

48 Hours 911

Chapter 911: Critical Moment

Nellie was completely terrified. She had never seen such a horrible sight in her life. It was like a school of sharks that had detected blood around them. Those black figures emerged from the caves where they lived. There were so many of these monsters that they completely surrounded Nellie, Han Lu, and Zhang Heng. They stretched their hideous scaly bodies and swam freely in the sea. Nellie's heart sank, and she was hit by despair immediately.

She could not imagine how the three of them could survive a situation like this. Earlier, Zhang Heng had almost used up all of his strength to deal with one of them. And now there were at least hundreds of them swimming on top of them right now! They could easily tear them into pieces.

Unlike sharks, these monsters thought and behaved like humans. No, it should be said that these monsters were more cunning than humans. They knew how to use Han Lu as bait to lure Zhang Heng and Nellie into this desperate situation step by step. Nellie's calf was trembling, but when she looked back subconsciously, she saw that Zhang Heng was swimming towards her instead of fleeing.

Zhang Heng did not stop as he passed the two women, throwing the diving knife back to Nellie. It seemed he wanted her to continue cutting off the fishing net that entangled Han Lu. While facing this amount of enemies, the diving knife would not make a difference. After that, Zhang Heng continued to swim towards the terrifying sea of monsters above him.

To Nellie, what Zhang Heng just did was no different from killing himself. The moment he moved, hundreds of monsters above him were triggered into a frenzied state. They huddled and gathered into a tornado-like school and charged towards Zhang Heng. The leader of the human-frogfish monsters flew like a black arrow toward Zhang Heng's chest.

However, Zhang Heng's expression remained unchanged, as cold as the reef in the sea. Although Zhang Heng and the monsters were approaching each other, the difference in speed between the two of them was just too great. These monsters were born to live in the sea. Zhang Heng, on the other hand, swam no faster than a turtle in his diving suit.

At first glance, Zhang Heng seemed to be the one preyed on right now. Nellie could not bear to look at Zhang Heng anymore. In the blink of an eye, Zhang Heng and the leader were less than two meters apart, and he could see the wrinkles on the enemy's face. Under the tremendous pressure, Zhang Heng's courage was shaken, and he thought of turning around and escape.

This was not a wise choice in Nellie's eyes. Due to the difference in speed between the two parties, Zhang Heng might not even be able to swim for half a meter. The very next second, however, Nellie thought that she must be hallucinating. She actually saw a pair of huge wings spread out behind Zhang Heng's back.

Nellie initially thought that the pair of wings would tear through Zhang Heng's diving suit, but upon closer inspection, she realized that the wings behind him were just a shadow. At this point, Nellie had gotten a little numb. In the past twenty minutes, she had witnessed too many things that defied common sense. She did not know which party shocked her more now.

Was it the human-frogfish monsters or Zhang Heng with a pair of shadowy wings that appeared behind him suddenly?

The human-frogfish monsters were about to land their claws on Zhang Heng, but none of them expected that he would suddenly accelerate with his Shadow Wings.

This was Zhang Heng's trump card, saving his life during a critical moment like this. It could be used without the help of any game items. It was almost equivalent to a supernatural ability. In the past, Zhang Heng had used these to soar in the sky.

Since the Shadow Wings were not made of feathers, their unique texture made them 100% effective underwater. After Zhang Heng sped up, he managed to draw a short distance from the monsters again.

So far, the entire thing turned out just as Zhang Heng expected. Just like the gloomy seaside town, those monsters were all targeting him. Whether they were trying to kidnap Han Lu or confuse Nellie, their ultimate goal was to force Zhang Heng to show up. And once he showed up, they would immediately shift their attention to him. None of them paid attention to Nellie and Han Lu on the side, as if they were two pieces of ordinary rocks.

As of now, Zhang Heng was trying to draw as many as those monsters to one side. By doing that, he hoped to clear up the sea area above Nellie and Han Lu's head. After he did that, Zhang Heng turned his body, drew an arc in the water, and returned to Nellie's and Han Lu's side.

Nellie had been paying attention to Zhang Heng's situation. However, she did not forget what she was supposed to do. She grabbed the knife that Zhang Heng had thrown at her and cut the fishing net that entangled Han Lu.

Not long after she cut the fishing net, she was picked up by Zhang Heng. At the same time, Zhang Heng also picked up Han Lu on the other side. He held the two women with both of his hands. Zhang Heng now looked like he had just bought large bags of items from a supermarket. After that, he rushed to the surface before the monsters reacted.

The three of them were now at a depth of about 12 meters. Strictly speaking, they were supposed to make a final stop at a shallower spot before they got out of the sea. Fortunately, Zhang Heng and Nellie did not swim up too fast earlier, and Han Lu, being used as bait, had stayed at the same spot for quite a long time. Although there was still a risk of suffering from diving sickness since they ascended so rapidly, it was not life-threatening.

As compared with being caught by the monsters, getting of diving sickness was all well worth the risk. Nellie's dive computer's alarm beeped wildly, but the three of them did not have the time to be bothered by it. Nellie's attention was completely on the monsters behind her.

Initially, Zhang Heng, who spread his wings, could swim faster than them. Now that he was holding two people in his hands, however, his speed had naturally slowed down. Hence, the monsters were now getting closer to them once again. In order to lessen Zhang Heng's burden, Nellie and Han Lu inflated their BCD (buoyancy adjustment device).

And Zhang Heng, on the other side, was also calculating in his mind how long his Shadow Wings could last. Fortunately, his Shadow Wings should last long enough to support the three of them out of the

water. Looking at the exit of this tunnel, Zhang Heng saw some reefs around the area. As long as they could get to the reef, the three of them would no longer need to rely on their gas cylinders. Other than that, once those monsters left the sea, their agility would be greatly reduced. That was when Zhang Heng would be able to deal with them easily.

Chapter 912: Falling

Nellie had been watching her back nervously. The monsters were closing up to them at an ungodly speed.

On the other side, however, the three of them were getting closer and closer to the sea above their heads.

For the last part of their escape route, both sides were charging at each other at full speed.

Nellie saw those human-frogfish monsters pouring in from all directions as they were going to drown them.

But the next moment, she realized that she was out of the water and was looking at the sun again.

Nellie had never thought that the sun she saw every day could look so adorable.

When the sunlight fell on her skin, the warmth felt like something she never felt before.

The three of them had now left the sea. Just when Nellie thought that they were out of danger, an exceptionally strong black shadow suddenly leaped out of the water. It used its companion's back as a launching pad, allowing it to jump higher in the water, managing to grab Zhang Heng's ankle.

Zhang Heng's Shadow Wings could only afford to carry two people. Fortunately, Nellie and Han Lu were ladies and were rather lightweight ones at that. They were, however, lugging around a complete set of diving equipment with them. The moment Zhang Heng left the water, he could feel himself getting gradually harder to fly.

His flying speed dropped again, but he was still ascending steadily. However, when the monster grabbed onto his body, Zhang Heng's Shadow Wings could no longer support the weight. The three of them soon began to fall back to the surface.

Even at this moment, Zhang Heng still maintained absolute calmness. Immediately, he gauged the distance between the nearest reef and himself.

Zhang Heng then swung Nelly and Han Lu to the nearest reef. After the two landed, the burden on the Shadow Wings was lifted. But before Zhang Heng could fly higher, more and more shadows sprang out from the water, grabbing onto the first monster holding Zhang Heng's leg.

After that, Nellie and Han Lu saw a scene that they would never forget. At that moment, there were at least seven or eight monsters hanging on Zhang Heng's body, and at the same time, more monsters were jumping out of the sea. The worst part was that Zhang Heng's Shadow Wings had reached ten seconds of usage, and before he knew it, it suddenly disappeared without any warning.

Just like that, Zhang Heng fell into the sea again, like a drop of water falling into a pan of hot oil. Those human-frogfish monsters went into frenzy mode the moment Zhang Heng dropped into the ocean.

Surrounding him quickly, they dragged him all the way down the huge undersea tunnel. It was as if he was entering the gates of hell. Han Lu, who witnessed the scene, was about to jump back into the sea again to find Zhang Heng. However, she was stopped by Nellie immediately.

“Are you crazy? Your cylinder is running out of oxygen!”

“For the sake of saving us, those monsters got to him and dragged him back into the ocean,” Han Lu said. “If he were alone, he would have easily escaped this place even if he couldn’t beat them.”

As she spoke, Han Lu turned around and looked at Nellie. “Let me use your tank,” she asked.

“I don’t have much oxygen left as well. You need to calm down. We can’t help him if we return to the water in our current state.”

There was one more thing Nellie failed to mention. There wasn’t much air left in Zhang Heng’s tank either. Even if he managed to survive those monsters’ attacks, the probability of him surviving after being dragged to the bottom of the sea was close to zero. All she could do now was to persuade Han Lu not to do anything stupid. Otherwise, all the previous sacrifices Zhang Heng had made would go to waste.

Fortunately, Han Lu was not the kind of woman who would kill herself just to be with the person she loved, unlike how most romantic TV series’ depicted a woman. The reason why she wanted to go back into the ocean was her instinctive reaction after witnessing Zhang Heng getting dragged into the water by those monsters.

After Nellie attempted to persuade her, she managed to calm down again. She knew that Nellie was right. In their current state, even if they entered the water again, there was nothing they could do to help Zhang Heng. Instead, she would risk getting killed by those monsters.

As of now, Zhang Heng had saved Han Lu twice. Hence, she didn’t mind sacrificing her life to save Zhang Heng. However, if she were about to risk her life only to achieve nothing, it would be meaningless.

She realized that she had to stay alive to figure a way to rescue Zhang Heng. Unlike Nellie, Han Lu had actually thought about their gas tank problem. Thanks to the death dream incident, she had a chance to pry into the world Zhang Heng lived in. Thus, she still had some hope left.

Although Han Lu also knew that the tiny flame of hope she held on to was more of a way to comfort herself, she was still willing to do her best to keep it alive.

Han Lu asked Nellie beside her, “I heard that there are troops stationed on Yonaguni Island, right?”

Nellie was taken aback. “Yes. There is a Self-Defense Force base, but very few personnel are there right now. Do you want them to help us find Zhang Heng?”

Speaking of that, Nellie seemed to think of something else. She then took out her camera. “Although I couldn’t take pictures of the monsters below, I did take some pictures of the wall carvings earlier. We may be able to convince the personnel at the base with them.”

Han Lu looked at the underwater tunnel again. At this moment, it looked extremely calm, and she did not spot any monsters, as if everything she had just gone through was a hallucination. And Han Lu was

expecting Zhang Heng to return from the bottom of the sea, but that never happened. After that, Han Lu withdrew her gaze desperately and said, "It's not too late. Let's go now."

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Han Lu and Nellie used the direction they got from the dive computer to look for the boat they took to come to this diving spot. The captain had used his mobile phone to Google the magical phenomenon where the sea turned red suddenly.

He immediately greeted Han Lu and Nellie when he saw them. "I'm glad that you guys are fine. I am worried that the red tide would affect your diving experience..."

The captain suddenly stopped and asked, "I thought there were three of you? Where's the boy with a Tokyo accent?"

"We have encountered some... terrible things," Nellie said. "We need to head back to the island now and find someone to help him."

"Roger that." From how they were reacting, the captain could see that the situation was dire. So, he quickly put away his smiling face and said solemnly, "It's good to have one more person help the two of you. Do not hesitate to ask for my help. I can mobilize the people from the Fisheries Association. As long as everyone worked together, we can overcome all kinds of difficulties."

A wry smile appeared on Nellie's face, "I am afraid that ordinary people can't handle this matter. Anyway, let us go back to the island first."

Whenever Nellie thought of the monsters she saw earlier, she did not want to stay at sea any longer.

After that, she looked at Han Lu again, who was sitting in the stern at the moment, not knowing what she was thinking.

Chapter 913: Discussions

Han Lu and Nellie did not stop and rest after returning to the shore, running all the way to the Self-Defense Forces' base. They rejected the captain's proposal to ask the Fisheries Association for help, and they did not seek help from the police station.

This was because there was no one could deal with those things underwater except the army. When it came to this matter, Nellie felt more nervous than Han Lu. Other than the fact that Zhang Heng had rescued her earlier, she could not imagine the island she lived in would be surrounded by a larger group of monsters.

Yonaguni Island had been sparsely populated. Most of them were civilians with very little combat experience. Nellie had not forgotten the wall carvings that she saw earlier, where the monsters would ambush the human towns. Yonaguni Island was her hometown, where her friends and relatives lived. She had to protect it at all costs.

Nellie and Han Lu finally arrived at the gate of the military base. The two soldiers guarding the gate immediately raised their rifles and sounded a stern warning.

"This is a restricted military zone. No entry is allowed without permission!"

When they saw that Han Lu was a tourist, they repeated their warning in English.

Nellie raised her hands, showing that she carried no weapons, saying at the same time, "We have urgent matters to discuss with the person in charge here."

After listening to her request, however, two soldiers appeared indifferent. Instead, they simply repeated, "This is a restricted military zone. You have to obtain permission to enter. Otherwise, I'm afraid that we will have to ask you to leave."

"Please, this is probably a major event that has to do with the very survival of Yonaguni Island!" Nellie pleaded anxiously.

Yet, the two soldiers pretended that they did not hear her, and at the same time, raised their rifles a little higher.

"Do you know anyone in here? Maybe we can ask him to take us in," Han Lu asked. She could see that it was almost impossible for them to enter the military base.

Nellie shook her head. "These soldiers are not from this island. Other than military exercises and training, they hardly leave this base. Normally, we don't socialize with them. But..."

"But what?"

"The people from the Fisheries Association are connected with them, regularly delivering seafood to the base. You are right! The person in charge of the seafood delivery may know someone in the base," Nellie replied. "We should try to talk to them."

Nellie then contacted the man who captained the boat earlier. About a quarter of an hour later, a rather accomplished man in his forties in military uniform walked out of the base.

"Are you looking for me?"

"Are you the person in charge?" Nellie asked with expectation.

"No, I'm just a naval chief. I am mainly responsible for the external procurement of the base," the man said while walking out of the gate. The soldiers on both sides then saluted him with their guns.

"Can you take us to see the person in charge here?"

"Let's talk about what you are doing here first." The naval chief did not agree to help them, but neither did he refuse them as well.

"Well, I know it sounds crazy, but we were diving towards the underwater ruins earlier, and the sea suddenly turned red. After that, we encountered the ocean current. When the current was gone, one of our companions disappeared. Hmm... She is Ms. Han Lu. To look for her, we entered an underwater palace."

"You both?" the naval chief raised his eyebrows.

"Oh, yes. There were initially three of us. I was the diving guide of the diving club on the island, and the other two were tourists who came to visit this island," Nellie explained.

“Well. Go on.”

“I don’t know how to describe the scene I saw afterward. A monster that looked like the combination of a man and a fish attacked me. However, one of our companions managed to kill it. Uh... After that, we continued to swim ahead, and we found the missing Ms. Han Lu. However, we also encountered more monsters. I could see there were at least hundreds of them... I don’t know their exact numbers... To save us, one of our companions was dragged to the bottom of the sea by those monsters. And now we don’t know if he is still alive...” Nellie’s voice started to tremble at the end.

“So, you are saying that you people were attacked by a group of mermaids?”

“No. They weren’t mermaids. With those hideous looks, they have nothing to do with mermaids. And I’m not talking about fairy tales. They are real. I saw it with my own eyes. I... I was too scared at the time, and I didn’t take a picture of them. But I did take a picture of some wall carvings at the entrance.”

Nellie passed the camera to the naval chief while talking.

The naval chief took it and studied it for a while. However, he did not comment on it. Instead, he asked, “Have you shown these photos to anyone else?”

“No, we came here as soon as we arrived at the shore,” Nellie admitted. “Sir, please trust us. We know the consequences of lying about such things.”

Upon hearing that, the naval chief remained speechless for a while. He seemed to be thinking about everything Nellie had just told him. After a while, he nodded. “Well, this is the base of the Self-Defense Forces. It is indeed true that you are not allowed to enter the base without permission. For the sake of Tanaka, the chairman of the Fisheries Association, I will let my superiors know about this. But I can’t guarantee that he will believe you. I will show him the pictures that you took as well. The photos should make your story a little bit more convincing.”

“Thank you for doing us a favor. This is about the survival of Yonaguni Island. I hope you can persuade your superiors to take this matter seriously.” Nellie bowed with tears.

While the naval chief turned around and walked back to the military base with the camera, Han Lu asked Nellie again in English, “What did he say?”

“The naval chief said that he would tell his superiors about it. If we can make the Self-Defense Forces take action, we might be able to kill all those monsters.”

Nellie did not tell them about rescuing Zhang Heng because two hours had passed since they came out of the sea. Zhang Heng’s hope of returning was too slim. However, as long as the Self-Defense Forces were willing to take action, they could kill those monsters and avenge Zhang Heng. At the same time, they could also save the residents on Yonaguni Island.

When Han Lu heard what she said, there was no joy on her face. Instead, she said, “Something is not right. Did he just take away your camera?”

“Yes. The naval chief said that he would show the photos to his superior. Those photos will prove what we had gone through was real.”

Under normal circumstances, there was nothing wrong with it. However, Han Lu didn't know why she felt anxious, especially when she saw the naval chief. She even began to wonder if coming to the Self-Defense Forces for help was the right decision.

That being said, since she was now in a foreign country, she did not have too many options to choose from.

Chapter 914: Hallucination

The two waited for about half an hour, after which the gate of the military base opened again. The naval chief walked out, and Nellie immediately greeted him. She came with huge expectations, but the naval chief only disappointed her greatly with his reply.

"I told your story to my superiors, but it was so absurd that he found it hard to believe."

"What about the photo? Did you show him the photos?"

"Of course," the naval chief nodded. "Those were shocking photos, but they only prove that the underwater ruins near Yonaguni Island are real. And this is something that the archaeological community should be worrying about. We also don't know if these photos are fake or real."

When Nellie heard the naval chief's reply, her heart sank. After that, she heard the chief continue.

"Nevertheless, we have just queried the hotel, airport, diving shop, and the boat that took you back, and we learned that you did have a companion who failed to make it back with you. In the spirit of humanity, the Self-Defense Forces has agreed to deploy some personnel to help you to search the nearby waters."

Those words rekindled Nellie's hopes.

"How many of them?" she asked.

"Two patrol boats. Including me, there will be 25 members of the Naval Self-Defense Force."

"That's not enough," Nellie shook her head. "With such a number, it will be impossible for us to defeat all those underwater monsters."

"Unfortunately, this is the maximum number of personnel we can deploy to conduct the search for your friend," the naval chief said. After a pause, he continued, "We will bring some weapons. This is the most I can do for you within my authority."

Nellie realized that this was as much help as they were ever going to get.

Perhaps only after seeing the underwater palace, these Self-Defense Forces soldiers would change their minds. Just when Nellie was about to express her gratitude to the naval chief, she suddenly heard Han Lu asking in English, "Where is the camera?"

"It's with the man behind me. I will return the camera to you after we get on the boat." Without waiting for Nellie's translation, the naval chief replied in English and looked at Han Lu. "Any other questions?"

Although Han Lu still felt something amiss, she could only shake her head. Perhaps, as Nellie had said, those soldiers would start believing them after seeing the undersea tunnel and the monsters.

“Saving lives is like fighting a fire. Let’s depart now,” the naval chief said.

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They arrived at the navy’s dedicated pier and were greeted by the endless expanse of the sea. Nellie could not help but feel a sense of nostalgia. After the traumatizing event she had endured, she was never the same anymore. She found it hard to love the sea anymore. She even had to shake her head vigorously to drive the fear out of her mind.

The two Self-Defense Forces’ patrol boats, filled with soldiers, were on the ready. Other than the regular navy sailors, some frogmen with diving equipment were sitting in the patrol boats.

Nellie was relieved when she saw their determined faces. The chief led the two of them onto one of the patrol boats and arranged for them to sit in the cockpit to lead the way. Han Lu then asked again, “Can you return the camera to us now?”

“Of course,” the naval chief replied. He then made a gesture, asking a soldier to get Nellie’s underwater camera and return it. However, Han Lu’s expression changed soon after she took the camera.

“Where is the SD card?”

“We took the SD card. As I said before, we need to verify the authenticity of the photos,” the chief attempted to explain. “We will return the card to you after we complete our verification. If you need it, I can return it to you first, but it will be a blank card.”

“Why not copy the photos to your computer and return the card to us?” Han Lu asked.

The naval chief heard what she said and glared at her. However, he did not answer her question.

In the end, Nellie stepped up to calm everyone down.

“It’s okay. Anyway, the Self-Defense Forces have sent someone to take care of the situation. We can take the card back later. We all have the same goal here, which is to solve this crisis as soon as possible.”

Han Lu glared at the soldiers outside the cockpit who were armed to the teeth and said nothing.

The speedboat hurriedly arrived at the diving spot in question. After that, Nellie and Han Lu also found the reef where Zhang Heng dropped them. Before the frogmen dived, they could already see that there was no underwater tunnel.

In fact, there is basically a reef beach. Other than the reefs exposed out of the water, the seabed was filled with reefs. Let’s not talk about a sperm whale entering and exiting the tunnel. From what they saw, even a dolphin would be stuck in it.

Nellie’s eyes widened, “This... how is this possible?! We obviously escaped from here in the afternoon!”

“Are you sure you remember correctly?” The naval chief asked.

“Yes, I remember that rock. It looks like... a saddle, and the rock next to it looks like an onion,” Nellie insisted.

“It’s here,” Han Lu confirmed in English. “I will never forget this place.”

“But where is that underwater palace you were talking about?” the naval chief quizzed.

“We should be able to see it after passing through that huge undersea tunnel. And underneath of it is that mysterious and terrifying undersea palace.” When Nellie thought about what happened earlier, she could not help but shiver.

The naval chief shook his head. “When you first told me that story, I honestly didn’t believe it. Let’s not even start with the strange things you told me. We should talk about the underwater tunnel and the palace you mentioned. You are a diving guide here. You should know that this area has always been a trendy diving spot. We welcome a lot of divers here during the peak season. If there is really an underwater tunnel and palace, don’t you think someone would’ve found it by now?”

“About that...” Nellie was taken aback. She had to admit that what the chief just said made perfect sense. But she did indeed escape from here just a few hours ago.

Now, it seemed as though she had been hallucinating all along.

Could the red tide have affected her? But she could not explain how she shared the same hallucination with Han Lu. And where did Zhang Heng go after that? Was that part of her hallucination as well?

Nellie looked around blankly. She could not tell which part of it was reality or hallucination.

The naval chief was very patient. He then said in English, “The reason why I still brought my men here although I knew you were lying was that I found out that your companion is missing. But if you keep telling me about monsters or undersea palaces, believe me; it won’t help you find your companion.”

He looked into Nellie’s eyes. “I really want to help you, but first, you have to tell me what happened underwater.”

Nellie opened her mouth, but she could not say a word.

Chapter 915: Rescue

The cockpit fell into a strange silence. Just when Nellie began to question whether everything that she saw before was fake, Han Lu spoke.

“Sorry, my companion disappeared when he went diving. We were worried that we would not convince the Self-Defense Forces to save him if we said that it was just a simple accident. That’s why we fabricated such a bizarre story. I hope it can attract your attention. The photos were forged by a friend very skilled at Photoshop.”

“Now it makes sense.” The naval chief nodded when he heard the words, “Although you lied to us, as I said, for humanitarian reasons, we are still willing to help you to look for your friend. Now, you can tell me where did your companion go missing?”

“Of course.” Han Lu pointed the direction.

The patrol boat then turned around and drove in the direction that Han Lu pointed. When they arrived there, several divers grabbed their diving equipment and dived into the sea. However, it was now sunset, and they still could not locate Zhang Heng.

The naval chief said to Han Lu and Nellie, "It looks like we've had a fruitless search today. We will pay close attention to the nearby coastline. Maybe the tide will send your companion's body to the beach. By the way, how many days are you planning to stay on the island?"

"I will stay until my visa expires," Han Lu said.

"Okay. I will send someone to the hotel to notify you as soon as I have something new," the naval chief replied.

After that, the patrol boat sent Han Lu and Nellie back to the island. Nellie then looked at Han Lu. There were a lot of things she wanted to ask, but she did not know where to begin. She hoped that Han Lu could take the initiative to explain to her what was going on with whatever she had told the naval chief.

The Self-Defense Forces were their best hope in finding Zhang Heng. However, Han Lu had pointed out a random spot to them. As for the photos that she took, Nellie finally came to a realization. If everything she saw was a hallucination, then there was no way she could explain the carvings she saw on the tunnel's wall.

And now that those photos were in the hands of the Self-Defense Forces, Nellie realized that the only evidence that could prove she wasn't lying was no longer with her. And now, she understood why Han Lu cared so much about those photos. Han Lu, however, never mentioned those photos again, and it puzzled Nellie.

Nellie hoped that Han Lu could explain her actions, but instead of that, Han Lu said, "It's getting late. I'm going back to the hotel. You should go home too. Thank you for your help today."

Those words took Nellie by surprise.

"Just like that? What do you plan to do after this?"

"As I said, I will stay here for a while and wait to see if there is anything new," Han Lu said.

"Then... good luck. You can come to see me if you need any help. You know where to find me," Nellie said. In the end, she did not ask the questions that she wanted to ask. So, she went home like a worrywart.

And Han Lu also turned around and walked back to the hotel.

After returning to her room and closing the door, Han Lu immediately took out her mobile phone and found Shen Xixi's contact information from her address book. Zhang Heng had introduced her during the death dream incident; hence Han Lu could only contact her now because she was the only other person who knew about the dark world besides Zhang Heng. As for Fan Meinan, Han Lu did spend a few days with her, but she did not leave any contact information.

Shen Xixi was the only person Han Lu could count on right now.

Fortunately, not long after she dialed the number, Shen Xixi picked up the call. Han Lu could hear Shen Xixi's voice on the other end.

"Hello?"

Han Lu quickly drew the curtains, walked into the bathroom, turned on the faucet, and made sure a third person couldn't hear her voice. Only then did she tell Shen Xixi everything that had happened on the island.

Shen Xixi listened to Han Lu without the slightest interruption.

She could, however, hear Shen Xixi's breathing becoming more rapid. The latter seemed to be adjusting her emotions. After a while, she said, "It seems you have indeed encountered a supernatural event. And your suspicion is not unreasonable. The men from the Self-Defense Forces on the island are probably siding with those monsters. I suggest you take the first flight tomorrow and leave there as soon as possible."

"No, I need to look for Zhang Heng first..." Han Lu paused in her tracks. "...it doesn't matter if he is dead or alive."

"But from what you've told me, you are not safe. Let us deal with it. If you are still worried about Zhang Heng, you can wait for us to update you at Ishigaki Island," Shen Xixi persuaded.

"If you know me, you know I never sit idle and wait for news," Han Lu said. "Embrace risk, control the risk, and benefit from the risk—this is my motto. I will not wait here quietly. You still need me to lead you guys to the underwater palace."

Shen Xixi knew that Han Lu was telling the truth; hence she agreed. "In this case, you have to take care of your own safety at least before we arrive and stop contacting the Self-Defense Forces. Um, be careful of other people on the island as well." Shen Xixi said, "We will be there as soon as possible."

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After hanging up the call, Han Lu sat in a daze by the bathtub.

She had done everything she could, but she still could not accept the reality that Zhang Heng was dead. Looking at the water rushing from the tap, the scene where the three of them flew out from the sea replayed on Han Lu's mind. After which, Zhang Heng tossed her and Nellie onto the reef. In the end, Zhang Heng was dragged back to the sea by those monsters.

Han Lu lost track of time. Suddenly she heard someone knocking on her door.

"Who is it?" Han Lu turned off the faucet, got up, walked out of the bathroom, and looked out on the peephole.

The other side of the peephole, however, was completely dark, and she couldn't see a single thing. After that, Han Lu opened the door, and the lights were still turned on in the corridor. And there was no one standing outside her room.

At the same time, Han Lu noticed that someone had stuck a band-aid on the peephole.

This made Han Lu a little nervous.

Although she had told Shen Xixi that she wanted to stay on the island until Zhang Heng was found, she would be alone before Shen Xixi and her allies arrived. Not only did she have to face the monsters at the bottom of the sea, but she also had to deal with a strangely-behaving Self-Defense Forces.

Han Lu did not know who else she could trust on this island.

This was why she was not willing to explain the whole thing to Nellie.

Han Lu stayed in the hallway for less than half a minute and tore the band-aid off the peephole before returning to her room.

This time she made sure the door was closed and bolted.

Chapter 916: Knocking

After Han Lu locked the door, she stood behind the door for a while and looked out the peephole to observe the situation in the corridor. There was no one knocking on the door, and no one passed by her room.

After that, she walked to the windows again, checking if they were tightly closed. She even read the English fire prevention instructions on the wall. Even though Yonaguni Island looked quiet at night, Han Lu could always feel a sense of anxiety in her heart for some reason.

Nellie once told her that Yonaguni Island had always been very safe, and almost no crimes took place on this island. The island was so small that everyone knew each other. If someone committed a crime, the assailant would never be able to escape if the authorities set up a roadblock at the airport.

Hence, this small island had always been the safest place in Japan.

Han Lu comforted herself with such a thought. Although she discovered that the garrison on the island was likely connected to the monsters at sea, she believed they shouldn't be taking any drastic measures against her and Nellie for the time being after observing how they responded. So far, they had tried to eliminate evidence by taking her SD card and figuring out how to make the undersea tunnel disappear.

This was also the reason why Han Lu deduced that she would still be safe for the time being. If the other party wanted to do something to her, they could have detained or killed her when she and Nellie walked out of the military base. Dealing with her afterward would be pointless.

However, Han Lu was indeed a little restless tonight.

In order to eliminate the anxiety, Han Lu turned on the TV and randomly picked a channel broadcasting a reality show. Although unable to understand the language, it did help relax Han Lu a little.

The program deliberately set up obstacles for some young lovers to overcome, to which, the host and celebrities would observe how the couple solved the obstacles. The young lovers would complain, and others would laugh at them. All this while, such reality shows received good ratings in Japan.

However, Han Lu did not really like this kind of show. She had only watched it because there were a lot of people talking and laughing. Since she was all alone now, this was exactly what she needed. After a while, she wasn't paying attention to the show anymore; staring blankly at the television, her mind drifted with other thoughts.

When it was almost ten o'clock, the front desk called her and told her that there might be heavy rain later in the evening and reminded her to close the doors and windows.

Han Lu then thanked her. At about 10:30, she took a quick bath, mostly to wash away the salt on her skin and hair. From the time she finished diving until now, she hadn't had time to clean up. And she could not drag on any longer since she needed to sleep soon.

Han Lu kept the door open when she took her shower. By doing that, movements outside her room would be audible to her.

At a quarter past eleven, Han Lu finally finished her shower and dried her hair. After that, she got into bed. She hesitated for a while before finally deciding not to turn off the television.

The reality show had ended, and the channel was now running a soap opera.

Han Lu laid on her back on the bed, and she could hear the thunder rumbling outside. After a while, raindrops started to fall from the sky, knocking the windowpane with a repetitive pitter-patter. Han Lu gradually felt a little sleepy after listening to the sound of rain and TV dramas.

Overall, she had a terrible day. Whether underwater or onshore, she was exhausted. After falling asleep, Han Lu had a nightmare, dreaming that Zhang Heng was being eaten by those monsters. And she could not even find his corpse.

Just when she was thinking about what she should tell Zhang Heng's parents about this tragedy, she was awakened by a soft knock on the door.

Han Lu immediately sat up from the bed, not knowing whether the voice had come from reality or a dream.

It took only less than half a minute for her question to be answered. She heard a knock on the door again.

Han Lu came down from the bed, without slippers, and walked barefoot to the door. She tried her best to make as little noise as possible. After that, she leaned over the peephole and looked into it.

Immediately, she felt a bitter chill run up her spine from the bottom of her feet.

Just like the last time, she saw nothing through the peephole. It was pitch black outside. She knew the person that knocked on her door had to be the one that stuck something on the peephole.

And this time, Han Lu felt that the person had ill intentions towards her. If it weren't for the storm, she would have considered jumping out of the window now. Han Lu then looked around to search for something that she could use as a weapon while retreating backward. However, she did not expect that the person outside her room would go ahead to unlock her door.

After that, the person used a knife to open the latch on the side of the door.

Han Lu was so scared that she started to scream. Upon hearing her scream, the uninvited guest outside her room barged in and covered her mouth. He then pulled off his poncho hat.

It was Zhang Heng, the person that Han Lu thought was long gone.

She could not believe her eyes!

Although she always had a glimmer of hope that Zhang Heng might still be alive, she realized deep down inside that his chances of being alive would be comparable to a miracle.

And now, the miracle that she hoped for had come true.

Zhang Heng gestured Han Lu to stay quiet. He then walked around the room and found several coin-sized bugging devices. He then threw them into his room next door, closed the door, and dragged an unconscious man into Han Lu's room.

"Who is this?" Han Lu asked.

"Someone from the Self-Defense Forces. He was the one who knocked on your door and covered your peephole," Zhang Heng explained.

"Huh?" Han Lu was taken aback when she heard Zhang Heng's explanation. She did not expect her deduction to be wrong. "Aren't the people from the Self-Defense Forces trying to conceal the existence of those monsters? Why are they attacking me?"

"That was their plan previously, but now the circumstance had changed. After I got out from the underwater palace, they wanted to continue to use you to threaten me." Zhang Heng said.

"How did you escape from the bottom of the sea?" Han Lu was puzzled. "We didn't manage to find you after we got back on the boat. Nellie said that your gas cylinder was probably emptied. We all thought that you were dead."

"It's a long story." Zhang Heng blinked, "We'd better leave this island first."

Chapter 917: Deep Sea Terror

Ten hours ago, Zhang Heng's Shadow Wings disappeared. And there were still several monsters hanging on to his body. After that, he fell into the sea again under the influence of gravity. His presence had caused those monsters beneath him to go into a frenzied mode as if they were waiting for the carnival to begin. The moment Zhang Heng dropped into the ocean, they started to rush at him like they had lost their minds. In less than half a second, Zhang Heng's vision was blocked. His arms, chest, back, and legs were covered by those monsters.

Since the other monsters at the back arrived too late, they had no place to hang on. Hence, they could only grab onto their companions. In the end, Zhang Heng was completely wrapped in layers of monsters. Betty Shell wouldn't be much help in such a critical situation because the monsters were too close to him.

The thing that surprised Zhang Heng the most was that the monsters did not immediately attack him after they pounced on him. On the contrary, they carefully put away their teeth and claws. It was as if they were afraid that they might hurt him accidentally.

At the same time, they took him all the way down to the bottom of the ocean. He could not check on his dive computer because his vision was blocked, but he could feel that he was going deeper and deeper into the ocean.

At the same time, Zhang Heng was doing a rough estimation of the remaining amount of compressed air in his diving cylinder. There were probably only a few bars of air left now. And this amount of air was enough for him to breathe for two more minutes at most.

Even after he counted the time he could hold his breath, his circumstances weren't looking too good. Although Zhang Heng remained very calm, he had to admit that his chances of survival this time weren't great. After another minute and a half, his breathing had become a little laborious. At this time, even if the monsters let him go, there was not enough air left for him to swim back to the surface.

But at this time, Zhang Heng had given up on struggling completely, and he was calm. He relaxed his body and allowed the monsters to take him to an unknown location. After about half a minute, he had finally stopped moving. At the same time, the monsters that surrounded him seemed to be reducing as well.

When the monsters wandered away, Zhang Heng saw the familiar scene again.

He is now back in the underwater palace again.

But unlike when he came here just now, he was now leaning back against the dome in the center of the palace. Not far away were the two empty thrones, and behind him were the huge astrolabe-like stone carvings. The group of monsters that brought him here had now retreated to one side. All of them were looking at him from a spot that was lower than where he was. It seemed like they were afraid that Zhang Heng would escape. Hence, they were still surrounding him.

Zhang Heng felt that they were overthinking because his dive computer was beeping frantically. The compressed air in his diving cylinder had been completely exhausted. In other words, Zhang Heng could not go anywhere. All he could do right now was to stay in this huge underwater palace and wait for his demise to befall him.

The good news was that he was not going to die alone. There were a lot of monsters nearby him. The bad news was that he did not get to meet the real masters of the thrones at the final moment of his life. Zhang Heng suspected that at least one of them had something to do with his previous encounters in that hazy seaside town. But now, it did not matter anymore.

Due to the lack of oxygen, Zhang Heng's consciousness began to fade out. He looked at the huge astrological map behind him and wondered if it was part of his hallucination before his death. Zhang Heng felt that the astrological map was slowly turning.

He wanted to take a good look at it again, but his body did not allow him to do so. So, Zhang Heng used the last straw of his strength to remove the respirator from his mouth and closed his eyes. The next moment, Zhang Heng felt like he was back in his mother's womb.

It was a feeling of unparalleled tranquility and security. He no longer needed to breathe through his nose and mouth. It seemed like there was an invisible expectation that connected him to the sea; the entire sea had turned into his placenta.

Zhang Heng even started to think that the sea was where he came from but not the land. The azure water wrapped around him gently. All of his pores were stretched out in the water

He had even forgotten how long the time had passed.

Initially, Zhang Heng thought that this was his final hallucination before his brain went through hypoxia. It was said that all life on earth was originated from the ocean, and human beings were no exception. When death arrived, the person's soul would return to the place where it all started.

However, when Zhang Heng opened his eyes again, he realized that he had neither entered heaven nor hell. Instead, he was still staying in this underwater palace. The only change that he noticed was that the strong suffocation feeling caused by a lack of oxygen had disappeared. And it was replaced by the wonderful feeling of being able to breathe again.

Zhang Heng hesitated and then took off the mask on his head. And his eyes did not feel any irritation or discomfort. Zhang Heng saw that the half-man and half-fish-frog monsters nearby him were smiling when they saw him reopened his eyes.

However, they had no intention to open a way for Zhang Heng. They still stood in a circle, enclosing Zhang Heng in the center. At the same time, the astrological map was still moving slowly. And Zhang Heng felt very different as compared to when he came to this water palace earlier.

Zhang Heng vaguely aware that the changes in his body were most likely connected to the astrological map that was rotating behind him. It stood to reason that this astrological map granted him the ability to breathe and move underwater. Zhang Heng thought that he should wait here until the astrological map completed its rotation.

However, Zhang Heng sensed that there was an imminent threat getting closer to him. If he waited until the astrological map stopped rotating, the bad things that he anticipated would probably happen right after that.

hence he made a decisive decision and decided to leave this underwater palace.

He took out Betty's Shell from his pocket. Earlier, he did not have a chance to use it. But now, it finally came in handy for him.

Soon the calm sea became violent, and Han Lu, that was saying in the hotel currently was notified by the front desk, telling her that a storm might hit the island tonight. The staff asked her to close all the doors and windows tightly.

Betty's Shell would consume the user's anger and create a storm at sea. However, no matter how powerful a storm was, the destructive power would reduce gradually at the deeper part of the sea until it disappeared completely.

However, Zhang Heng realized that he did not need to provide too much anger to his Betty Shell when he triggered its effect. And its area of effect had expanded from the surface of the sea to the bottom of the sea.

Zhang Heng could even direct the ocean currents to sweep away a couple of the monsters nearby him. And there was an opening that appeared around the encirclement. Zhang Heng seized the opportunity and quickly left the siege through the gap with the help of the underwater current.

Chapter 918: Breaking Out

When the monsters saw that Zhang Heng was about to leave the dome, they became very anxious all of a sudden, quickly going after him to bring him back. However, Zhang Heng was now different from when they dragged him into the sea.

Although he still couldn't swim as fast as those monsters, it was undeniable that he swam a lot faster than before. He also knew how to control the ocean currents. Not only could he accelerate or stop the enemies from coming after him, but he could also stir up the sand at the bottom of the sea to make the seawater muddier.

Speaking of which, such a strategy was inspired by the red tide created by those monsters. With the help of the Filter Lens, Zhang Heng could always prevail in this chaotic situation. However, when he swam past the layers of the monsters and returned to the surface of the sea, he realized that it was already dark outside.

Zhang Heng was a little surprised. He didn't manage to look at his watch at the bottom of the sea, but as far as he was concerned, the time between him falling to the bottom of the ocean to when he started suffocating and being able to breathe again after taking off his respirator; Zhang Heng did not expect it to last so long.

He seemed to have completely lost the concept of time at the underwater palace.

When Zhang Heng looked at his watch, he found out that the time was ten at night.

The boat that brought him here was long gone.

There was still some distance away from the island. Under normal circumstances, Zhang Heng would be completely exhausted even if he could swim back to the island. In order to get rid of the monsters that came after him, the wind and waves on the sea were so strong they prevented him from swimming forward.

But now, Zhang Heng could dive to the bottom of the ocean again and send himself back to the island with the help of the underwater current.

There were a lot of monsters coming after him, but they were now in their nest. Once they left the undersea tunnel, it would be difficult for them to surround Zhang Heng in the vast sea.

Therefore, Zhang Heng did not take too long to return to Yonaguni.

This was not the first time Zhang Heng fought with those monsters. Their first fight happened in the hazy seaside town; hence he understood those monsters quite well. And when he went diving this time, he saw their history carved on the wall.

Zhang Heng knew that those monsters liked to deceive the nearby humans and tourists who visited Yonaguni Island. For so many years, none had found out about them. To say that they did not have people that sided with them on the Yonaguni Island, Zhang Heng would never believe in such a thing.

Zhang Heng initially suspected it was the island's fishermen who sided with the monsters because fishing was the backbone of Yonaguni's economy. The vast majority of men on the island were fishermen, and in order to support their families, Zhang Heng would not be surprised if they made some kind of trade with those monsters in exchange for the abundant fishes.

And Yonaguni Island had the world's second-largest marlin fishing ground, which might just prove his conjecture. Therefore, Zhang Heng did not stop the storm after he returned to the island. On the contrary, he concealed his whereabouts under the cover of the heavy rain to avoid being spotted by the fishermen on the island.

Coupled with Zhang Heng's stealth technique and bad weather, no one would notice him.

But when he arrived at the hotel where he had stayed before, he soon discovered that someone downstairs was watching Han Lu.

Moreover, from the way the man behaved and the equipment he used, he seemed to be from a military background. Zhang Heng knew that the Self-Defense Forces had a base on the Yonaguni Island, but it was said that the soldiers there had been very low-key, and they interacted little with the island's population.

That was why Zhang Heng did not suspect them earlier.

But now, it seemed like they were the ones that sided with those monsters on the island. Since the military base was a restricted area, it was not easy for others to notice the changes in their appearance. This was why they rarely interacted with the residents on this island. Just like the hazy seaside town, they were the party with overwhelming force, and they could protect the undersea palace.

Zhang Heng put himself into Han Lu's shoes, guessing that she would've looked to the Self-Defense Forces for help after he was dragged underwater by those monsters. They were the people with the closest proximity to Han Lu where she could seek help.

Unfortunately, she had asked the wrong people this time. To further prevent a dramatization of the situation, the enemies did not act on her for now, and they chose to only observe her. However, once they discovered that Zhang Heng was out of the sea, Han Lu's life might be at risk again.

Zhang Heng figured that those monsters had already contacted the Self-Defense Forces when he returned to the island and asked them to capture Zhang Heng. Therefore, Zhang Heng did not stay downstairs any longer. He borrowed a poncho from the nearby resident and knocked out the man watching Han Lu at the hotel's side entrance. From there, he slipped into the hotel, bypassed the front desk, and came to the floor where Han Lu was.

Then Zhang Heng met the man who stuck the tape on her room's peephole in the hallway.

With Zhang Heng's Lv.3 assassin skills, it was easy for him to deal with the man.

Until he walked to the man's back, the man didn't realize someone approaching. He held a knife in one hand and inserted the key that he got from the front desk into Han Lu's door with the other, waiting to surprise the woman. Zhang Heng did not forget that he was now in the real world. Just like those Self-Defense Forces men, he did not want to raise the alarm.

So he knocked out the man outside Han Lu's room with a stone. After that, he knocked on Han Lu's door, but she did not open the door. So, he twisted the key he inserted in the door, picked up the knife and pried the lock to break in.

That was what Han Lu saw earlier.

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Zhang Heng led Han Lu downstairs, but at that moment they also heard a series of footsteps under the stairs.

Zhang Heng figured that the men who were tasked to keep an eye on Han Lu had discovered that they had lost contact with two of their companions. However, Zhang Heng had no intention of retreating when he saw the enemies. There were a lot of people in the Self-Defense Forces, and dragging it on would be more unfavorable for them.

Once they called more men to surround the hotel, it would be more difficult for them to break out.

Zhang Heng asked Han Lu to stand against the wall on the left side for a while. He then paid attention to the sound of footsteps beneath them and silently counted the number of people coming from downstairs and the distance between them. When the enemies were about to climb upstairs, Zhang Heng jumped down and kicked away the weapon from the hands of one of the men. By the time he reacted, Zhang Heng had already knocked out the other enemy.

After that, it was easy for Zhang Heng to end the battle.

The enemies thought that they were well-trained, and they decided to underestimate Zhang Heng. They thought that the reason their allies lost to Zhang Heng was that he had ambushed them. When they fought against him for real, they quickly realized that he was a lot faster than their allies.

The assailant did not manage to see what Zhang Heng did to him. By the time he came to a realization, a knife was placed under his neck.

Chapter 919: Flying Into The Storm

Zhang Heng did not do anything harsh. All he did was knocking his target out. After that, he said to Han Lu, who was standing in a daze, "Let's go."

And Han Lu quickly came back to reality like she just woke up from a dream. She found out that she would get to know him better every time she came into contact with Zhang Heng. But in the end, Han Lu would realize that her understanding of Zhang Heng was only the tip of the iceberg.

There were too many secrets hidden in this man.

Every time Han Lu caught one of Zhang Heng's secrets, there would always be more secrets waiting for her. Han Lu even started to doubt whether anyone in this world could fully understand Zhang Heng. The floor that they were on was not too far away from the ground floor. Hence, the two managed to come downstairs pretty fast.

They still left the hotel through the side door, and Zhang Heng had to eliminate the three guards first.

The previous battle with the monster happened so fast that Han Lu did not manage to see what Zhang Heng did to defeat the monster. This time, she finally saw how Zhang Heng knocked out the guard. Zhang Heng first approached a target silently. The target stood relatively inside, half of his body remained in the corridor, and he was a little far away from his two companions. Zhang Heng took advantage of the enemy looking out and circled behind the target's back. Zhang Heng did not make a single sound throughout the whole process.

It was as quiet as a Persian cat stepping on the carpet.

After he got close to the target, he stretched out his hand to cover the opponent's mouth, dragged the target into the corridor, and knocked him out. After that, Zhang Heng deliberately made a little noise to attract the other two enemies. When they turned to the corner, they saw their companion lying on the ground. They became very nervous suddenly, and they quickly raised their weapons. They were facing the stairwell. What they did not know was that the threat came from a place beyond their sight.

After that, what happened to their companion reenacted on the two enemies. Zhang Heng knocked out one of them. And the remaining enemy wanted to use his close-quarter combat skill to beat Zhang Heng up. Unfortunately, there was a considerable gap between the two. Clearly, Zhang Heng was the better one here.

After the three guards were knocked out, Zhang Heng took Han Lu and left the hotel smoothly.

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"How do we leave this island?" Han Lu asked when they arrived at a slightly safer place.

"Airport."

"Airport? But there are not a lot of flights on Yonaguni Island, and the planes that come here usually fly during the day." Han Lu was puzzled, "Besides, it's raining heavily now. The planes are not allowed to depart even if there are flights available right now."

"Don't worry about the heavy rain. It will stop when we find the plane." Zhang Heng said.

Han Lu did not know how Zhang Heng found the plane. Earlier, she used her mobile phone to search for the available flights, but it yielded no result. The results showed that there were no flights for today and tomorrow. In fact, there was only one flight to Ishigaki Island three days later.

However, Han Lu did not think that they could wait until that time.

Yonaguni Island was not that big. Even if they escaped from the hotel, Zhang Heng could make use of the natural ingredient on the island to keep them alive. However, if the Self-Defense Forces decided to search the entire island, they would have nowhere to hide.

So the more realistic way to leave the island now was by boat. The nearest place for them to dock would be Taiwan Province. However, the dock was now heavily guarded by the Self-Defense Forces. Other than the visa issues, they might encounter the monster again at sea.

Han Lu was right. There were very few people at the airport, and the waiting hall was dark. Hence, the Self-Defense Forces did not arrange too much manpower over there. Zhang Heng climbed over the barbed wire fence and caught Han Lu, who jumped off from the fence.

The latter was now wearing Zhang Heng's raincoat. Due to the heavy rain, her hair was still wet. The rainwater dripped onto the ground from the sleeves and hem of the raincoat. Han Lu wiped the rainwater off her face, looked around for a while, and asked, "What shall we do next?"

Zhang Heng pointed to a private airplane in the distance, "Let's get on that plane and leave."

Han Lu was at a loss when she heard what he said, "But where are we going to find a pilot."

After that, she heard Zhang Heng said, "It's okay. I'll fly it."

"Do you have a pilot license?"

"I used to have one, but it was from the last century. I guess the validity period has already passed. Don't worry. I have flown many planes, and their control systems are not too different usually. I will send us to someplace safe." Zhang Heng said. After finishing speaking, he glanced at his watch again.

It was very closed to midnight.

Zhang Heng wasted no time. He opened the plane's door with a paperclip. After that, he got into the pilot's seat, while Han Lu took the shotgun seat. She then watched Zhang Heng fastened his seat belt. And Zhang Heng was quite lucky. There is a spare key hanging on the lower left side of the cockpit.

And Zhang Heng was not lying. Compared with fighter jets, the control system of private airplanes was much more straightforward. Even though decades had passed, the design of the dashboards and key switches had not changed much. The control systems that seemed highly complicated to ordinary people were not that complicated to Zhang Heng.

He skillfully carried out various inspections. After that, he turned on the main switch and navigation lights, let the fuel pump started filling, waited three seconds, and then turned on the accelerator, turned the key, and Han Lu heard the roar of the engine.

Han Lu could not believe what she saw. She looked at Zhang Heng, who was turning on the electronic device switch and controlling the plane to taxi on the runway. After thinking for a long time, she asked, "Does your mother know that you can fly a plane?"

"You know her. If you let her know that I can fly a plane, she will definitely pester me and ask me to fly her everywhere. Maybe she will ask me to fly her to the North Pole to see the aurora or something." Zhang Heng said while accelerating the plane on the runway, "So, please keep this matter a secret for me."

At this time, the men from the Self-Defense Forces at the airport also discovered that a private airplane was running wild on the runway.

They obviously had a hard time believing that Zhang Heng and Han Lu could leave the island with a plane under such extreme weather.

At this moment, the squally wind and lightning in the sky seemed like they were never going to stop. The heavy rain was smashing on the windshield of the private jet. Zhang Heng then slowly flew the plane up and left the ground. Due to the initial chaotic airflow, Zhang Heng had to maintain the plane's balance in the air carefully. The plane looked like it was going to crash. For a while, Han Lu was getting really panic.

Soon, just like what Zhang Heng predicted, the seemingly menacing rainstorm suddenly stopped as if someone pressed the pause button. All the whistling winds disappeared, and the dark clouds above them were dismissed as well. The night sky was calmed once again. And Zhang Heng had already flown the plane over Yonaguni Island.

Chapter 920: Night Flight

After setting up the autopilot, Zhang Heng took out two bottles of red wine from the passenger cabin at the back and a box of sleeping pills that could help one sleep better during long-haul flights. He then poured a glass of red wine before popping a pill into the glass. Once the pill had dissolved, Zhang Heng handed the red wine to Han Lu in the cockpit.

Although the two were temporarily out of danger, Han Lu still seemed a little worried. She took the wine glass and asked, "Will the Self-Defense Forces send their men after us? And if they call the authorities, we will be arrested the moment we touch down at the airport. However, we can take advantage of diplomatic channels. I can find a few friends to contact the people at the embassy to see if they can help us... Earlier, I thought something bad happened to you. So, I notified Shen Xixi about this, and she should be on her way to Yonaguni Island now. Since we've left the island, we have to notify her to prevent her from getting into the dangerous situation..."

However, she was interrupted by Zhang Heng before she could finish.

"Those monsters have no intention to make things worse. They won't call the police. As for our pursuers, they might come after us. But you don't have to worry about them. They won't be able to catch up with us. As for Shen Xixi, I will contact her to explain in person later... Hey, you've been through a lot today. It's almost midnight. Why not take a nap after that glass of wine? We will talk about the rest when you wake up."

"Alright." Han Lu did not say no to Zhang Heng's suggestion. Although she wanted to know why the enemies couldn't catch up with them, Zhang Heng seemed completely unworried. Hence, she picked up the glass of wine and drank it. She then frowned, "Ugh... it appears the owner of this plane has no taste. The wine tastes weird. I think the liquor seller must've cheated him, and he bought a bottle of fake wine."

"Let me open you another bottle," Zhang Heng said as he took out another bottle of wine.

However, Han Lu shook her head, "It's fine. I'm not in the mood to drink, and honestly, I'm not in the mood to sleep either."

"You can lie down at least. Close your eyes, and take a nap," Zhang Heng said.

Han Lu nodded. "Let me take a ten-minute nap. I still have lots of questions for you. When I wake up later, you must first tell me how you get rid of those monsters underwater and how you returned to the island..."

Han Lu walked to a small bed in the passenger cabin. Not too long after she laid down, she felt powerful drowsiness hit her. With a long yawn, her eyelids became heavier and heavier.

Zhang Heng got up and put a small blanket on her. He then looked at his watch again.

It was only less than half a minute before midnight. He would soon enter the world that stood still.

This was why Zhang Heng wasn't worried that the enemies would come after them.

If Han Lu was not with him, Zhang Heng could have holed until midnight and left the island.

Han Lu vaguely heard an inexplicable but reassuring voice when she was half-asleep. It said, "Good night. Everything that happened before is just a nightmare. Everything will be fine when you wake up."

She wanted to listen more, but her consciousness became more and more blurry. Seconds later, she finally fell asleep.

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Han Lu did not know how long she slept, but she could feel she was lying on the bed.

And it wasn't the small bed in the private airplane. She was now lying on a big bed, and the light was pouring into the room.

Was she at a hotel? Had they arrived in Naha? How did Zhang Heng convince the authorities to let them land at the airport? How did he get rid of the pursuit?

While thinking about those questions, her eyes suddenly popped wide open.

That was because she realized that she was not in Naha. Instead, she had returned home, lying on her bed. Han Lu quickly grabbed the phone beside her bed, and the thing that surprised her the most was the time. It was June 13th, and less than six hours had passed since they left Yonaguni Island.

Considering the distance between China and Japan, six hours were enough for them to fly home.

Then here came the question again. Zhang Heng did not have a flying license, and she could not explain where he got the airplane. In other words, flying back to China would only cause him more trouble. When Han Lu turned on the computer, she was relieved when she saw no news about a private airplane illegally entering the airport.

The Internet was no different from the past. The hot search was filled with news about different celebrities, new TV dramas, variety shows, and some sensational articles that were good enough to capture the readers' attention. The world still looked the same.

While Han Lu walked into the living room, she saw a note on the coffee table.

[Thank you for the vacation. There is breakfast in the kitchen. I hope to explain what exactly happened on that island, but I'm still investigating the matter. Perhaps I shall wait until I find out about everything in the future before telling you the truth, even if the truth may not be what you want.]

Zhang Heng left his signature on the note.

Putting down the note, she walked into the kitchen and turned on the rice cooker.

She saw a bowl of douhua that had been kept warm and two freshly fried dough sticks.

At that time, Zhang Heng had gone to the lounge on the second floor of the bar.

Since it was almost dawn, there were no other players in the lounge. The bartender lady was so bored that she was playing with her mobile phone behind the bar.

Zhang Heng and the bartender lady had known each other for a long time. There was still something he did not understand about her.

According to the latter, she worked several jobs to make money. In other words, she was also working during the day. When Zhang Heng met the old man in the Tang suit for the first time, he saw her there too. At night, she would manage the game checkpoint.

Zhang Heng had never seen her getting sleepy. Although she did not seem particularly passionate about her job, she had never nodded off during work.

While Zhang Heng walked in from the front door, the bartender lady playing with her mobile phone seemed to have noticed something. Her nose moved twice as if she smelled something weird.

“Where have you been recently?”

“I went to Yonaguni Island. I spent some time there with my friends.” Zhang Heng replied.

“Yonaguni Island... no wonder.”

The bartender lady seemed a little surprised by Zhang Heng’s reply. However, she had no intention to explain her reaction. She just nodded and said, “You came for the blade and the game item, right?”

Zhang Heng nodded. “Yes.”

Other than the Ordinary Blade sent for recasting, Zhang Heng had also asked the bartender lady to identify Heart of Kreis. It was time for him to claim them.

“Hmm.” The bartender turned around and took out one large and one small wooden box made of tulle wood and placed them in front of Zhang Heng.

“Here are your game items. Which one do you want to see first?”