoughts. She could only trust his judgment. There could only be two reasons why he told her to run. First, the action of running could be useful against the creature, or second, Zhang Heng knew that he was a lost cause and didn't want to drag her down with him, the reason why he made her leave while she still could.

After running for a bit, tears started pouring out of the woman's eyes. She stopped and, at the same time, cried out to Zhang Heng, "Dude! I don't have the key!"

Zhang Heng had brought her to the field to prevent her from attempting any more tricks, locking up the gate for good measure, and effectively keeping outsiders from entering. However, that meant that nobody was getting out either. The key to that lock was still with Zhang Heng, and as the woman turned around, what she saw gave her a chill.

Zhang Heng had disappeared. In his place was what seemed like a stone wall that had appeared out of nowhere, right smack in the middle of the running track.

It was all like a poorly written piece of dark comedy.

As hilarious as it might have been, the woman couldn't laugh at all. Right now, she was in complete shock. Too bad for her, as she didn't have the time to mourn Zhang Heng's death. Even though the creature behind her had just swallowed a person whole, it didn't seem to satisfy its insatiable hunger, appearing to be more raucous than ever.

After running for a while, she realized that the black substance wasn't very speedy. It moved only as fast as she could run. The only reason for its success so far was because of its sudden and abrupt attacks, all coming without prior warning. Most people would have a sense of security when they leaned against a sturdy wall, subconsciously believing that they were protected from threats that came from every other direction.

In fact, if the victim was prepared, the prospect of an escape was still on the books. Moreover, whatever worried the woman the most did not actually happen.

That creature didn't have an Image Splitting Skill, which would allow it to replicate itself, making it omnipresent. That would have allowed it to surround its victim from every angle. It seemed that it could only remain as one entity, and a part of its body had to be connected to the wall no matter how far it ventured.

However, it could definitely move freely from one wall to another, provided that the wall that it was attached to had returned to its original state. It was during these snatches of time that the woman could take a breather. Unfortunately, she failed to see a way out of the predicament and was, in fact, feeling absolutely awful. Due to specific reasons, she wasn't supposed to be doing vigorous exercise. She hadn't run so fervently since her high school fitness test, and now, her lungs felt as if they were about to burst out of her chest.

Nevertheless, not running would mean the end of her. She even began to wonder if she would die of exhaustion before the creature could get its hands on her if she kept sprinting at such a pace.

As a matter of fact, shortness of breath and a tightness in her chest was beginning to plague her, and now, her vision was getting blurry. Just as she was about to give up, she suddenly heard a familiar voice saying, "Here, quick!"

Lo and behold, Zhang Heng, of whom she thought was dead, was alive and standing at the gate. He had miraculously, at some point, opened the entrance of the field, and was now shouting at her. Unfortunately, she wasn't the only one who saw Zhang Heng. When that creature realized that he was actually alive, the wall behind the woman quickly returned to its original state.

This was her golden opportunity. By the time the wall was restored to its previous form, that thing would have been part of the gate's pillars. By then, it would be too late for her.

Ma Wei's imposter felt as if all the energy in her body had been drained out her as she attempted to move her lead-laden legs toward the gate. Every ounce of strength in her body had fizzled out, but she tried to squeeze whatever little energy she had left within her. Just as she began to pick up her pace, the dreaded creature of a wall began to move again. There was a look of hopeless despair in her eyes. But just as she thought that the creature would surely swallow her, a pair of hands wrapped her waist tightly.

Chapter 267 I Know About It

At a moment where life hung in limbo, Zhang Heng carried Ma Wei's imposter and ran as fast as he could. To his surprise, she was a lot lighter than he thought, weighing less than a hundred pounds. It certainly didn't match her height. However, this wasn't the pressing issue right now. Placing her on his shoulders, he started running toward the exit. Though he was carrying someone on him, he was still a lot faster than her when she ran.

Zhang Heng's persistent training had given him an edge when it came to stamina, and instead of letting the woman run on her own, he figured they would be a lot quicker if he just carried her. With swift hands, he unlocked the gate within seconds. While they ran, the woman was so terrified that she almost vomited. She then started sobbing like a little child.

"You tricked me! You used me as bait to attract the creature's attention. You even planned to get away without me, right?"

"I'm sorry. That was my item's effect. I technically needed somebody to distract the thing while I was unlocking the gate."

In desperation, Zhang Heng couldn't figure out a better way to free himself other than using his Shadow Moment. Once he entered shadow form, he was able to escape his physical boundaries and ditch the concrete that had smothered him. However, it would take some time before returning as a human once he entered the shadow form, and could only watch as the woman was chased by the creature. There really was nothing he could do at that time.

Zhang Heng could have easily left her behind and move through the gate in his shadow form, the safest way for him to escape the field. However, he remembered that she had actually risked her life in an attempt to rescue him earlier. Thanks to her selfless act, Zhang Heng was willing to risk his own life to save her as well.

Of course, the woman had to hang on for three minutes until Zhang Heng's shadow form expired. If she failed to do so, Zhang Heng would have left the place by himself. In other words, the woman had helped herself to survive the monster's deathly grip.

After a while, Zhang Heng stopped to rest. His heart thumped so rapidly that a break was necessary if he didn't want to collapse. The woman, on the other hand, had no intention getting off him. All she did was change positions on his shoulders and clung on tightly like a koala. He knew that virtually all her stamina had been spent trying to run away from the monster. Hence, he did not force her to get down. Suddenly, Zhang Heng felt a sharp pain stabbing his shoulder. "Oy! Can you stay put? We are still trying to get away from that creature!"

Ma Wei's imposter harrumphed and removed her teeth unwillingly from Zhang Heng's shoulder as she stared at her bite mark in satisfaction.

"I know that we're running away from the monster. However, my grudges against you will never be settled if I don't leave a mark!"

Satisfied after doing whatever she longed to do, the woman moved her attention back to the more pressing matter at hand.

"So... what the hell is that thing?"

"I have no bloody idea."

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"You have no idea, huh? Whatever the thing was, you were clearly the target."

Without having to spend any energy running from the monster, the woman think straight. Now that she carefully put some thought into it, she came up with a rather interesting conclusion.

"I've crossed paths with this creature once. I rescued a little kid from being its meal. Maybe, that's why it's targeting me."

Zhang Heng paused for a while before continuing

"What do you mean when you said 'its weakness' just now?"

"Are you a new player? With your strength and stamina, you don't seem new to me. Things like these are not secrets and most experienced players should already know. Usually, supernatural beings like these have a weakness. Once we find out what it is, we'll just need to focus on it. Technically, even a mighty monster could be killed by a child if its weakness is exposed."

"Weakness? Something like an Achilles Heel?"

"That's right. We need to figure out its origins or lore before we deal with it. Sometimes their weaknesses are hidden in stories passed down from generation to generation."

"Apart from that?"

After learning his lesson from Tapio, God of Forest, and the Lucky Rabbit Foot, Zhang Heng went online in search for information of a wall that could eat people up. Unfortunately, he found nothing particularly useful. There wasn't any time for that now, considering they were practically knocking on death's door.

"Usually, the most effective method to deal with most monsters is to use brute force. However... I'm not too sure about this one. Perhaps it needs to engulf you before you can start bludgeoning it to death."

Zhang Heng knew a method like that was most probably useless against it because this creature could freely change its form. In other words, this was going to be an extremely foolhardy monster for them to defeat. While he ran, Zhang Heng tried his best to stay away from all the walls that he passed by. However, the entire city was made out of concrete, making it the best place for the monster to hunt. All it needed to do was to slip from one wall to another. It would be almost impossible to locate and destroy it. As the topic of the creature's weakness was in discussion, Zhang Heng suddenly thought of something. Before he could say anything, though, he came across someone he knew.

Zhang Heng chose not to run on the main road because there were too many buildings around it, besides not wanting to endanger its inhabitants. So, he carried the woman and ran past a little garden located northeast of the field. The place was a favorite for pleasant and relaxing strolls, especially true for couples that were in love. Now that most students had returned to their respective hometowns, and considering it was already ten at night, Zhang Heng didn't expect to meet someone he knew here.

It was Shen Xixi, the girl who broke up with him not too long ago. It seemed as if something was bothering her tonight, and Zhang Heng was surprised to see that she hadn't yet returned to her dorm. Shen Xixi stood up from the bench near the lake the moment she heard rapid footsteps approaching. She too was surprised to see Zhang Heng. However, seconds after that, she heard Ma Wei's imposter shouting at her.

"Run! Run!"

Naturally, Shen Xixi was baffled by the desperate cries. However, when she saw the black liquid chasing them from behind, she felt excited. At first, Zhang Heng thought that Shen Xixi would ask him a ton of questions about the strange thing behind him because that was what ordinary people would do. Instead, she decided to heed the advice to run.

Only after Shen Xixi had caught up with them did she bombard Zhang Heng with questions.

"Where did you guys find that thing? Have you seen its attack? Did it have something to do with the wall?!"

Chapter 268 This Is Unreal

Before Zhang Heng could say anything, Ma Wei's imposter popped her head up and asked the question. "You know how to deal with this thing?"

"This is my first time facing this creature. Of late, lots of stray animals and homeless people have been disappearing from the streets. We received news that someone saw the black liquid moving within the walls at the locations of those unexplainable disappearances. My people have been trying to track it down for some time. However, it's extremely cunning. Judging by the victims' background information, it basically targets the weakest group of the society. Nobody would notice that they've gone missing. I

can't figure why it would come to the university this time, though. This is our best chance to get rid of it."

As they ran, Shen Xixi took out her cellphone to contact Wang Yu and the rest of the organization to gather at the university. When she returned her phone to her pocket, Zhang Heng asked her a question.

"Your organization deals with these matters as well?"

"I'm sorry that I lied to you. Usually, people wouldn't believe us if they didn't see such creatures with their own eyes. It's hard to explain these things to the public, which is why we call ourselves a non-profit organization." Ma Wei's imposter whispered into Zhang Heng's ear,

"She's trying to say that you're not going to be much help. What's going on right now? This woman doesn't know that you are a player. And it seems kind of sadistic too. She likes using her allies as bait."

"Just stay put."

"Huh?"

"I'm not talking about you."

"I know that you're not talking about me."

Ma Wei's imposter looked really serious. She then turned around to look at Shen Xixi.

"Hey, pretty one. When are your men coming?"

"Usually, all of them are home at this hour. They live some distance from this place, and would need at least an hour and a half to get here. That's if they manage to get a cab right now. As for those living nearby, they can get here within half an hour."

"Great! At least someone will take care of our bodies."

Although whatever Ma Wei's imposter said was unpleasant to the ear, she was trying to tell everyone that the three weren't in a good state. Until now, Zhang Heng still had his stamina in tip-top condition and didn't show signs that he would tire anytime soon. However, he was still carrying someone over his back, and it would be impossible for him to keep running at such speeds for a sustained amount of time. As for Shen Xixi, one could easily see the regular workouts she'd been doing, with only the thick winter clothing covering her dazzling figure. As compared to Ma Wei's imposter that fizzled out after only a minute of running, Shen Xixi was definitely more durable than her. Until now, at least, her breathing was still steady, and it certainly didn't look as if she was about to collapse anytime soon. However, nobody could predict what would happen in ten minutes.

Among the three of them, Ma Wei's imposter was the only one that didn't use any of her stamina. That said, she still tried to put herself to good use. While the monster was jumping from wall to wall, she had noticed a pattern to it, and the moment she spotted the walls around them changing, she would quickly inform Zhang Heng. "We need to do something about this," said Zhang Heng after running for a while.

The three ran at the same pace with the monster. However, the path they chose was predictable, where they ran along the tar roads. Besides not always being a straight path, they would sometimes come across buildings in front of them. In such instances, the creature would take advantage of its wall-

jumping abilities to move along the buildings, closing in the gap between them or even surpassing them at times. Left with no other option, they could only turn and run back in the direction from where they came.

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After a short silence, Shen Xixi finally made up her mind.

“The typical human isn’t powerful enough to deal with such a creature. I have a way to distract him. I want the two of you to use this opportunity and get away from this place.”

As she spoke, Shen Xixi took out her wallet and drew out a red card. Zhang Heng turned to look and found out that it actually looked familiar to him. He soon recognized that it was a trap card from Yu-Gi-Oh! – Battle Mania

Card Type: Trap card.

Number of uses: Unlimited.

Rarity: Rare (R)

Effect: Activates only during your opponent’s Standby Phase. All face-up monsters that your opponent controls would be changed to their Attack Position and cannot change their battle positions this turn. If possible, all monsters your opponent currently controls must attack in this turn.

After seeing the effect of Escape Dagger, Zhang Heng wasn’t surprised by Shen Xixi’s item. He could guess what she was trying to do. In Yu-Gi-Oh, this card would force the opponent’s monster to morph into its attack position. In other words, she was trying to taunt the beast. After creating an opportunity for Zhang Heng and Ma Wei’s imposter to escape, she would contact Wang Yu to help her. Acquiring a game item wasn’t her only reason for her insistence on killing this monster. She was mainly tired of seeing people getting killed by it.

“Wow! Look at her spirit compared to you. When we first met, you completely ignored me even after seeing those thugs about to rape me. What a stark difference!”

Zhang Heng said nothing in defense. Instead, he stopped running and said, “Come down.”

“No way! Are you angry with me? I was just making a random comment.” Ma Wei’s imposter seemed to be unhappy, but she had to come down from Zhang Heng’s back regardless. Both of them were safe for now after Shen Xixi used the trap card. However, Ma Wei’s imposter didn’t think that Shen Xixi could outrun the monster and win the battle. Judging by her looks, Ma Wei’s imposter knew that Shen Xixi wasn’t confident that she could hold up until her people came to her aid. Still, she had used the trap card to get Zhang Heng and the woman to a safe spot. At the same time, she didn’t stop running away from the monster, trying her best to draw it as far as possible from them.

“We should do something to help her!” muttered Shen Xixi when she saw her getting further and further away from them.

“Great! Go help her then. If she lives, I won’t hold you responsible for what you did to me before this.”

“I have something to do. So, I’ll be away for a while.”

“This is unreal! Come on, brother?! Why do I have to go first every bloody time? You’re exactly like my primary school teacher. He lets his students do the most difficult stuff and only starts to work properly during award month,” groaned Ma Wei’s imposter while rolling her eyes at Zhang Heng. “Remember. Hang on until I come back.”

“Wait. What if you don’t come back?”

Zhang Heng had already left when Ma Wei’s imposter asked the question. As a chilly gust of wind blew at her, she pulled her coat together. Just like what she did to Zhang Heng when the monster had attacked him, she chose to run towards Shen Xixi for help.

Chapter 269 Fine, I’ll Continue Running Then

In the darkness, Shen Xixi could hear the steady rhythm of her breathing and heartbeat. It had been five minutes since she used the Battle Mania card, where the D-grade game item took effect, turning the creature’s attention onto her.

However, what was about to happen next would be her biggest test yet. She knew that if she continued running aimlessly like that, she wouldn’t last more than thirty minutes.

After a while, Shen Xixi learned the pattern of the creature’s movements, where its behavior was in direct relation to the walls. In other words, the further she stayed away from the walls, the safer she would be. Less than a kilometer outside the school grounds was People’s Park, which had been opened to the public and was probably the furthest place from the city’s jungle of reinforced concrete.

Shen Xixi planned to deal with the creature there until Wang Yu and the others arrived. But just as she ran through the eastern gates, she saw that the beast was already waiting for her there. The creature appeared to have guessed her plan and had surpassed her. Shen Xixi did a quick assessment and decided to give up on heading to the south gate because one, it was too far, and there was no way she could outrun the thing, and two, the gate was usually locked at nine at night. Even if she managed to get there, it would be a waste of effort.

Eventually, she opted to retreat to the small garden where she had been, the furthest place from all the other school buildings. She decided that she could hide around the small artificial lake over there and play hide and seek with the creature.

After running for so long, though, Shen Xixi’s body was starting to send her brain fatigue signals. She was, after all, a girl, and even though she began to workout regularly to enhance her stamina since becoming a player, she was only slightly more durable than an ordinary person. Moreover, unlike Zhang Heng, who had been playing as a single-player, Shen Xixi was used to playing in a team setting. To improve efficiency and cope with various complex situations, each member of the team had their own specialty. As far as possible, the skills and abilities wouldn’t overlap, but rather, complement each other. Each teammate had a predetermined development route as well.

In her team, Shen Xixi played the role of team leader and brains. Battles were the responsibility of the other members. Since her job was to improve her leadership and decision-making abilities, it meant there wasn’t much time for physical exercise. Also, the low visibility in the dark was causing her a lot of trouble.

Being in the cramped garden would put a distance between her and the buildings, but the setting was also more complicated. Of course, it wasn't without reason that the garden was hailed as a sacred lovenest for budding couples – there were only two street lamps in the whole area, one of which was broken a long time ago. Exuding a vibe of romantic ambiance, it was perfect for hugs and cuddles. Right now, it wasn't exactly ideal for Shen Xixi.

She didn't know if the creature had eyes or how it was able to see, but one thing for sure, its vision was definitely not affected by the amount of light surrounding it. Her perception, on the other hand, was definitely influenced by the darkness, which was causing her to lose her sense of direction.

In fact, if it had not been for energy preservation, Shen Xixi wouldn't have risked it to run to this place and allow the creature the chance to sneak up on her. As she panted, she stopped by the lakeside to slow her breathing. She stood with her back facing the artificial lake as a precaution, so the other directions were clearly in her sight. Her strategy was straightforward but also very effective.

Under the glow of the sole streetlamp above her, she could clearly see to her left and right. Behind her was the lake, and since there wasn't any concrete structures on it, save for a little rock formation, it should be safe. The only problem was the trees that blocked her front view. Thankfully, it was winter, and most of their leaves had fallen off.

It was in this direction that Shen Xixi focused her attention on. If the creature were to attack her, she would surely be able to see it. Her nerves were still frayed, knowing that no matter what, the enemy was still a supernatural creature. Even in her calm demeanor, she was a little skittish. Suddenly, the phone in her pocket vibrated. It was a text from Wang Yu.

He wrote: Wait for me! I'm nearby. I'll be there soon!

She had to admit that the text calmed her nerves a little. It seemed that the situation was a lot better than she expected. Wang Yu wasn't the team's main fighter, but he was second only to Yu Yangzi. The only problem was that he lived the furthest from the school. He was the one that Shen Xixi mentioned would take at least an hour and a half to get there. Nevertheless, he would have to be her best bet, for the time being, at least.

Shen Xixi shook her head in an attempt to clear her mind. Receiving Wang Yu's text set her thoughts in motion again. She wasn't merely thinking about passively running for her life but hoped that she would be able to gather more useful information to deal with the creature later on. As she was thinking about her next strategy, the hill on the artificial lake behind her began to melt quietly.

This wasn't Shen Xixi's fault. Because that thing had been traveling through concrete walls, she had deliberately avoided the buildings on campus. It didn't cross her mind that the creature could also use the mock rock formation.

By the time Shen Xixi noticed the black liquid moving toward her, it was too late to react. Thank goodness, Ma Wei's imposter arrived just at the nick of time. As she searched for Shen Xixi, she had stopped to tear off a piece of clay from her pocket and began molding it. It wasn't until two minutes ago that she succeeded. Sprinting to the artificial lake, she threw it at the creature when she saw it.

It landed between Shen Xixi and the pool of black liquid, and a wall was instantly erected.

Shen Xixi was terrified. She thought that Ma Wei's imposter must have had a grudge against her and was about to use the creature to get rid of her. But a minute later, she saw that the wall was actually blocking the creature from reaching her.

"What are you still doing there? Run!" shouted Ma Wei's imposter. "My plasticine wall won't hold for long!"

Shen Xixi didn't even look back as she started running. She turned to the girl who had just saved her and asked, "You're a player too?"

"I suppose so," Ma Wei's imposter answered as she huffed. She hated working out the most. Without Zhang Heng around, her human mule was gone, and she was forced to buck up and run alongside Shen Xixi. But as soon as she started, she stopped, looking very excited. "Oh, how silly of me! Why am I running? That thing will only attack you, right?"

Shen Xixi's answer, however, only destroyed her hope. "My game item also has a time limit. Its effect can only last for fifteen minutes. That's less than two minutes from now."

When Ma Wei's imposter heard this, she wanted to cry. "Fine! I'll continue running then."

Chapter 270 It's Not Me, I Didn't Do It, Don't Accuse Me

The plasticine wall erected by Ma Wei's imposter wouldn't stop the creature for too long. Right now, she and Shen Xixi were running for their lives toward the parking lot. Earlier, Wang Yu had sent a message to Shen Xixi and told her to meet up there. Though Shen Xixi placed most of her attention to the monster, that did not mean she had stopped thinking about other stuff. After running for a while, imposter noticed Shen Xixi constantly glancing at her.

"Just ask what you want to ask. I might not answer you anyway," said the imposter while gasping for breath.

"I'm sorry. The incident at the auction center has spread around the entire circle of players. Everyone is on high alert. Still, many players fell into that trap, especially members of the three major factions. The victims reported that they would always find a small pile of plasticine beside them."

Shen Xixi paused for a while, then continued,

"As of now, the three major factions have come up with a large amount of money as a reward to whoever that can provide the crook's whereabouts."

"It's not me. I didn't do it. Don't simply accuse me."

Ma Wei's imposter quickly denied all the allegations. Now, she was more cautious when she talked.

"Did you tell others about my ability to use plasticine? I did it to save you, you know?" "No. I won't tell anybody about it, but are you still going to do what you do? The three major factions are mighty, and sooner or later, they will find out about you. I also think that it's better if you return the Dreamland of Death to them. A B-grade game item will bring you a lot of trouble." "I told you that I'm not the one who

did it! That woman is causing all kinds of trouble everywhere. Why am I the one to take the blame?! I have never seen this Dreamland of Death before. There's nothing for me to return!"

"That woman?"

Ma Wei's imposter had no intention of explaining any further. "Anyway, all you need to know is that I've nothing to do with that woman. Err... wait. She has something to do with me. She was the one who caused me to be banned from the game."

Shen Xixi always wanted to ask about her relationship with Zhang Heng, but something unexpected happened suddenly. The left part of the wall in front of them started melting.

"Go to Qinsi Block now. I will lure it there," replied Shen Xixi.

"Where is Qinsi Block? I'm not from your university, hey?"

"Oh. I'm sorry. Follow me. This way!"

Shen Xixi grabbed the imposter's hand and headed in a different direction. At that moment, the imposter was already showing signs of exhaustion. It seemed that the monster didn't want them to leave the university. Hence, it paid extra attention to the exit. However, there was still some distance between the parking lot and the exit, and seeing the two running toward Qinsi Block, the monster went after them as well.

Shen Xixi ran in a big circle and charged toward the parking lot while the monster jumped from one wall to another. It was actually a brilliant plan, and there was nothing wrong with it. However, Shen Xixi hadn't considered the imposter's durability. If only she had witnessed how the imposter huffed and puffed as she ran earlier, she would surely have wondered how someone could have such weak stamina.

Earlier, when the imposter ran towards Qinsi Block, her mind was so jumbled that she couldn't make out which direction she was supposed to take. She had to rely on Shen Xixi to guide her on the right path. Seeing that they were almost at their destination, the imposter was shocked to discover that the path she just took was just a warm-up run. There was still a very long way to go.

The imposter's stamina had almost depleted completely, and she could no longer lift her legs to continue running. She squatted on the ground and clutched her chest with both hands.

"I can't run anymore! I can't run anymore! Just leave me here and go."

Shen Xixi didn't know what to do anymore. After all, the imposter was a full-grown woman, impossible to be carried like how Zhang Heng took her on his shoulder. Considering that the imposter had rescued her once, she would definitely not leave her here to die. As they stopped running, the monster had caught up to them. Suddenly, they saw a beam of bright light coming from a car.

Wang Yu and his black Mercedes were finally here! There were only 30 meters between them. Some time ago, an outsider hit a girl from the university, resulting in a massive fight between the driver and the students. Ever since the accident, the university had prohibited cars from driving inside the university. They even added two metal pillars on the path that connected the parking lot to the university. University teachers and staff were no exception as well. After parking their vehicles in the lot, they had to walk to the office or classes.

However, these two metal pillars didn't stop Wang Yu from rescuing Shen Xixi. Once he saw that she was in grave danger, he wasted no time drove his modified Mercedes up on the sidewalk. By doing that, he managed to bypass the metal pillars. At the same time, Shen Xixi quickly dragged the imposter to the side. In the end, the black Mercedes crashed head-on into the pile of black goo.

To their surprise, the Mercedes was dented severely at its front. The black liquid managed to change form from liquid to solid, which meant that the car had just hit a hard wall. From the powerful impact, a large spiderweb of cracks could be seen on the wall. However, they soon disappeared, and the wall looked as good as new. Before the collision, Wang Yu had bravely jumped out of the car and wasn't injured.

He then quickly stood up after he rolling on the ground for a bit. With his precious car destroyed, Wang Yu became really upset.

"This is ridiculous! How can we kill it?"

"Melee attacks are useless against it. We need to figure out its weakness as soon as possible. We tried our best to look for information about this creature's background. Unfortunately, it was fruitless. That means this creature isn't as powerful as we think it is. It has to have some kind of weakness, regardless."

Seeing that the wall had started melting again, Ma Wei's imposter put on a bitter smile.

"The weakness of a concrete wall? It has to be a tractor."

Previously, all Wang Yu could think was to save the woman in front of him in the coolest way possible. Undeniably, the way he showed up was awe-inspiring. However, he began to regret what he just did. All the while, he wasn't too happy with Shen Xixi dealing with these supernatural threats. The game quests were already dangerous enough, and now, Shen Xixi wanted to help the real world as well.

Any ordinary person would pray that they would never have to come across something like this. Even though players like them knew more about the world they lived in and even possessing game items that could help them, they were still human beings. It was extremely risky for them to handle such threats of unearthly origins.

However, Shen Xixi had a good reputation in the team, and most of her teammates would usually agree with whatever decision she made. Even if Wang Yu wasn't happy with the arrangement, he could only keep it for himself. Besides, he had always been fond of her. If they wanted to defeat this monster, there were countless pros and cons to be considered.