

48 Hours 691

Chapter 691: Voyager 1

“It’s all just basic knowledge. You can easily learn about them with a little online research,” Zhang Heng entered the keywords as he said. He typed in a combination of two words—Alien + Cretaceous, but only nonsense showed up in the search result.

He saw conspiracy theories like, “The Horrible Truth: Aliens killed dinosaurs!” Evidently, the information he wanted might be located in this pile of garbage news. There was even an article that went with the title, ‘Aliens have already visited earth!’ and ‘Eleven pieces of evidence that prove the Chinese are the ancestors of aliens!’ Naturally, none of these proved any useful.

So Zhang Heng recalled Lin Sisi’s weekly journal again. He changed the keyword combination this time and typed in Alien+Disaster+Access Denied. Simultaneously, to prevent anyone from deleting anything from the database, he used a VPN to access the internet this time. Although Google had withdrawn itself from China, its algorithms still grabbed information nonstop from Chinese websites. Zhang Heng could take advantage of it to complement Baidu Snapshot.

This time around, he found something worth a read. He then turned on both computers, and after spending ten minutes with Bai Qing reading through the posts, he found only one that could be useful. It was a short horror science fiction story written by a professional author, and it happened that the forum did not remove it. The author seemed to really put his passion into the account, yet only a few comments were below it. Most of the words there, however, served to criticize.

[I don’t think it will work.]

[You can’t say that. Maybe the author had been replaced by an alien. That’s why his writing is so bad.]

[It makes sense now. That explains everything.]

...

Bai Qing could not help but send a reply.

[I think it’s quite a good idea, and it’ll be even better if you just keep writing! You can do it!]

However, it seemed the author had a hard time dealing with the negative comments. His last login was three weeks ago, and he had never visited the forum since. Zhang Heng noticed the previous comment, though. It was posted only one day ago, and the person’s username was Voyager 1. The comment made no sense at all.

[Are you Fermi Paradox? So, you are using that thing to write science fiction?]

Zhang Heng looked at the ID and saw that the person was online.

So he sent Voyager 1 a private message.

[Can you talk more about the Fermi paradox?]

[Wait a moment.] replied Voyager 1.

After about two minutes, he sent a second message.

[My boss was just watching us. I don't want him to know that I'm looking at other things during working hours. You want to learn more about Fermi Paradox? Can't you just search it on Baidu?]

[No. You mentioned something about a science fiction novel earlier.]

[Oh, oh, you're referring to that thread. I think you might've got the wrong person. That guy does not belong to this forum. He used the same username on Douban as well. He is a very mysterious guy—he only logs in from 5:30 to 6.00 every day, and you'll never see him before or after. He's as punctual as a robot.]

Zhang Heng silently pondered upon it. If this ID belonged to Lin Sisi, it made sense that she would only come online at a particular time since her parents restricted her computer usage—a common practice for most families with young children. The peculiar behavior had made her even more mysterious among the forum members.

[What do you know about her?] Zhang Heng asked.

[Her? You're saying that Fermi Paradox is a girl? Speaking of which, I don't remember she has ever mentioned her gender. I don't know her too well. She usually comes online when we get off work. I remember she was a very serious person. She would argue if she thinks she's right, and she would not give up until you surrender or it was time to go offline. I must say, though—she was quite knowledgeable. Some even suspected that she must be from some research institute or a schoolteacher.]

[Oh?]

[By the way, our group organized a stargazing outing a while ago. Fermi Paradox asked a lot of questions and mentioned that she would come with two of her friends. Later, she told us that her family wouldn't allow her to join. At that time, we speculated that he was a married man, and his wife was quite strict.]

Zhang Heng and Bai Qing exchanged glances. It appeared they found the right person this time.

He continued typing.

[What is that set of things you mentioned earlier?]

[Oh, didn't "The Three-Body Problem" win a prize last year? Communicating with aliens has become a burning topic recently. I remembered about three weeks ago, Fermi Paradox posted something about this topic, saying she managed to decipher a part of a radio emission from space.]

[What happened after that?]

Voyager 1 was very patient. Since he had nothing better to do, he continued explaining the whole thing.

[The so-called radio is actually some sort of electromagnetic radiation. It can penetrate interstellar medium, traveling even further to deliver information to distant galaxies. Scientists use radio telescopes to observe and study radio waves. The largest radio telescope in the world is the Arecibo Radio Telescope in Puerto Rico, spanning a diameter of 350 meters. But in the second half of this year, our

country's 500-meter wide FAST radio telescope should be completed. It should then be the largest radio telescope in the world.] proclaimed Voyager 1 with pride.

[I know what a radio telescope is.] replied Zhang Heng.

[Actually, I want to know how Fermi Paradox deciphered the radio waves.]

[Hold on.]

The enthusiastic Voyager 1 logged in to Douban, and two minutes later, he sent a shocking reply.

[The post has disappeared.]

[What is its title?] Zhang Heng asked.

[It is called "I deciphered a part of a radio emission." Fermi Paradox said that she discovered that a part of a radio emission contained some crucial information. However, during that time, no one in the group believed her. Radio emissions are typically emitted by astronomical objects and carry no meaning. Since it is electromagnetic radiation, it can theoretically be used to store information. But it is hard to imagine an extraterrestrial life-form converting a pulsar into a radio transmitter. Everyone thought she was joking, and for the first time, she didn't argue with us. After that, no one talked about it anymore.]

Zhang Heng searched the post's title but found that it had been completely deleted from the internet. He remembered the man he met who had the skills to edit surveillance videos. It seemed that some computer expert was living among them.

"What should we do now?" Bai Qing asked. This was a terrible feeling. Now that they were on the right path and one step away from the final answer, they became stuck in the last section.

Before Zhang Heng could reply, there was another message from Voyager 1.

[Well, it doesn't really matter that the post is gone. Anyway, I have learned her deciphering method. However, it can only be used to decipher that particular radio emission. After that, I cross-checked the radio emission found on the internet, but I couldn't find the radio emission that she mentioned. So, I figured she might have made the whole thing up.]

Chapter 692: Blue-Green Algae

Initially, Zhang Heng and Bai Qing thought that the radio emission would yield a trove of information. Little did they expect that the only thing they would get was a word. It looked like Lin Sisi had deleted all the other pointless parts, leaving only the part that represented the final answer.

[Blue-green algae.]

"This is... cyanobacteria?" Bai Qing rummaged through the vocabulary in her head and found the right word for it.

"I know why the three children went to the river that night." Zhang Heng sighed, "They were collecting blue-green algae from the river."

Blue-green algae was a common occurrence. Found everywhere, one could spot them growing in all kinds of places with water. Some blue-green algae could cause red tides in the sea and algal bloom in

the lake after being polluted by nitrogen and phosphorus, causing serious losses to fisheries and aquaculture. However, few people knew that blue-green algae had a history of 3.5 billion years, making it the oldest living creature on earth.

“Didn’t you say that even an ICBM can’t kill the thing beneath Warehouse No.3? How can blue-green algae destroy it?”

“I don’t know either,” Zhang Heng said. Pausing to think, he said, “Based on my preliminary guess, I think the blue-green algae harms the alien tree’s cloning function. We now know that the tree breeds two different kinds of cicada pupae. The small cicada pupae produce the shadows latched to the fourth ventricle, and the large ones produce the human bodies. I don’t think the tree can come up with them whenever it wants. The aliens have first to collect some of their target’s samples. It can clone a dinosaur during the Cretaceous period and humans in the present time... but what about ancient prokaryotes like cyanobacteria? Unfortunately, we don’t have time to verify this conjecture.”

“Give it a try since those things have started to attack us. They will not stop until they eliminate us because we are a great threat. And this may also be our only chance to eradicate them.”

“Huh?” Bai Qing wondered what opportunity Zhang Heng was talking about.

“They seemed to be fond of taking our place, pretending to be us and blending into human society. Maybe it’s our turn to switch roles this time,” added Zhang Heng.

Initially, Bai Qing did not understand Zhang Heng’s last sentence’s meaning, standing there stunned for half a second. Then, she had an epiphany, and her mouth dropped open.

“You... You want to venture into their nest by pretending that you are your own clone?”

“Why not?” Zhang Heng said. “I eliminated the four men in the Academic Affairs Office, found one of their mobile phones, called their superior, and told him that the task was completed. And now the guy who pretended to be me is in the trunk. Besides, you are with me now. Before they can find out, I can continue pretending to be my clone.”

Bai Qing blushed when she heard him say she was with him. After a while, she quickly added, “This is too risky. What if those things use a secret code like us to identify each other?”

“It will be risky, but this is our final fight. We’ll have to go all out. It’ll be an inevitable battle. Fortunately, we have the advantage of bringing the battle to them. Besides, we still have a trump card in hand.”

Two minutes later, Zhang Heng walked out of the internet cafe with Bai Qing. She had been crying while the fat boss looked at them suspiciously.

The thug named Xiao Fei outside the internet cafe could not help but spit on the ground when he saw them. “What a waste,” he cursed.

Zhang Heng took Bai Qing away from the group, went to the van, opened the door, and got together.

When the car door closed behind Zhang Heng, Bai Qing immediately stopped crying, and then asked in a low voice, “How was my acting?”

“Not bad, it should be wondering what happened to us. And it will notify the others soon,” Zhang Heng replied quietly. Earlier, he actually thought about taking down the internet cafe owner but remembered the group of teenagers sitting outside. If he attacked the fat boss, they would surely come in to help him.

Zhang Heng was not afraid of those brats, not wanting to make the situation worse lest it could negatively impact future plans.

He then lifted the blanket in the trunk to reveal his clone.

Although Bai Qing was mentally prepared, she was still freaked out by what she saw, stumbling two steps backward. Seeing two Zhang Heng in front of her was a horrifying scene that she would never forget.

Zhang Heng’s clone was tightly bounded in the trunk, and his mouth was sealed. He could only move his eyes.

“Let’s discuss a deal between you and me.” Zhang Heng sat down in front of it, and at the same time, ungagged the clone.

“Unbelievable, you are safe and sound. According to the comparison of human strength, four adults should be able to subdue a minor like you easily in a small room,” the clone replied. Instead of showing fear, it showed a hint of curiosity.

Instead of entertaining the clone, Zhang Heng pointed at Bai Qing. “Let me guess. You should be the one who pretended to be her mother, right? I know you have powerful learning abilities, but it doesn’t make sense that you could understand the human society in one night and learn all kinds of human expressions. Unless you have lived in human society before.”

“You are brilliant.” A smile formed across the clone’s face. “The way you act and think don’t match your age. None of your peers behave like you. This doesn’t make sense at all. We checked your background and found out that you are just an ordinary high-school student. Your parents are working abroad, leaving you and your grandfather here. How did you possess such strong fighting skills and investigative abilities? More importantly, most would start doubting themselves when they encountered another life form like us. You, however, seemed to recognize our existence from the beginning. I don’t remember coming into contact with you before.”

This question aroused the curiosity of Bai Qing as well. She noticed that Zhang Heng seemed to be a little different from what she remembered. However, she could not tell the differences in details.

Zhang Heng did not answer. He then said, “I’m the one asking you a question. You don’t get to ask me anything.”

“What difference does it make?” sneered the clone. “You two can’t run forever. You killed two teachers and two staff members in your school. Even if we don’t replace you, the police will find you. As for you, my daughter...” The clone’s gaze fell on Bai Qing. “You know that you alone are not strong enough to go against us. If you don’t want to live in fear, better just obey us.”

“We don’t need you to worry about our future.” Zhang Heng was unusually calm. “Let’s talk about you and your tribe first.”

Chapter 693: Don't Be So Sure

Zhang Heng's clone curiously glared at the knife stuck in his thigh, his face showing no sign that he was in any pain. "It seems I have to take back what I said before," he said calmly. "You are no smarter than your peers. Since you already know what I am, you should know that such torture wouldn't affect me. If you are intending to use such means to extract information, I advise you not to waste your energy."

"No, don't get me wrong, I did this because I wanted to. There is no other purpose." Zhang Heng stopped for a moment. "Okay, let's go to the next topic. Before that, let me ask you a warm-up question."

"And what would this question be?" The clone rolled his eyes.

"I want to know what medium you used to contact your people?"

"What do you mean by the medium that I use?" The clone rubbed his chin on his shoulder.

"Think about a bat's ultrasonic soundwave."

"Oh, you must be worried that I might've told the others about my capture, right?" the clone grinned. "But you already know the answer to this question, don't you? You deliberately captured me and went to the internet cafe for a while. Besides saving your little girlfriend, you wanted to see if my people were aware of our differences. You are quite smart. Although pointless, you did buy yourself some time to escape. However, you will still not end well."

"Really?"

Zhang Heng didn't comment on the reply. He then asked the second and most important question:

"Where did you keep the people you guys have replaced?"

"Interesting, but what makes you think those people are still alive?"

"You better answer me now," Zhang Heng emphasized.

"Otherwise?"

The clone laughed when he heard that. "Admit it. You have no means to threaten me. The reason why I am willing to chat with you is that I'm feeling bored."

"Better not be too sure," said Zhang Heng. He opened up the side of his schoolbag and took out a tempered glass jar.

Inside the jar were four hideous creatures that looked like the unholy child of a three-eyed dinosaur shrimp and a lamprey. They scurried along the glass wall of the jar, trying to open the lid. Zhang Heng had sealed the jar with some tape, and there was no escaping for those tiny monsters. The moment Bai Qing saw the peculiar creature, she almost threw up her breakfast. She had no idea how Zhang Heng could hold the glass jar without his hand twitching.

"Come and say hello to your allies."

Zhang Heng had captured these four alien lifeforms after killing the four people that ganged up on him in his school. He had to crack open their heads locate them. Although the clone's expressions were well controlled, the revelation must have had a significant impact on him since he had stopped talking.

"With all due respect, you guys are much weaker than I thought," Zhang Heng said. "I exerted a little strength on one of your allies, and his calf broke."

"High-level lifeforms have always paid more attention to the development of intelligence," the clone said. "We don't need strong bodies to be at the top of the food chain. Humans perceived dinosaurs as apex predators with advanced physical functions. To us, however, they are nothing but prey."

"I find that hard to refute," Zhang Heng said, "but when I put you into this glass bottle, I wonder if you can still say it out loud with confidence."

"If you're using them as blackmail, forget about it. We don't value interpersonal relationships as much as you humans," chirped the clone, his emotions seemingly sorted out.

"Really? Why did your allies risk their lives to rescue you last time?" Zhang Heng turned to Bai Qing. "Help me get the gas," he said to her.

Mouth covered, the latter dug out a can of portable liquefied gas from the package on the side of the backpack, then plugged in the portable stove and handed it to Zhang Heng. This thing was usually used for cooking in the wild, allowing for the convenience of a proper fire without the luxury of a real kitchen.

Zhang Heng put the tempered glass jar on it and ignited the portable cooker with a lighter. After a while, the rapidly rising temperature began to irritate the four ugly creatures inside of it. They started to tackle the glass jar even more violently. However, as Zhang Heng's clone said, perhaps they added all their attribute points to intelligence that resulted in their lackluster physical fitness. As a result, their bodies couldn't match up to the strength of the tempered glass jar.

After a while, they stopped moving. All four aliens gradually dropped to the bottom of the glass jar, with their limbs curled up like cooked cockroaches. Zhang Heng didn't assume that these things would die so easily, though—judging from the corpse from the freezer, they would enter a state similar to hibernation or apparent death once their body went below their adaptive temperature.

"Enough," the clone suddenly spoke. For the first time, he was angry and began sounding warnings. "You gain nothing by annoying us."

"It depends on how cooperative you are. Tell us the whereabouts of the people you replaced, and I will turn off the fire."

The clone lowered his head in thought. It seemed he was weighing the pros and cons of the choice he would be making.

"Okay."

"I want to know what you guys have planned for me as well," Zhang Heng added. The moment he ended, the clone's mobile phone rang.

It should be the owner of the Internet café. He was going to ask him why he brought Bai Qing out. Zhang Heng put the phone next to the clone's ear. "You know what to say, right?"

...

Ten minutes later, not did Zhang Heng discover the whereabouts of those they had kept alive, but he now gained a general understanding of the aliens' organization. That said, most of them were irrelevant. Zhang Heng knew that his clone would never divulge the secrets beneath Workshop No. 3 since it was the crux of their survival and reproduction.

Even if Zhang Heng killed it and his four allies, the clone would still refuse to tell him anything. In fact, even if it knew that Zhang Heng had been to Workshop No.3, mum would be the word.

Till the end of the conversation, Zhang Heng never once mentioned the glass factory and blue-green algae. This confused the clone to a certain extent, making it think that Zhang Heng and Bai Qing were still unaware of their core secret. Under such circumstances, it was willing to sacrifice some intelligence in exchange for a chance for him and his allies to survive.

Chapter 694: Disguise

The most crucial question now laid before Zhang Heng and Bai Qing was whether they should destroy the alien tree beneath Workshop No.3 or save people first.

Judging from the information obtained by Zhang Heng, these two places were quite far apart.

Emotionally speaking, when Bai Qing learned that her mother was still alive, she wished to get there immediately to rescue her. On the other hand, she knew very well that once they saved her mother, the glass factory's aliens would be alerted. In terms of priority, the glass factory was more critical. That was because most of the aliens were gathering there, and if they were well prepared, even Zhang Heng would not be able to deal with so many at once.

If they went to the police for help, they had no way of determining if the aliens had infiltrated the force. Therefore, after hesitating for a while, Bai Qing said, "Let's act separately. You go to the glass factory, and I'll go to rescue my mother."

This was probably the only feasible solution at this stage. Zhang Heng nodded and did not attempt to stop her. He just said, "I will give you both the locator and the camera. Just keep an eye on the place for now. Once I deal with the problem in the glass factory, I will get to you as soon as possible. Remember, make no contact with them until I arrive."

"Yeah." Bai Qing grabbed the bag that Zhang Heng handed to her.

After experiencing so many horrible experiences, she was no longer your ordinary high-school girl. The final battle was just around the corner too, and she had decided not to let it affect her anymore.

After Zhang Heng finished, he thought for a while, then said, "Turn around."

Bai Qing then quickly turned around upon his request. When that happened, Zhang Heng took out the Lego blocks, assembled a chainsaw, and then inserted the Infinite Building Block to materialize it. While his fake stared at him in fear, Zhang Heng put the gag back into the clone's mouth and started to crack open his skull with the chainsaw.

Once the brain was exposed, the thing in the fourth ventricle wanted to escape, but Zhang Heng quickly used a plastic box to scoop it up and put it into the glass jar. He cleaned up the blood on the ground and covered the corpse with a blanket.

He then handed the bloodstained glass jar to Bai Qing.

“If they want to attack you. Use this as a bargaining chip.”

Bai Qing turned around and was taken aback by the glass jar’s contents. The thing inside was disgusting. That was the last straw. She couldn’t hold it in anymore, grabbing the trash can handed by Zhang Heng and vomited in it.

“Sorry,” Bai Qing apologized between gagging.

“It’s okay. There is still some time left. You have to get used to being with them before you leave,” said Zhang Heng. He also informed Bai Qing about other matters that needed paying attention. After that, he put on a new set of makeup on Bai Qing before they parted ways.

Bai Qing went to find her mother, while Zhang Heng first drove to the river, collected a bottle of blue-green algae with a mineral water bottle, then returned to the glass factory. It had only less than three hours since those creatures ganged up on him in the school.

Carrying his bag, he walked towards the gates of the glass factory.

This was the second time he came here. This time, he entered through the front gate instead of climbing the wall, even nodding at the guard on duty.

Initially, the guard wanted to stand up, but halfway through, he sat down again. He just sat there and watched Zhang Heng walking into the factory. He met many workers along the way and recalled what he saw the night before, and they passed him by like he did not exist. As expected, they still behaved the same way.

If the bosses of other factories saw this scene, there was a high probability that they would cry. This was probably the working environment of their dreams.

Zhang Heng did not encounter any problems until he walked to Warehouse No. 3. As compared with last night, security here was even tighter. An outpost had been added, and a team of security guards stood there patrolling the area every five minutes.

When the leader saw Zhang Heng walking over, he said, “Stop, why are you back? It’s your duty to stay with that girl. You are not supposed to leave her side.”

Zhang Heng said, “I underestimated her. I don’t know what went wrong. She seems to recognize that I’m not the original Zhang Heng. She pretended not to doubt my identity and ran away when I was not paying attention.”

“She escaped? Does No. 2 know about this?”

“I called and told No. 2 about it. Fortunately, I managed to grab some of her hair before she ran away,” Zhang Heng went on. “No. 2 told me that I could start to clone her.”

Zhang Heng made a huge bet here. He knew that No. 2 was the person responsible for coordinating the operation. During his previous conversation with the fake Zhang Heng, he never mentioned the thing under Workshop No. 3. Zhang Heng figured that the alien tree would need something like hair or blood to clone someone.

It seemed the Lucky Rabbit Foot worked this time. The guard's leader did not ask him any more questions after that. Not only did he step away from him, but he even took out the remote control and opened the gate for him.

Zhang Heng nodded at him and walked into Workshop No. 3. But the next moment, the other man reached out and stopped him again, with only one word.

“Wait.”

Immediately, Zhang Heng started to get anxious, worried most that these people would attempt to verify his claims by checking with No. 2. If they did that, his lie would be immediately exposed. After a while, two security guards came over with a rabbit.

The leader of the guards retracted his hands. All of them then entered Workshop No.3 with the rabbit.

Before they arrived at the underground entrance, another guard was already there to remove the can washer for them, revealing the secret entrance.

Zhang Heng knew that he would be trapped underground if his identity was exposed. All they needed to do was to move the can washer back to its original position to block the exit.

Without stopping, Zhang Heng followed the two security guards in front of him.

Zhang Heng could still smell the familiar and strange fragrance around him. The ferns from the Cretaceous period were still around. The stairs continued to descent, and at the very end was the door covered by the ugly vines.

One of the security guards walked up, using the rabbit as a sacrifice. The vines started to move faster and faster until the sarcoma on the branches eventually exploded, and countless tiny tendrils stretched out of it. Like a mosquito's proboscis, they pierced into the rabbit's body swiftly.

Another security guard quickly opened the door while the vines devoured the rabbit.

Chapter 695: Grand Opening

A strange knocking sound came from the center of the hall. At the same time, millions of microscopic ash particles floated everywhere in the air. Fortunately, this was Zhang Heng's second time coming here. Hence, he was not surprised by his surroundings.

The two security guards beside him showed no expression too, and they did not stop moving after opening the door. They stood on both sides and walked into the hall with him. It seemed like they wanted to stay until the cloning ceremony was completed.

The three of them walked into the hall and stopped before they entered the attack range of the ugly vines. After that, Zhang Heng saw his two companions lying down on the ground with their foreheads

pressed against the floor and their legs spread apart, looking like a toad. At the same time, their bodies started to tremble in the same rhythm.

Their trembling frequency coincided with the knocking sound around them. Zhang Heng wondered if this was their way of communicating with the weird alien tree in the middle of the hall. Whether or not it remembered what happened last night, Zhang Heng was not planning to wait any longer. This was his limit. After that, he took out a bottle of blue-green algae.

While the two security guards were still performing their weird ceremony, he opened his handbag silently.

The guards noticed that something was not right with Zhang Heng. One of them raised his head, only to be greeted by a small wrench. Zhang Heng had smashed his forehead, rendering him paralyzed.

These things would hide in the fourth ventricle and pilot the human body, and they were usually in a very safe spot. The bodies they controlled, however, were no different than that of an ordinary human being. In other words, once a heavy blow had been delivered to the brain, they would be unable to pilot the body even though they were still alive.

The second security guard reacted very quickly. After witnessing his companion's tragic situation, he rolled on the ground and managed to dodge Zhang Heng's next attack. Immediately, he turned on his walkie-talkie.

Instead of panicking, Zhang Heng quickly blocked the exit to stop the guard from leaving. The moment the guard remembered that the signal could not travel out from this place, it glared at Zhang Heng and asked, "Who are you?"

"Good question. I have been looking for the answer," Zhang Heng replied.

While talking, he walked to the second guard with a wrench.

The latter took a step back, which brought it closer to the ugly vines' attack range. The creepers began to move like a shark that had detected blood. The second guard knew he could not move back any further, so he turned to look at Zhang Heng and growled harshly. "You know our secret. No one will let you leave this place alive."

"I know you never intended to let me go too," Zhang Heng said calmly, facing the security guard who leaped forward. Immediately, he swung the wrench in his hand, this time managing to hit the opponent's cheek, smashing his teeth twice. An ordinary person would have been dead on the ground upon receiving such a severe blow and injury. But as long as Zhang Heng failed to attack the enemy's brain or spine, the creature could still fight.

It was why the guard was still able to move. He stretched out his hand to strangle Zhang Heng's neck, while Zhang Heng grabbed its collar with his other hand. At the same time, Zhang Heng managed to deliver a second blow to its eye accurately and destroyed it, its blood splattering all over Zhang Heng's t-shirt. After the attack, the creature had been severely weakened. Zhang Heng immediately delivered the third blow and fourth blow. When he finally let go of the wrench, the guard's head had already been unrecognizably deformed. There was no way he could continue his choke-hold.

Zhang Heng wiped the blood off his face. With such a brutal attack, the alien hidden in the fourth ventricle was probably squashed. Then, a system notification came in.

[Successfully found and killed an alien. Proxy war score: +5. Visit the character panel to view the related information...]

After spending so much effort, Zhang Heng finally killed his first alien in this quest. However, he did not finish off the other security guard, now paralyzed, and instead went back to where his bag was and took out the algae bottle, hidden in the deepest part of the bag.

Zhang Heng divided the algae into four portions. The first was thrown at the ugly vines, the second on the alien tree in the middle of the hall, and the third at the spot where the alien tree spit out ashes. As for the last portion, he reserved it for future use.

The blue-green algae were more effective than he thought. When he threw the third portion into the tree's cavity, the ashes it spat suddenly increased by at least tenfold. Zhang Heng had to use his clothes to cover his mouth and nose. It was suffocating in the hall now.

At the same time, its bark also began to peel off. Previously, Zhang Heng saw how the alien tree would heal itself by shedding off its old bark. This time, it looked like it had contracted some skin disease. Zhang Heng then killed the paralyzed security guard in the shortest time possible, which garnered him five points. At that time, the ashes and fallen tree bark had flooded the hall and was up to his ankles.

Zhang Heng's line of sight was almost completely obstructed. Even the Filter Lens wouldn't function in this place. Rendered with little option, he was forced to find his way to the door blindly and through memory. At the same time, he noticed that the vines on the door had become very irritated. They began to climb up the steps, wanted to escape the basement.

However, since the vines were all part of the alien tree, they couldn't leave this place. After crawling a certain distance, they could not move further. Zhang Heng leaped among the sarcomas, managing to dodge two attacks aiming at him.

And he had finally escaped the basement.

But for him, the battle had just begun!

The security guards noticed the abnormality when they saw him coming up alone, not to mention that he had bloodstains on his body. They did not say a word to each other, and they started to jump at Zhang Heng at the same time.

Zhang Heng took out a Lego mini submachine gun from his bag. The leader frowned, wondering what he was about to do with the toy gun. The next moment, he saw Zhang Heng inserting the Infinite Building Block into the gun's last empty slot.

And the next thing he knew, he was shelled by a rain of bullets, mercilessly hitting all that stood at the front line. However, the system reminded Zhang Heng that he had only scored 5 points, which meant he had only killed an alien.

He tried to aim at their heads as much as possible, but the fourth ventricle was not that big, and the location of the aliens inside was not fixed unless he had a considerable amount of ammunition. Otherwise, attempting to kill all of them would prove to be a massive challenge.

Chapter 696: Fear

Those things did not expect that their ally would suddenly turn to them. When Zhang Heng opened fire, they were caught off guard. What surprised them the most had to be the toy mini submachine gun that mysteriously came to life.

Considering stringent gun control laws, an ordinary person would be hard-pressed to get his hands on such a powerful weapon. Not to mention Zhang Heng was only a high school student. It was difficult to connect his accurate marksmanship to his age.

The security team outside workshop No. 3 was utterly stupefied by Zhang Heng's first attack wave. If they were ordinary humans, they would have been killed on the spot. The human body was like a shell of sorts to these aliens, and they wouldn't die as long as their brains or spines didn't get hit.

In fact, one of the ten aliens who charged at Zhang Heng got lucky, getting shot only in the chest and leg. Although his gun was only twenty centimeters away from the enemy's head, Zhang Heng decided to stop shooting. He would never miss his target at such close range, but after seeing that there were still so many of them to be dealt with, he decided to reserve ammunition.

After all, the micro submachine gun in his hand was made of Lego bricks, and there was only one magazine left. Thus, he blocked the enemy's hand with the submachine gun, and before the alien could launch another attack, Zhang Heng grabbed his knife with the other hand and stabbed it into its temple.

With a grunt, Zhang Heng pulled out the knife, now entirely coated in blood, and watched his enemy collapse in front of him. Unfortunately, he received no notifications from the system. Suddenly, a guard came out of nowhere and crawled to Zhang Heng to grab his leg. His cheek had been pierced by a bullet earlier, but it seemed like it did not affect him too much.

So, Zhang Heng fired another shot at him.

Not long after he took down the group of security guards, a couple of factory workers ran to him the moment he walked out of the workshop. Whether men, women, or children, all ran mindlessly to Zhang Heng as if unafraid of their impending death.

Zhang Heng did not expect that he would get to enjoy killing zombies in a quest. These things could endure pain very well, and other than the head and spine, they had no other weaknesses. Simply said, they could keep attacking even after they had taken multiple shots, the reason why Zhang Heng thought these creatures were like zombies. They were actually more like the zombies from "Zombie World War" instead of the "The Walking Dead" series. Hence, after emptying half a magazine at them, he only managed to slow a few down. By the time he realized it, the bogeys on his right side had almost gotten to him.

Unlike other shooters, close-quarters combat happened to be one of Zhang Heng's specialties. After the previous battles, he had found a quick and lethal way to deal with them. All he needed to do was to

break their necks and render them paralyzed. The method had a shortcoming, though, and that was the alien in the fourth ventricle would still be alive.

With the skull's protection, it would be easy for Zhang Heng to kill them right now. His most pressing goal at this stage was to escape this place. Not wanting to deal with hundreds of enemies simultaneously in the glass factory, Zhang Heng decided to retreat and paralyze them first.

At such times, the wrench would be better than the knife.

It took Zhang Heng less than three seconds to break the necks of two people. That, however, bought him no time, as the other enemies behind him were almost onto him. In the end, Zhang Heng was forced to open fire, in which the system sent him a couple of notifications as he gunned them down.

Taking advantage of the small window of time, he climbed to the roof of workshop No. 3. It was at that time that he could see how good they were at reanimating their human shells. Those that came out of the cicada pupae earlier were better at piloting the bodies. These ones followed Zhang Heng up to workshop No. 3's roof. There were also some with worse motor coordination, seeing how they had to climb slowly, and there were some who just couldn't come up.

After Zhang Heng got on the roof, he did not run immediately. Instead, he waited a while and kicked the first three zombies that appeared off the ledge. He then took a look at the factory and found out that there were enemies in almost every direction.

Clearly, the trouble he had caused in workshop No.3 had angered those things.

If they knew what he did underground, they would probably be even more furious.

Unexpectedly, all the aliens abruptly stopped moving, frozen solid as if the power was cut off from them. Zhang Heng thought that he had come to a huge wax museum. At the same time, he received another system notification.

Even in such a critical moment, Zhang Heng could not ignore the notification.

[Congratulations on completing the hidden mission. Successfully finding and destroying the "Pupae Tree," cutting off the aliens' means of reproduction. Proxy war score: +100. Visit the character panel to view related information...]

Zhang Heng figured that the Pupae Tree mentioned must have been the thing under workshop No. 3. Related to the reproduction and survival of the alien, the Pupae Tree's great significance to them was self-evident. Zhang Heng was not surprised that he was rewarded with 100 points. In many sci-fi movies and games, all the other bugs would die after the brood had been killed.

However, Zhang Heng was wrong. This was not a movie, after all. All the aliens around him somehow knew that the Pupae Tree was destroyed. Seemingly realizing that their tree had been destroyed, the horde instantly broke out into a frenzied state when they awoke from their slumber.

They raised their heads in unison and glared at Zhang Heng on the roof.

Although no one said a word, Zhang Heng could feel that that they were probably not too happy now.

In fact, right at the next moment, the aliens started to climb the roof in an even more furious manner. Some even set up a fire-fighting ladder to climb the roof. At least hundreds of them surrounding workshop No. 3, all having a single goal in mind—kill the man that destroyed the Pupae Tree.

Zhang Heng finally understood what it meant by poking a hornet's nest. It now seemed he would have to be on a constant run and fight for his life for the remainder of the quest. Who knew how many had infiltrated society? Even if the Pupae Tree was destroyed, those still breathing were enough to hunt him down.

This problem, however, was something to be dealt with in the future. For now, Zhang Heng had to figure out a way to leave the glass factory to join Bai Qing to save the imprisoned citizens. Seeing more and more aliens climbing up the roof, he did not intend to stay any longer. He smashed the head of the alien who charged at him, then ran towards the wall as he emptied his clip. This wasn't the time for reserving ammunition.

The remaining bullets managed to create an exit.

Unfortunately, the enemies were one step ahead, blocking the exit before Zhang Heng could get to it. At the same time, more and more enemies were closing in from three other directions.

Seeing that he was about to be surrounded, a strange idea suddenly appeared in Zhang Heng's mind. Even he himself did not know why he would make such a move. He stopped running, stretched out one of his hands to face the enemy in front, and closed his eyes.

The world seemed to come to a pause. After that, the horde of charging enemies suddenly stopped and fell to the ground like broken puppets. This strange domino effect happened to the enemies who were still climbing the ladders as well—their faces filled with indescribable fear.

As for Zhang Heng, he seemed to have experienced a nightmare. When he opened his eyes again, he was drenched in sweat. His body and mind were exhausted, but he knew that it was not the time to rest. He mustered the last ounce of strength he had and jumped towards the wall.

Chapter 697: Did You Know?

Zhang Heng stumbled across the road after escaping from the glass factory. A large truck almost hit him. Luckily, the driver managed to stop in time. He poked his head out and started cursing, but when he saw the submachine gun, his attitude changed as quickly as he started mocking.

Bystanders gawked in terror at Zhang Heng's submachine gun and the fact that he was covered in blood. Right now, he looked more like a monster than those things in the glass factory. Some had even taken out their phones and called the police in secret.

Zhang Heng couldn't be bothered anymore. Not long after he escaped from the glass factory, he heard the sound of something hitting the wall from behind. That should be the aliens that were going after him. He assumed that they must have jumped down with him but failed to control their strength as they leaped over the wall.

The sound they made, however, gave Zhang Heng another boost of adrenaline. Although he was physically exhausted, it was not time to rest. He looked around, and it took him half a second to remember where he parked the van.

While he ran there, the aliens had already rushed out of the glass factory. He instantly ignited the van's engine, switched to reverse, and rammed the two aliens who had caught up to him. Amid the frantic screams of bystanders, he slammed his foot on the gas and fled the scene.

With his driving skills, it would be difficult for the aliens to catch up with him, at least for now. When Zhang Heng saw in the rearview mirror that he was getting further away, he took out his mobile phone to call Bai Qing.

...

Bai Qing answered the call almost instantaneously. She sounded a little nervous. "What happened? Why do they look angry now?"

"I might have just wiped them out," said Zhang Heng without mincing words, from the other end of the phone.

"..."

Bai Qing was silent for a moment as if attempting to process what she just heard. "How long will it take you to come to me?" she asked after a pause.

"Forty-five minutes." Zhang Heng glanced at the map.

"I don't think they'll be waiting that long. I saw them packing up, and it appears they are planning to evacuate from the stronghold. I have no idea what they'd do to their prisoners before they leave too. What do I do? I have a bad feeling."

"I will hurry up. Just stay where you are and wait for me," Zhang Heng said.

This time, Bai Qing did not answer immediately. There was only silence.

Zhang Heng could hear Bai Qing's breathing becoming more rapid. She answered after a while. "You said that their bodies are very fragile, and you accidentally broke one of their legs while putting them in the bottle."

"Yes. I know what you are thinking now. Please don't do it. It's too dangerous. The jar I gave you is only to be used in the direst of situations. You are not supposed to do something risky with it."

"But you can't get here right away. Only I can delay them from evacuating," Bai Qing said. "When you were in the car, you threatened one of them using his kind trapped in the jar, and it worked."

"Yes, yes, but at that time, I hadn't destroyed their nest yet. They are not the same now. I've never seen them so furious before. In the state that they are in, we have no way of predicting their behavior. They might do something that surprises us."

"But my mother inside the facility. I can't just sit here like this!"

"I promise you I am coming as quickly as I can..."

"Did you know?" she suddenly interrupted him.

"Hmm?"

“When I asked the alien that question, for a moment, I was actually pleased by its answer. I think that might have been the only time I could listen to you say that.”

Upon saying that, Bai Qing abruptly hung up.

When Zhang Heng attempted to call her again, her phone had already been turned off.

No longer bound by traffic rules, he had no choice but to drive as fast as he could. After all, he had already run in the streets with a submachine gun and reversed his van into two “people.”

Time was quickly running out. The police should be locating him soon, and he had to help Bai Qing save her mother before getting arrested.

However, his biggest problem now was not the police or the aliens. Zhang Heng still could not explain what happened earlier on warehouse No. 3’s rooftop. He had no idea why he did what he did at that time and why those aliens collapsed one after another.

What was worse was that the fatigue did not seem to go away with time. He noticed how this had severely affected him physically and mentally. To be more precise, it came from the deepest part of his soul.

All he wanted was to look for a place to close his eyes and have a good night’s sleep. Unfortunately, the current circumstance had forced him to stay awake. In an attempt to suppress his increasing drowsiness, Zhang Heng emptied a handful of chewing gum into his mouth.

Forty minutes later, he arrived at where Bai Qing was, a half-completed construction site in the new district. It was just as Bai Qing had described—even the guards were gone.

Zhang Heng opened the door, and almost lost his balance when he got out of the van.

He leaned on the door and shook his head, trying to fight the fatigue. Grabbing the Pestilence Bone Bow and Paris Arrow from the passenger seat, he walked into the construction site. In this state, his archery skills would be affected to a certain extent. It was the best time for the Paris Arrow to showcase its ability.

His greatest fear was that the aliens had killed Bai Qing and the prisoners before they left. If that were the case, he would be one step too late. It would be almost impossible to go through another round of hot-pursuit with aliens with his physical and mental condition. Although he did change cars halfway, the police should still be able to locate him soon.

Zhang Heng drew his bow, carefully circumventing the small dirt hill in the center of the construction site, and walked towards the concrete building in front of him. Only 66% completed, its top was not sealed off, and the scaffolds hadn’t been removed as well. When Zhang Heng walked to the elevator, a warning sign suddenly rose in his heart.

He saw a shadow getting bigger and bigger beside his feet. Before he had time to think, he immediately rolled sideways and avoided the ash cart barreling down from the sky. The cart fell from the 11th floor and landed where he stood earlier. If he had not dodged it in time, Zhang Heng would have been squashed into a pile of minced meat.

Before he had time to stand up, two shadowy figures sprang out from the back of the building and attempted to stab him with the iron pipes in their hand.

Chapter 698: Last Battle

Zhang Heng evaded the first iron pipe, then blocked the second using his Pestilence Bone Bow. Although the bow was made of bone, it was still a Grade-B game item, and when it collided with the iron pipe, it made a screeching sound. There were, however, no scratches on it.

The Pestilence Bone Bow's original owner probably did not expect anybody to use it to block an iron pipe. Judging from the truck that fell from the sky and the two attackers that ambushed him, Zhang Heng realized that the whole thing had to be premeditated. They were just waiting for him to come here and make him pay for what he did to the Pupae Tree.

They wouldn't have bothered him if he were in perfect condition, but his mental and physical state were almost at their limits. When the attacker struck at him with the iron pipe again, Zhang Heng failed to avoid it entirely, and it cut a deep gash into his arm. He felt like he was stuck in a quagmire, his speed and reflexes half a beat slower than usual.

Fortunately, he had gained a lot of combat experience after completing so many rounds of quests. Even if his combat effectiveness was partially weakened, Zhang Heng felt that he might defeat two opponents that were immune to pain.

Their attacking style, though, would be difficult for Zhang Heng to deal with.

The two iron pipes were more than 1.5 meters long. It was almost impossible for an average person to carry the heavy pipes on their own, but for those aliens, they did not seem to have any troubles using it to fight. Having the advantage of the lengthy pipe allowed them to fight from a safe distance. Whether a knife or a wrench, Zhang Heng would have difficulty attacking them after losing his agility. He couldn't find an opportunity to use the Pestilence Bone bow and Paris arrow to attack them too.

The enemies seemed to have made up their minds and wanted to use this method to exhaust Zhang Heng bit by bit. Zhang Heng, on the other hand, couldn't find an opportune moment to retaliate for the time being. He could only keep on avoiding and blocking their attacks. Not only were his arms injured, but his chest and waist had been hit as well. Fortunately, they were just minor cuts.

After Zhang Heng tackled another wave of attack, he started to pant. On the other hand, his two opponents were tireless, and other enemies were watching him from above. While dealing with the opponent in front of him, he had to watch out for incoming attacks from above. The two enemies seemed to be intentionally pushing him to the corner.

Once his range of action was restricted, he knew perfectly well what would happen to him next. Although aware of the other party's intentions, he had no other option but to retreat to the trap that the enemies had prepared.

Now, the time for him to strike back had finally arrived. After Zhang Heng finishing counting down in his mind, he threw away the Pestilence Bone Bow in his hand and drew the empty submachine machine.

It was time for it to transform back into a Lego toy, and in that split second, Zhang Heng inserted the Infinite Building Block to materialize it again. He raised his arms and aimed at the head of the enemy in

front of him, and just as the iron pipe was about to stab Zhang Heng, the alien fell dead. The other enemy did not survive the shot that Zhang Heng fired at him as well.

Zhang Heng's marksmanship was clearly not as good as before. Fortunately, little time was spent aiming since both enemies were not too far away. And no one could outrun a bullet. If he were not exhausted, he wouldn't have had to resort to this method.

Suddenly, Zhang Heng received two notifications from the system. However, this was not the time for him to calculate his current score. He quickly rushed upstairs since those aliens were still there. In other words, Bai Qing and the rest of the imprisoned people were still alive.

To get there as soon as possible, Zhang Heng chose to take the elevator. However, he knew those things would not allow him to get up so easily. As expected, when the elevator came to the sixth floor, a sack of cement fell from the sky, landed on the elevator, forcing it to come to a halt.

And not long after that, another cart of bricks fell from the top floor and landed on the elevator. This time, it snapped the cable, and since they had removed the anti-falling device, the elevator was now in freefall.

A thunderous crash reverberated throughout the building when the elevator slammed into the ground, the massive impact completely deforming the metal box. One could only imagine what would happen to the people inside. Hence, as the people on the 11th floor waited for the dust to settle, Zhang Heng had already climbed up from the other side of the wall.

Undeniably, Zhang Heng had taken a considerable risk by choosing this method to go upstairs. Supposedly, it was an easy climb, but his current condition significantly restricted him. As such, it took him a lot longer than usual to complete the climb. Considering how high he was from the ground, he would have fallen to his death if he missed one step.

Zhang Heng knew that the aliens must have arranged to ambush him at every point, so he had to surprise them by using an unconventional method. Indeed, this would mess up their plans. Another piece of good news was that it seemed only a few aliens had been deployed to deal with him here. Otherwise, there would have been many more than just two people ambushing him downstairs.

Although Zhang Heng's hands slipped twice as he climbed up, he eventually arrived on the 11th floor safe and sound. After entering the building through the cement window, he walked in, trying to make as little noise as possible. At the same time, he silently observed his surroundings.

After walking for about twenty steps, he came across a load-bearing wall and saw a guy lying on the stairs with a modified nail gun in his hand. This should be the only lethal weapon they could get their hands on for now. A nail gun could become lethal after a slight modification.

He wasn't in a hurry to shoot the enemy, though. Seeing that his presence hadn't been noticed, Zhang Heng marked the location in his mind and continued to move forward along the wall. He walked another ten meters before finally seeing the prisoners that the aliens had replaced. Their faces were sullen, creased with anguish from the terrifying experiences they had to endure.

The college student was among the prisoners. Bai Qing and her mother were among them too. Zhang Heng was relieved to see that they were safe, but now they were in a comatose state. The alien in charge of guarding them had a lighter in his hand, and beside him were four empty gasoline cans.

The alien was surprised to see Zhang Heng. Before he could light the prisoners on fire, Zhang Heng opened fire, hitting his head accurately. After he pulled the trigger, the other enemies that were waiting to ambush him from the other side rushed over as quickly as they could.

Instead of looking for cover, Zhang Heng knelt halfway and fired the remaining twenty bullets. When the smoke finally cleared, he was so exhausted that he did not even want to move his finger.

As wails of the police sirens grew louder, Zhang Heng knew that he had to be on the run again.

Chapter 699: Superman

“Bai Qing, let me have a look at your math workbook. I have two wrong questions to correct.”

“Okay.”

Bai Qing heard Chi Jia’s voice, put down the pen in her hand, and took out the math workbook from her schoolbag. She handed it over, but continued holding on to it.

“Yes?”

“Sorry, I got distracted.” Bai Qing apologized and let go of the book.

“Were you thinking of him again?” Chi Jia took the workbook and raised her eyebrows.

“Yes.” Bai Qing automatically glanced at the seat beside her, but some other girl had occupied it.

Three months had passed since the battle at the construction site, and that was the last time she ever saw him. When she opened her eyes again, she had already arrived at the police station with the other survivors.

As expected, no one believed the story they told the authorities. The four bodies found at the construction site had been curiously stolen that afternoon, and when Bai Qing told the police about the glass factory, they hastily deployed a special-forces team to the location. When they got there, however, the factory had already been emptied, and they found nothing beneath workshop No. 3.

The good news was that her mother’s body and the other aliens had disappeared at the same time. Due to lack of critical evidence, and since her mother was found alive, the criminal lawsuit against her father was withdrawn. All that happened before seemed like a bad dream. Everything went back to normal miraculously after Bai Qing opened her eyes.

On the other hand, Zhang Heng was charged with illegal possession of guns and ammunition, driving without a license, hitting a pedestrian with his car, and suspected homicide. Getting rid of all the charges would be near impossible, so after calling his grandpa one last time, he disappeared.

The police were not too concerned. Hunting down a high school student with no social experience could not be easier for them, not to mention the presence of security cameras everywhere in modern society. A high-school student like him couldn’t be on the run forever.

However, what happened next went beyond anyone's expectation. Zhang Heng's escape was clean and flawless, like a drop of water falling into an ocean. Even after trying a myriad of investigative methods, the police still failed to catch a glimpse of him.

"That guy...is really as good as you said?" Chi Jia asked.

"Yes, I sometimes wonder if he is from another planet. Otherwise, there is no way to explain how he could fight those things on his own."

"Is he like the Superman from Krypton?" Chi Jia curled her lips, "Are you trying to be Louis Lane?"

Bai Qing blushed. "I just don't know how he is doing now."

"If he is really as good as you said, you don't need to worry at all," Chi Jia said. "Maybe he's returned to Krypton in his spaceship."

Seeing Bai Qing's expression, Chi Jia paused, and a grin appeared on her face. "Oh, you are not really worried about him, are you? You are wondering why he didn't contact you after so long. I can see that you miss him a lot."

"I'm not missing him! What are you talking about?" Bai Qing picked up the book and pretended to smack Chi Jia with it.

The latter turned around, ran away, back to her seat, and picked up her school bag. "I'll make a move. My sister and I are going to get our nails done tonight. You can carry on thinking about your Mr. Superman."

"..."

When everyone in the classroom was almost gone, Bai Qing packed her books and looked at the unrecognizable seat beside her before leaving the building.

Once she left the gates, she strolled to the bus stop with her schoolbag.

She had been feeling restless recently but couldn't figure out why.

Bai Qing remembered the feeling she had when she was stalked around Children's Palace. Three months later, the same feeling struck her again. Bai Qing quickly turned around and looked behind her. However, it was the peak hour where everyone had just gotten off work and school. The street was crowded, and she could find nothing unusual around her.

So she could only tell herself that she was paranoid. The trauma that she has been through must have made her oversensitive.

After that, Bai Qing came to the bus stop as usual, where she saw a man wearing a mask and a hoodie. Although he didn't look at her, Bai Qing felt that he looked somewhat familiar, only that she couldn't remember where she saw him.

The bus that she had been waiting for had finally arrived. Bai Qing and other passengers swiped their cards and got on the bus. Right before the door was about to close, the mysterious man stepped into the bus as well.

Bai Qing could not help but stare at him again. The familiar feeling kept on lingering in her mind.

She was on the verge of recognizing him. After that, she subconsciously took a few steps forward, moving away from him. She then looked out the window, trying to stabilize her emotions.

And it did work. After a while, her mood improved, until she saw a law firm on the street. Then, she finally remembered who the mysterious man was.

He used to be her father's defense lawyer. They had met before, but she had a bad feeling about him. Especially his emotionless eyes; they made her extremely uncomfortable.

After experiencing a series of bizarre incidents, Bai Qing did not think that it was a coincidence that she met him here. When the bus stopped at the next stop, she quickly squeezed her way through to the door and got off the bus.

However, this was an area she was not familiar with. She had no idea where she was and could only choose a place convenient for hiding. A shopping mall was nearby, so she headed in, walking through the cosmetics and jewelry counters on the first floor. Upon arrival at a fire exit, she opened the hinged door, and outside was an open-air parking lot.

Bai Qing was looking for an exit, but she saw the mysterious man standing there the next moment.

Not bothering to hide his intention this time, he walked towards her instantly.

Bai Qing turned around and ran into the mall, but then she found out that the door could not be opened. She shook the door lock vigorously, desperately trying to attract attention to herself. However, the closest counter was still far away from the fire exit. Seeing that the distance between her and the mysterious man was less than 20 meters, she could only give up and run to the back of the parking lot.

The masked man took out a knife from his briefcase and followed her.

He spoke in a hoarse voice, "It's time to make him pay."

Chapter 700: To Friendship and Memory

"It's not enough that he destroys our entire species. In the past few months, he has been chasing and killing whatever we have left," the mysterious man said bitterly. "Thanks to him, my people have been becoming fewer and fewer. With the Pupae Tree gone, we can no longer reproduce in this world. He still refuses to give us the chance to spend our lives hidden among humans quietly. If this is the case, we will also kill all who are related to him and let him have a taste of loneliness."

Bai Qing had backed up all the way to the rear of the parking lot, and she had no more space left.

She looked around, spotted a fluorescent tube, and grabbed it from the trash can.

If she were still the old her, she would probably be fearing for her life right now. She was still a little scared after experiencing the alien incident three months ago, but at least she was not trembling in fear anymore. And she could make use of objects that were around to protect herself. She was uncertain, however, if the fluorescent tube could help defeat the alien in front of her.

Seeing the masked man approaching her slowly, Bai Qing held on tight to the only weapon she could rely on.

The masked man seemed a little disappointed by her reaction. According to what he knew, Bai Qing should have been shivering by now, desperately attempting to explain that she had nothing to do with Zhang Heng. After taking a closer look at her face, he realized that she had accepted the reason why he had come to her for revenge.

Although there was no one in the parking lot now, the masked man wanted to waste no time. This was, after all, a public parking lot, which meant there was a constant flow of people here. Hence, he picked up speed and dashed at Bai Qing, wanting to end the fight as soon as possible.

And the battle ended as fast as he expected. After running less than five steps, blood gushed out of the back of his head. A bullet that had come from nowhere penetrated its head, going through the alien, was latched on the fourth ventricle.

The masked man's eyes were filled with unwillingness and bewilderment, and at the same time, a touch of fear.

However, in the next second, the alien was unable to control its body anymore. It fell beside Bai Qing's feet. Seeing blood and brain matter spattering out of the bullet wound, she did not scream in fear but instead showed a touch of joy. Immediately, she dropped the fluorescent tube in her hand and looked around.

"It's you. You are here, right?!"

"..."

No one answered her question in the parking lot.

"So you plan not to see me for the rest of your life?" Bai Qing hollered loudly, "What are you afraid of? Afraid that I will ask you that question? Am I scarier to you than those things?"

After a while, a voice finally emerged from the roof next door. Zhang Heng replied helplessly, "Let's talk about the other matter later. This guy has an accomplice in the mall. He couldn't go after you while locking the fire exit at the same time. I need you to help me to load the body into the car first. I will go and deal with the other guy."

He then threw down a car key from above.

"Okay." Bai Qing said happily as she grabbed the keys. After a pause, she seemed worried that Zhang Heng would leave without repeating goodbye. She added, "I miss you very much."

"I know."

After his reply, Zhang Heng disappeared from the roof.

...

A quarter of an hour later, the two met again in the parking lot. Initially, Bai Qing wanted to run to Zhang Heng, but a Ford Mondeo drove past her and blocked her way. She had to wait for a while before

running to Zhang Heng. This time, she was no longer as reserved, pouncing onto him and hugging him like a koala.

The latter had to reach out and hug her to prevent her from falling off.

"I knew you hadn't left yet," Bai Qing said.

The Mondeo's driver found a parking space. Then the family of three got out of the car and saw the intimate scene between Zhang Heng and Bai Qing. Immediately, the father quickly covered the eyes of his youngest son. And the mother shook her head repeatedly.

"Teenagers nowadays know no shame. This is a public place."

Usually, Bai Qing would blush when she heard this kind of comment, but now she was drowning in the joy of reunion. Although under criticism, she still did not stop hugging Zhang Heng.

She was even brave enough to reach out and touch Zhang Heng's cheek, "Am I dreaming now? Are you really back?"

"Yes, I'm back, but I can't stay for long. I still have to deal with a body in the women's toilet," Zhang Heng replied.

"Sometimes, I do wonder if you will return to Krypton after saving earth," Bai Qing sobbed with teary eyes.

"When I am done with them, yes. I am afraid I will be away for a long time."

"How long will you be gone? Forever?"

"Something like that."

"That means the secret code that we had between us is more than a secret code, right?"

"I'm sorry," Zhang Heng apologized.

"No, you don't need to apologize to me. You saved me and my life. You are my hero, even if I'm the only one that knows about it in this world," Bai Qing said. After that, she moved closer to Zhang Heng and placed her luscious lips on Zhang Heng's lips. It was a quick and soft peck, like a dragonfly skimming above the water of a pond during the summer.

Bai Qing's face finally turned red this time, and she murmured, "So this is how it feels like to kiss."

...

...

On the bar lounge deck, Zhang Heng woke up from the Proxy War's quest.

As compared to the past, he found out that his body had not undergone any changes.

After what happened on the roof of workshop No.3, Zhang Heng had been trying to study what happened to him. But after trying several times, he failed to replicate what he did previously.

After that, Zhang Heng also checked on his game items and confirmed that none had been responsible for what happened to him.

Putting the weird dream that he had into consideration—the wet and dark seaside town and the strange-looking old man—was perhaps more noteworthy to him than the quest itself.

“You look good today,” the bartender said. “Saw an old friend?”

“I guess so. You look delighted today too. Why?”

“Oh, because my old friend is coming back too. I’ve been waiting for him for a long time.” The bartender’s eyes were filled with joy when she talked about the person. After that, she made two glasses of cocktails as fast as possible and passed one of them to Zhang Heng. “To friendship and memories, the two most beautiful things in the world,” she toasted.

“Shouldn’t you be drinking this with your old friends?”

“It doesn’t matter. Drinking with you is the same. He doesn’t like drinking very much anyway.” The bartender lady took a sip of the cocktail, then frowned slightly. “Is it too sour? I think I put too much lemon juice in it?”