

## 48 Hours 931

### Chapter 931: Streets

"Congratulations." Zhang Heng complimented.

"Thank you." Xu Qian accepted Zhang Heng's blessing, took two more sips of tea, and put down the teacup. "As for my competitors, there are a lot of them, and I can give you all their names. All streamers who are almost as popular as me are to be considered competitors of mine. And as for those small-time streamers waiting to get to where I am today, there are countless of them. However, our competition isn't too fierce. My only fierce competitors are those who adopt the same streaming style and as popular as me. I can give you their names."

"Hmm?"

Xu Qian tapped her bracelet and quickly selected a few business cards from the address book and sent them to Zhang Heng.

"I considered this possibility before. If one of them decided to stalk me, I figured they would have hired someone to do it. The person could be a private investigator. I bet they are trying to dig up dark stories about my past. Once found, they would post these on the internet to make my popularity drop. Sometimes, those in this line will do whatever it takes to get the upper hand."

Zhang Heng clicked on the email and looked at it, making no comments.

"Is there anything else you want to ask?"

"That's it for the time being. I will investigate the list you gave me first," Zhang Heng said.

Xu Qian widened her eyes. She seemed a little surprised. "In addition to guarding my personal safety, the bodyguards of G7Z are also responsible for investigating my stalker?"

When Zhang Heng was asking the questions previously, some doubts emerged in Xu Qian's heart. This was her first time meeting a bodyguard that tried to collect such detailed information about her. Instead of looking like a bodyguard, Zhang Heng looked more like a private detective. Initially, she thought that he needed all that information to develop a protection plan for her. She did not expect Zhang Heng to take the lead and investigate this matter.

Zhang Heng's expression remained unchanged. "Oh, haven't the people in the company told you about my working style? I prefer to take the initiative to attack instead of sitting back and wait for the enemies to arrive."

"Uh... I didn't ask too many questions. All they did was give me a price list and the cost of each service. Anyway..." Xu Qian seemed to think of something, but she did not continue. She added after a pause, "Anyway, I have completed the payment. It's up to you. You can investigate it if you want, but you can only go out when I'm streaming. And you have to come back at night. When I go out, you have to stay by my side to ensure my safety."

"No problem," Zhang Heng said.

Other than wanting to help Xu Qian solve her problem, he also wanted to take this opportunity to find the whereabouts of the shellac records. Although he had 240 days of extra game time, this quest didn't seem to contain any threats at the moment.

Xu Qian was satisfied with Zhang Heng's answer, "Very well. I'll have to ask you to live with me for the coming two weeks. The master bedroom is my room, and the second bedroom is for work. I'm afraid you will need to sleep on the sofa. However, my sofa is a high-end product, more comfortable than the beds on the first and second floors. The sofa can be reassembled, completely flattened, and it can be controlled via your bracelet."

"Okay."

Zhang Heng did not care much about where he lived. He had slept in a constantly moving hammock on a ship and the little hut that he built. He wasn't here for a vacation, after all. All he needed was a place that could shelter him from the wind and rain.

Xu Qian stood up from the sofa and stretched her waist. "I have already ordered some bedding products for you. The express delivery will arrive in a while. You can buy your necessities and a change of clothes for yourself. I will start my streaming later. According to our agreement, you can go out during that time, but you'll have to be back before midnight. That will be all."

Xu Qian stretched out her hand after she was done talking. "I hope we can get along for the next two weeks."

"I will find out who is stalking you." Zhang Heng and Xu Qian shook hands.

"That's would be the best."

The truth was that Xu Qian didn't believe that Zhang Heng could deliver his promise. "There is still some time left before my next stream. I'm going to take a short nap. Do as you wish."

Xu Qian walked into the master bedroom, and the door displayed the word, LOCKED.

A quarter of an hour later, a drone carrying a package flew toward the window, and Zhang Heng instantly received an item confirmation on his phone. After Zhang Heng clicked confirm, the upper part of the floor-to-ceiling window opened up, allowing the drone to fly in.

The drone dropped the package by the wall in the living room, played some music, and flew out the window. About twenty minutes later, Xu Qian walked out of the bedroom, yawning. She then looked at the parcel in the corner. "The parcel is here? You can head out now."

"Well, if you need anything, just call me." Zhang Heng picked up the Shrouded Sheath and Pestilence Bone Bow at his feet and said goodbye to Xu Qian.

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On his first day out, Zhang Heng did not immediately start an investigation. He wanted to get himself familiar with the city first. He walked out of the apartment and came to the street outside. Xu Qian's unit was inside the dome, and the floor-to-ceiling windows were not facing the street. So this was Zhang Heng's first time seeing the outside world.

The entire third level's design was technological oriented. With tall buildings at every corner, both the sidewalk and the main roads were very spacious. Unlike the futuristic city in the Blade Runner movie, Zhang Heng saw no flying cars. The cars on the road still ran on four wheels. However, gasoline used to power vehicles had now been replaced by a new energy source.

The air, on the other hand, was reserved for the suspension railway, which was also the main public transport on the third level of this city. It led to every corner of town. Other than that, billboards that could be found in Blade Runner were used here. Its projection technology allowed the billboards to show different advertisements to different people continuously.

From the automatic shaving razor to the chocolate cake, the advertisements tempted the consumers to purchase them. Generally speaking, the weather on the third level of this city was mainly sunny. When Zhang Heng looked at the people that walked on the street, everyone looked quite confident. Striding along with their chests up, they looked like they were in a mighty rush. They appeared very optimistic about the future that was coming at them.

The plants that were planted on both sides of the road were done very well. Coupled with the extremely realistic sky mimicry, residents here did not feel depressed at all.

Dusk was coming soon; hence, the sky's brightness was dimmed accordingly. Zhang Heng stood at the crossroads, thinking about where to eat later. He had been fiddling with his wristband for a while, and he had figured out all of its functions.

The good news was that although science and technology in this quest were far more advanced than the real world, it wouldn't be too difficult for Zhang Heng to get the hang of it. It was only the year 2077, after all, and it meant that the criminal investigation methods that Zhang Heng had mastered so far could still come in handy.

## **Chapter 932: Help**

When Zhang Heng stood in front of the elevator, he heard the woman in fishnet stockings talking about credit points. The credit point was the official currency of the Human Federation. Almost all goods and services were bought and sold with credit points.

Zhang Heng then saw his current credit point balance from the bracelet.

962 points.

It was not a lot; clearly, not enough to pay for the service offered by the woman in fishnets, and it wasn't enough for Xu Qian to buy a new bag either. However, it was more than enough for Zhang Heng's food and necessities. Take his beef ramen as an example. A bowl of that would cost around 25 credit points, which meant his 962 credit points were enough to complete this two-week mission as long as he did not spend them on anything unnecessary.

Zhang Heng did not know whether his salary was paid on a monthly basis or if he would get paid for each task he completed. Right next to the noodle shop where he had his dinner was a shop selling all kinds of audio equipment. Thus, once he finished his meal, he took a walk there.

"Shellac record? Never heard of it."

The owner of the audio equipment store was a man with long hair, and he looked quite artistic. When he heard Zhang Heng's question, he shook his head. "Although I don't know what you are looking for, I can tell you that all physical records were discontinued in 2039. Only digital audio is available now. You can download them from the internet, and they sound better too. But..."

"There are indeed some people who like to collect antiques. I will give you an address where you can try your luck."

"Thank you."

After receiving the address, Zhang Heng navigated to his destination with the navigation function on his bracelet. It was a grocery stall called House of Old Things. It wasn't far from the audio equipment store, but the location was slightly remote, and it was in the middle of two communities. The grocery store was not facing the road, while an unpopular pastry shop lay next to it.

Although the sky had not turned dark, the House of Old Things had already put up a closed sign on their window. Just like its name, the shop had a very retro exterior. It still had the classic wooden glass door from the end of the 20th century. Here, Zhang Heng found a rare sense of familiarity in this technologically advanced city.

Unfortunately, he came at the wrong time. Seeing that the owner had gotten off work early, Zhang Heng could only come again at another time. However, just when he turned around to leave, the wooden glass door of the House of Old Things suddenly opened.

A young man of around sixteen years old ran out of the shop. He had a guitar on his back and an old stereo under his arm, shouting at his friend while he ran. "Hurry up, hurry up! That old man might wake up any time now!"

His friend was about the same age as him, and he held an electric oven and two routers with antennas. However, he looked a little sad. "Wang Gan, do you really think that we can sell these for money? We still haven't found buyers for the stuff we stole last time."

"We can ask the museum. If they don't want to buy them, we can sell them back to the old man. Isn't this a sh\*t place that buys and sells old things?" said the young man.

Before the young man at the back could respond to his companion, Wang Gan stopped running suddenly. Caught off guard, he almost ran into Wang Gan in front of him.

"What's wrong? Didn't you say you want to get away from this place as fast as possible?" the teenager behind complained. However, when he raised his head and looked past his companion, he immediately became nervous when he saw Zhang Heng. The three stood there and looked at each other for about four or five seconds.

After that, the young man named Wang Gan asked, "Who are you?"

"Bodyguard." Zhang Heng replied.

"What?!" The two teenagers were shocked when they heard Zhang Heng mentioning his job. "We are just picking up some random garbage. Is it really necessary for the old man to hire a bodyguard to deal with us?"

"You seem to have misunderstood," Zhang Heng said, "I am not the bodyguard of this shop's owner."

Wang Gan breathed a sigh of relief, "What a relief. You scared me to death."

"But... It is not right to steal the property of others. Besides, I'm pretty sure that security cameras recorded what you just did. Once the shop owner calls the police, you'll be spending your time behind bars."

"It doesn't matter. There are no security systems installed in the old man's shop. And he is a weirdo. He doesn't trust the police," the young man behind Wang Gan said quickly. After he said that, he quickly realized that he seemed to have said too much.

Wang Gan glared at him before turning to Zhang Heng. "Since the matter has nothing to do with you, you should get out of our way."

"Or what?" Zhang Heng asked rhetorically.

"Or..." Wang Gan gritted his teeth, put down the speaker under his arm, and pulled out a fruit knife from his pocket. "Otherwise, don't blame us for being rude."

Zhang Heng did not respond to Wang Gan's threats. All he did was look at the Shrouded Sheath on his waist. And the two teenagers landed their gaze on Zhang Heng's Shrouded Sheath as well. Immediately, their face turned pale. They were not professional robbers in the first place. They had only stolen all those old things because they were too bored and looked for some fun. Besides, earning some extra cash would earn them bragging rights in school. Since they didn't expect to sell those old things anyway, they shouldn't be able to afford any decent weapons as well.

When they compared their weapons with Zhang Heng's blade, any person could see that their blade was shorter.

Upon seeing this, the two looked at each other and obediently put down the knife.

Zhang Heng stepped aside too. "Off you go. And don't come back again. If I see you again next time, I won't be letting you off the hook so easily."

After scaring away the two teenagers, Zhang Heng bent over to pick up the pile of things they dropped on the ground.

Right after that, the door to the House of Old Things opened again, and an elderly man who appeared to be in his sixties emerged with a shotgun in hand. "Hands up! You damn thief," he shouted.

"Uhh... actually, the thieves were just driven away by me. Since this is not their first time robbing you, you should know them quite well," Zhang Heng explained. "I was planning to send these things back to your store."

"You can't lie to me, the boy with a bow. I know you robbed those robbers." With cheeks flushed red, the old man gasped, "You followed the two little bastards to my shop and waited to ambush them. They stole my treasures, and you robbed them."

"It makes sense." When the old man was speaking, Zhang Heng smelled alcohol in the air. Hence, Zhang Heng stopped talking, put down the router and speakers in his hand, and made his move.

The old man saw a quick flash in front of him, and when he reacted, Zhang Heng was already holding his shotgun.

Seeing Zhang Heng pointing his own gun at him, he suddenly sobered up and nodded.

“Well, I believe you are here to help.”

### **Chapter 933: Shellac Record**

Zhang Heng remained unbothered by the old man’s reaction. When he opened the shotgun’s barrel, he found out that there were no bullets in it. So, he returned the shotgun to the old man. After that, he picked up the things he placed on the ground earlier and followed the old man into his shop.

“Where do I put these?”

“Well, you place them anywhere you like. I’ll clean it up later.” The old man’s attitude seemed to have improved a lot after Zhang Heng pointed at him with his shotgun.

So, Zhang Heng put the pile of old things on the table and started to look around. The House of Old Objects was a concentration camp of paraphanelia from the past century. The goods here were ancient, with old routers, old teapots, stamps, commemorative coins, and even a cooker hood. Among all those old things, the items that filled up the shop were books. There were all kinds of books and old newspapers and each one was carefully preserved.

At first glance, the shop actually looked like a library.

In the end, Zhang Heng’s attention landed on a car model. “How much for the car model?”

The old man looked in the direction that Zhang Heng pointed and said, “Oh, this is a building block toy from the past. It was produced by the first toy company that produced building blocks. The people were once crazy about it. At that time, the building blocks were nothing more than building blocks. Later, some other companies started to produce smarter toys. And that building block company started to follow suit. Unfortunately, it eventually shut its doors due to poor management. It’s wasn’t easy for me to acquire this treasure. It is undeniably a commemorative piece of toy. I have to sell it at 800 credits.”

“That’s far too expensive.” Zhang Heng walked toward the car model while bargaining. He found the familiar Lego logo on the building block. After picking it and giving it a careful look, he felt instantly relieved. Initially, he thought the timeline change would’ve caused the Lego company to cease to exist.

If that was true, the Infinite Building Block that he brought with him would be rendered useless. With this Lego car model, he would be able to use his Infinite Building Block to deal with some of the complicated situations.

“Good things never come cheap,” the old man said. He then frowned. “Did you come to my shop just to buy Lego blocks?”

“No. I also want to inquire about the whereabouts of shellac records.” Zhang Heng said, “The owner of an audio equipment store told me that I could come to you to try my luck.”

“You have come to the right place,” the old man said. “There are very few who know about the shellac records. It is an audio medium that was born at the beginning of the last century. After the shellac ate

the leaves, they would secrete purple resin. Combine the purple resin with clay, cotton fiber, and other mixtures and you will get a shellac record. It dominated the market until the end of World War II. Later, Japan invaded the birthplace of its main raw material, and vinyl records were invented. The shellac record was then replaced by the vinyl record. Not long after that, vinyl records were replaced by CDs. And now, most audio is in digital format.”

“It is said that there are still some small factories producing CDs and vinyl records to satisfy a small part of the demand. As for shellac records... No one produces them anymore, which makes them very rare. To be honest, the shellac record is not very suitable for storing audio. A single shellac record can only store a few minutes of audio. And the sound is not well preserved too. Why are you interested in shellac records anyway?”

“Well, we have to find new hobbies for ourselves from time to time,” answered Zhang Heng. “So, do you have shellac records here?”

“Hah!” the old man snorted, but he didn’t answer Zhang Heng’s question immediately, folding his arms and staring at him. “You have to bargain with the building block’s price with me. I don’t think you can afford the shellac records. How would I know if you are not going to grab the records and run away like those two little bastards.”

“Because I need a lot of them. I’d like our business to be long-term, and robbing you will do me no good,” Zhang Heng said. “You seem to have many ways to collect these old things. I want to buy every single shellac record in this city.”

“It’s impossible. Do you know how much they will cost you? Besides, you can’t buy all the shellac records with only money.” The old man scoffed and shook his head as if he just heard a joke.

“It doesn’t matter. I have time. We can take it slow.”

“Oh, if I were you, I wouldn’t be so sure, but for the sake of you helping me retrieve the stolen goods, I can indeed sell you a few shellac records.” The old man did not blink. He then told Zhang Heng its price. “Three thousand. Three thousand credits for one shellac record.”

“One hundred.” Zhang Heng did not blink as well.

“Are you here to mess with me?” the old man growled angrily.

“You started it first,” Zhang Heng said. “You’re the one who said not many know about shellac records these days. And there are even fewer collectors. If I’m not mistaken, you have a difficult time selling your shellac records. It’ll do you better to sell them to me at a lower price.”

“You know nothing about shellac records! You don’t even know their value. I might as well take them to the grave and listen to them myself.”

“Do you really want me to wait for your death and dig your grave?” Zhang Heng asked.

The old man was so enraged that he started to laugh. However, something else seemed to cross his mind, and the anger on his face faded a little. “You are right. Other than you, no one else will be interested in buying shellac records. I can sell them to you at a low price, or I can even give them to you for free.”

“But?” Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows.

“But you have to provide me with something I need in exchange.”

“What do you need?”

“Although your outfits are a little exaggerated and over-the-top, I have to admit that you look like you can fight well. I want you to be my bodyguard and accompany me to meet someone. He lives at the bottom level of this city. That place is not that safe, especially if I go alone.”

“I’m afraid that won’t be possible because I’ve just taken a job as a bodyguard for someone else. You will need to wait two weeks before I can protect you,” Zhang Heng said.

“No, I don’t need you to protect me all the time. I just need you to accompany me to meet someone. Can you spare some time for me? It will only take four to five hours.”

“If that’s the case, I can do that for you.”

Xu Qian would stream every day, especially in the evening, which usually lasted until midnight. According to the previous agreement between the two, Zhang Heng only needed to get back to her before midnight.

“Wait here.” After Zhang Heng replied to him, the old man turned around and walked to the side of a bookshelf. He pulled out an iron box from the side, opened it, took out a paper bag, and handed it to Zhang Heng.

Zhang Heng knew the contents of the paper bag without even opening it. The system had just informed him that he had found a shellac record and it earned ten game points.

### **Chapter 934: Shopping**

At midnight, Xu Qian finished her routine stream. Upon wishing her fans good dreams, she quit the streaming platform and yawned. She did not get up in a hurry, going instead to check the credits she made today.

Since her live stream viewers had been declining recently, the gifts that she received had also reduced. Hence, her income didn’t look too good. As compared to in her primetime, her income had been reduced by at least half. However, Xu Qian saw the two sweet text messages her boyfriend sent her a few hours ago. He told her to rest early, and he also told her that there would be surprises for her tomorrow.

Her mood improved a lot, and she began to feel that it wasn’t too bad of an idea to quit her job and get married to her boyfriend. So she walked out of her studio and went to the refrigerator to get a bottle of beer. When she turned around, she saw Zhang Heng playing with his building blocks on the sofa.

“You are back. How did it go? Did you find anything?” she asked while opening the bottle.

“Well. I just ruled out two people on the list that you gave me. But...”

Xu Qian waved her hand and interrupted Zhang Heng, “I don’t care why you ruled them out. You just need to do your job well and show me the results.”



After she took two sips of beer, her irritability seemed to tone down a little. So, she took the initiative to apologize. "Sorry. I talked a lot on my stream just now. I am really not in the mood to talk anymore."

"Understandable." Zhang Heng nodded.

After that, the two stopped talking. Xu Qian turned on the projection and watched the hottest series on the Internet. However, she did not watch it for too long. After she drank all the beer in the can, she got up and went to the bathroom. After another half an hour, the washroom's door was unlocked.

Xu Qian walked out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around her, and her hair had just been blown dry. "I'm going to bed first. Don't sleep too late. I'm going out to buy some clothes tomorrow morning."

"Okay, see you in the morning."

"See you in the morning."

Xu Qian turned around and walked into her room.

After Xu Qian left, Zhang Heng tried the sofa mentioned by Xu Qian earlier. It was indeed more comfortable than a normal bed. Although Zhang Heng had no requirements for his living environment, he would not complain if he could sleep comfortably. He placed his blade at his side, and soon he fell asleep on the pillow.

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Early the next morning, Xu Qian ordered two takeout breakfasts, which were delivered by the drones. Zhang Heng had also noticed that although there was a small kitchen in Xu Qian's apartment, it seemed like she had never used it before. In fact, by 2077, there were very few people who still insisted on cooking their food. That was because all the restaurants used drones to deliver food to their customers. The drones were incredibly convenient, and the restaurants had to abide by strict sanitation and health standards. Other than that, the price of the food was reasonable and affordable.

The vast majority of people would opt to take out three meals a day so they would have more time to do other things. With its absolute necessity diminished, cooking became more like a hobby. Most of the stock of vegetables and meat would be supplied to the restaurants. Of course, people could still buy them from the supermarkets; they came at way higher prices now. Besides, most people did not have a kitchen in their homes. The apartment unit that Xu Qian rented had a kitchen because the original owner was a cooking enthusiast. Xu Qian now used it as a utility room.

Zhang Heng wanted to pay for breakfast, but Xu Qian refused his money.

"Although the agreement didn't mention anything about living with me or providing you meals, I have to eat every day anyway. So I don't mind paying for your meals since it doesn't cost much."

Xu Qian shared half of her meal with Zhang Heng as she spoke. Although there were various technological methods to help with weight loss, maintaining a balanced diet was still the better method to keep in shape. Fans nowadays were not stupid. The moment they found out that their streamers used the help of some kind of technological method to slim down, the streamers would start losing many fans.

In the end, Zhang Heng did not insist on paying for his meals. He did not have many credits, to begin with. It was always a good thing to be able to save more credits.

The Lego building blocks that he had with him were rented from the old man.

Yes. He was renting it, not buying.

Although the old man was willing to let him exchange service for shellac records, he still insisted on Zhang Heng paying 800 credits for the Lego bricks. And he was not willing to lower the price. So, Zhang Heng suggested to the old man about renting it temporarily. However, it was different from the shellac records. He would only get to use the Lego bricks in this quest. He could not bring it with him after the quest was over.

So, in the end, Zhang Heng obtained the right to lease this set of Lego bricks at the price of ten credits per month. Both parties were very satisfied with the deal. In addition, Zhang Heng paid half a year's rent to the old man, costing him a total of 60 credits to get the Lego bricks that he wanted.

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After breakfast, Xu Qian called a taxi and went to the largest department store on the third level with Zhang Heng. Across the roads, Zhang Heng could see the dynamic advertisements on the outer wall of the mall. A wide variety of products were being advertised, including clothes, cosmetics, various technological gadgets, and a newly released game.

Xu Qian saw a young girl promoting sports earphones in the advertisements, and she was envied of her.

"That's Qiu Wei, the top-streamer of the company I work for. She is two years younger than me, and she worked in this industry for only a year and a half. However, her annual income has reached eight figures. So many companies want her to endorse their products. I have to say that she is the company's well-deserved cash cow. Now, she lives on the fourth level of this city. When she celebrated her birthday this year, the company invited about one hundred streamers to join her birthday party. I was there, and I received a limited-edition lipstick when I walked in. It costs about 6,000 to 7,000 credits. There were drinks, male escorts, and other forms of entertainment. It was said that the cost of the birthday party exceeded one million credits."

"Yeah." Zhang Heng sat in the co-pilot seat and responded to Xu Qian. However, he was focusing on paying attention to his surroundings. He did not forget his bodyguard's duties.

The department store area was the most prosperous place on the third level. Stores lined the entire street, while throngs of people entered and left the place. It was indeed very lively. As a former assassin, Zhang Heng knew that this was also the place where something bad was most likely to happen. No matter who the perpetrator was, they could easily make themselves disappear into the crowd.

This time, Zhang Heng did not bring his Pestilence Bone Bow and Shrouded Sheath with him. The reason why he dressed like a normal person was that he wanted to draw the stalker out. Xu Qian was not concerned about whether she could find the person who stalked her. She just wanted to sleep peacefully at night. Then, when her boyfriend returned to her, she would not need to worry about her safety anymore. And perhaps, she could even take advantage of this matter and move to the fourth level, living the life of the rich wife in advance.

On the other hand, Zhang Heng placed a lot of importance on his first job. If he could catch the stalker, he would be able to solve Xu Qian's troubles once and for all. After all, the title of this quest was Bodyguard. Of course, Zhang Heng could do his job minimally to complete the task, but his instinct told him that this matter was not as simple as it seemed.

From the information he gathered so far, Xu Qian was indeed a very ordinary streamer. She was good-looking, and she had a small reputation. However, she could be materialistic at times, and she had a bad temper too. The good thing was she would admit her mistakes. All she could ever think of was to marry a wealthy man and live a better life. And she did not interact with too many people in real life. It was difficult to imagine that someone like her would get involved in something serious.

### **Chapter 935: Stalker**

Once Xu Qian got down from the car, she headed directly to the luxury stores on the mall's first floor. Not long after that, she spent roughly ten thousand credits on the clothes. Although this was the city's third level, very few people made purchases in these luxury shops. Hence, there were way fewer people in this kind of store.

Zhang Heng could see that Xu Qian was a regular here. The store assistant lady greeted her enthusiastically as soon as she walked in. She proceeded to recommend her the new arrivals in the store. Xu Qian then picked a few of them and went to the fitting room at the back for a try.

Zhang Heng, like the other men in the store, found a corner and stood there. One of the men beside him was playing with his bracelet, and the other eyed the gorgeous ladies that passed the store while his girlfriend was away.

However, the latter's eyes were quickly attracted by the figure that had just walked out of the fitting room. Xu Qian had just changed into a new set of clothes, which looked like Scarlett Johanson's outfit in the movie *Ghost in the Shell*. It was simple in design yet looked technologically advanced. Besides, the outfit also highlighted Xu Qian's curvaceous figure. Coupled with her sweet appearance, the force of the powerful juxtaposition immediately attracted the stares of a large group of men. Thus, the store assistant couldn't help but compliment her.

"I want this set," Xu Qian said after taking a picture in the mirror.

And right after she finished this sentence, a boy, influenced by his friend, finally mustered enough courage and walked towards her. Blushing, he muttered, "That... Hello. Have we met before?"

Unfortunately for him, Xu Qian did not answer his question.

Instead, she looked at Zhang Heng. And Zhang Heng knew that he had to carry out his bodyguard's duty. Hence, he walked over, stood in front of the two, and said kindly to the boys, "Hello, what can I do for you?"

The boy then glanced at Zhang Heng's figure and appearance and chose to give up on talking to Xu Qian.

After the boy's bold advances, Xu Qian wanted to stay in this store no longer. She returned to the changing room to change back her clothes and asked the assistant to pack the new clothes quickly. After that, she put on her sunglasses, paid for the clothes, and left in a hurry.

Right after she walked out of the store, Xu Qian said to Zhang Heng, "You did a good job just now."

Zhang Heng knew what Xu Qian meant. It was inevitable that she would encounter such a thing whenever she headed out. Since she was a public figure and was supposed to behave like a sweet girl in front of everyone, she could never resort to any violent means to deal with such trouble. If the incident were to be recorded and posted on the internet, she would lose many followers indefinitely. If the person made a big deal out of it and if it wasn't handled well, it could trigger a series of serious consequences.

This was why Xu Qian was remarkably satisfied with Zhang Heng's gentle and polite approach. Later, she headed to several other stores, eventually spending a total of 60,000 to 70,000 credits before she finally decided to call it a day. It was almost noon now. To express her gratitude, she invited Zhang Heng for some Huaiyang cuisine.

As the two rode the escalator, Zhang Heng suddenly whispered into Xu Qian's ear, "It seems someone is following us."

Xu Qian instantly became nervous. "Then what should we do?!"

"It's okay. Pretend you don't know anything and just keep walking. I will take care of the rest," Zhang Heng said as he reached his hands into his backpack.

Since he wanted to draw the stalker out, he did not bring his Pestilence Bone Bow and Shrouded Sheath with him. However, that did not mean he would let down his guard, especially when he did not know the opponent's strength. The Infinite Building Block and the pile of Lego parts that he carried in his backpack were used to deal with a situation like this.

Besides, Zhang Heng had been observing the stalker for some time now. The stalker thought that he was extremely cautious. With the crowds in the mall and the distance between the two parties, the stalker assumed that Zhang Heng would not be able to spot him. He did not know that Zhang Heng's observational ability had become extremely good after completing the Deduction Reasoning quest. Other than that, he was now the master of stealth. It would be an epic failure if he did not manage to detect that someone was following them.

On the contrary, after Zhang Heng observed the stalker for a while, he found that the stalker had amateurish abilities. Apart from the good job covering his face, he didn't make any extraordinary moves.

Thus, Zhang Heng did not bother to make any more wild assumptions. He decided to confront the stalker directly. Xu Qian, on the other side, did what Zhang Heng told her to do. She tried her best to control her walking, neither too fast nor slow. She pretended that she did not notice anything and continued to walk normally.

On the other hand, Zhang Heng put his hand into his backpack, pretending to be looking for something. At the same time, he quickly assembled a stun gun with the Lego blocks. After that, he inserted the Infinite Building Block into the stun gun to materialize it.

Based on Zhang Heng's initial observation, the stalker looked extremely weak. Technically speaking, he could easily bring him down with his bare hands. However, he remembered that this was a proxy war dungeon, and being cautious was always advantageous.

At this time, they arrived at a corridor on their right. It connected the second floor of this mall with the second floor of another smaller mall opposite them. It allowed patrons to head to the other mall without going downstairs and crossing the road.

Xu Qian pretended that she wanted to go to the other shopping mall. So, she turned and walked towards the corridor. And Zhang Heng made sure that he stayed by her side. Soon, the two disappeared behind the corner store. Once they saw that they were in a blind spot, they stopped moving forward, and they leaned their backs against the wall.

Zhang Heng believed that with the stalker's vigilance and anti-reconnaissance capabilities, he would never have thought that someone would ambush him here.

And when he walked to the point where he could see Zhang Heng and Xu Qian, the distance between them would be around three to four meters at most. By that time, it would be impossible for him to run away from Zhang Heng.

Xu Qian was a little nervous because they were still in public, and many people were walking around them. She didn't look afraid of what would happen next, but she saw Zhang Heng frowning the next second. Before she could say anything, Zhang Heng had already gone after the stalker.

After calculating the time, Zhang Heng figured that the stalker should be approaching them really soon. He waited for another two seconds, but he still could not spot the stalker. So, he immediately realized that the situation might have changed. When he rushed out of the store, he saw the target running away from him in the crowd, and the distance between the two was starting to grow.

Zhang Heng then took out the stun gun. Compared to a pistol, however, the stun gun had a closer ranger. In other words, Zhang Heng would not be able to shoot him from where he stood. Xu Qian was still by his side, too, and he could not leave her alone. After Zhang Heng chased him over a short distance, he stopped and watched the stalker disappear into the crowd.

"What's the matter?" Xu Qian looked confused.

"He managed to get away," Zhang Heng said as he put away the stun gun.

"Didn't you say that he wouldn't spot us?" Xu Qian asked.

"That was what I thought as well." Zhang Heng said.

"Then why did he run?"

Zhang Heng did not answer her question. He looked up at the surveillance camera above his head.

"We will find out."

### **Chapter 936: Livestream**

After realizing that the stalker was real, Xu Qian's originally relaxed emotions tensed up again. That afternoon, she received a surprise from her boyfriend. He bought her a sports car that cost 600,000 credits. The dealership sent the car to her apartment, and the sales representative handed her the keys and flowers. Compared with those gifts, however, Xu Qian actually hoped that her boyfriend was by her side.

However, the latter was still busy having business meetings on earth at the moment, and he would only be back by next week at the earliest. Initially, Xu Qian hired a bodyguard to help her sleep better at night, but she was now grateful that she hired one for protection.

After the two returned from the mall, Zhang Heng did not go out again. Xu Qian had already started her stream in her studio room, and according to the agreement, Zhang Heng was allowed to leave the apartment. However, he chose to stay in the living room to make her feel safe.

In the meantime, Zhang Heng did some investigation.

He was lucky that G7Z Security Company was the largest security company in New Shanghai 0297. It had a wide range of business. In addition to providing high-end services such as private bodyguards, it also provided general security for public places such as shopping malls and theaters. The two had gone there in the morning, where the G7Z security company did the security work of that large shopping mall.

Without having to sneak into the monitoring room, Zhang Heng could acquire the surveillance footage by filling up an internal application form. After filling out an application form online, and an hour's wait, the surveillance footage was sent to his personal terminal. Zhang Heng then connected his bracelet to the projection equipment in the living room to play those videos.

It was easy to find the stalker in the crowd. Paying extra attention to the stalker's behavior, he saw that he did not have verbal or physical contact with other people in the mall. The surveillance footage now showed Zhang Heng and Xu Qian hiding behind the corner shop.

At this time, the stalker lowered his head to click on something on his bracelet. However, he used an external monitor connected to his bracelet and the crowd as his cover. Hence, Zhang Heng could not see what he was doing on the external monitor. Soon after that, he kept away the external screen and started to run as fast as he could. After a few seconds, Zhang Heng realized something wrong, and he jumped out from behind the store before pursuing the stalker. However, Zhang Heng was worried about Xu Qian, so he stopped going after him, and the stalker eventually managed to escape.

A Hacker?

After Zhang Heng watched the video, he touched his chin. This would explain why there were no visitor records when the stalker invaded and why the alarm did not go off as well.

...

Xu Qian followed Zhang Heng's advice. She said nothing about her brush with the stalker during her livestream. However, this incident could arouse the protective desire and compassion of her male fans, and if they sympathized with her, she might just be able to coax out some gifts from her fans. Since she was thinking of quitting soon and had just received the small gift that cost 600,000 credits from her boyfriend in the afternoon, Xu Qian did not care much about the money.

After she got off from her stream, she walked out of the room. To her surprise, she found out that Zhang Heng had also just exited her livestream.

"Were you just watching my livestream?" Xu Qian asked with raised eyebrows.

"Well, I didn't expect that you could dance," Zhang Heng said.

"Hmm. There is a dance studio next to the place where I lived when I was young. My mother knew the teacher there, and I learned dancing there for a while. However, it requires too much hard work, and I couldn't last that long. So when I become a streamer, I have to pick up dancing again. It's useless to look only pretty these days. You have to be talented too."

After the livestream, Xu Qian was not as irritable as before. It was probably because of what happened in the morning. Seeing Zhang Heng gave her a sense of security. Opening the refrigerator door, she took out two cans of beer this time and tossed one to Zhang Heng.

"You dance very well." Zhang Heng complimented after he took the beer.

"Thank you. I know that you are just nice. However, I am far from being a professional dancer, and the people who watch my livestream weren't admiring my dancing skills. They are only paying attention to my body," Xu Qian said.

"At least, this shows that you are in good shape," Zhang Heng said calmly.

"I accept the compliment."

Xu Qian sat down on the sofa next to Zhang Heng, took a long sigh of relief, and opened the beer in her hand, "To be honest, I didn't expect you to watch my livestream."

"Why do you say that? Who usually watches your stream then?" Zhang Heng asked rhetorically and opened his beer.

"All kinds of people, but most of them are lonely people who can't get any satisfaction from the real world. You don't look like that kind of person," Xu Qian said. "I heard there was once a country worried about its rapid population growth. About 50 or 60 years ago, the federal population entered a negative growth stage, and everyone seemed to prefer to live alone."

"Well, in primitive societies, our ancestors all lived in large tribes, hunting, foraging, and raising children together. If the individual leaves the tribe, it would be impossible for the person to survive. When overproduction happened and living conditions improved, they started to leave the tribe and form their families.

"Then we have come to an era of unprecedented convenience. All of your basic needs can be fulfilled through the telephone and the Internet. We no longer have the need to connect to society. And so, we have more time to pursue personal freedom and self-actualization. During this process, the position of the family in society is also being challenged.

In fact, this trend got more and more popular in the world we live in, especially in the neighboring countries, where the fertility rate kept getting lower. Many single men and women preferred to be alone because they didn't want to tolerate another person. Without children, they would have a better quality of life. This phenomenon has gotten worse in 2077.

"This is why becoming a streamer seems so popular in this era. There are different types of streamers, from gaming, telling jokes, chatting to talent showcasing. Some of the streamers would even act cute to gain more views. They are there to meet all the reasonable and unreasonable requirements of their fans.

“Well, it makes sense. I still have to find myself a long-term job to feed myself,” Xu Qian sighed, “Especially when I am young and beautiful. You can grab a man on the road and ask him what kind of woman he likes. They will tell you all kinds of answers like virtuous, gentle, and blah, blah, blah. All those are nonsense. There is only one truth. Men are very dedicated animals, from eight to eighty years old, they all like young and beautiful girls. If your goal is to look for someone to marry, no matter how much you improve yourself, as you grow older, you will not have the advantage when you are young. I will not make such a mistake. I marry myself to someone while I am still valuable.”

Xu Qian then finished the beer in the can.

### **Chapter 937: Second Job**

After that, the two chatted for a little longer before Zhang Heng asked Xu Qian if he could join the fan chatroom. She gladly agreed, even letting Zhang Heng become an administrator. It was midnight, and Xu Qian finally felt the exhaustion hit her. She ended the free-of-charge chat with Zhang Heng, got up, took a bath, and went to sleep.

On the second day, Zhang Heng stayed with Xu Qian for the whole day without going anywhere. What surprised her was that Zhang Heng actually fulfilled his duty as an administrator, warning those who broke the chatroom’s rules. He also resolved the conflicts between her fans. He seemed to be having fun with it. This time, it was Xu Qian’s turn to feel embarrassed to ask Zhang Heng about the investigation’s progress. She even started to consider if she should pay Zhang Heng an extra salary.

On the third night, when Xu Qian was livestreaming, Zhang Heng finally went out alone. She had also added another physical lock to the studio room’s door.

Before leaving, Zhang Heng reminded Xu Qian again. Considering that the stalker might be a hacker, there was a possibility that he was now using another’s ID. Thus, Zhang Heng told Xu Qian that even if she received a message from him, it was best to ignore it since he would only return to her apartment right after she ended her stream.

Once Zhang Heng left the apartment, he called for a rental car and headed to the House of Old Things. Old Man Geng contacted him yesterday and asked him to pay for the shellac record, and he also promised to give him another after completing the task.

So Zhang Heng had to put the stalker case aside now and accompany Old Man Geng to the bottom level of this city.

“Leave your blade and bow with me first,” Old man Geng said. “We are doing business, not fighting.”

“Didn’t you say you wanted me to be your bodyguard?” Zhang Heng frowned.

“Yes, but that’s just in case. We should show our peaceful side first. Don’t worry. I will place your blade and bow in my secret basement. All the goodies are hidden there. I will never lose it.”

Left with no other option, Zhang Heng passed his Shrouded Sheath and Pestilence Bone Bow to Old Man Geng.



Old Man Geng then took a good look at Zhang Heng, and he was happy with him. "Let's go. Don't you have to come back here before midnight? By the way, are you a female high school student? Why do you have to go home on time every day? "

"..."

"Forget it; I have no interest in your other jobs. If everything goes well, I will be able to get my job done very soon," Old Man Geng said.

The two then took a shuttle in the center of the city.

From here, one could take a shuttle back and forth between the different levels of this city. And, this was also the only way for one to travel around. However, the people who lived in the city's lowest level had to register themselves if they wanted to ascend to a higher level. Usually, the application could be approved quickly if the person had no criminal record. However, there were only allowed to travel to a maximum of two levels above them. So, if they wanted to go to a higher level than that, they would need someone at that level to invite them.

However, if the person's workplace and residence were on different levels, they could apply for a long-term pass at their workplace. All they needed to do was to renew them every six months, after all. By doing that, they were allowed to travel freely among different levels, avoiding the trouble of making an application every time.

Other than that, moving homes was also very simple. Each level had an asset threshold. If one passed the threshold, the person could move to a higher floor, live there, and enjoy the benefits that came with it.

Alternatively, the individual could provide corresponding validation to prove that they would have a substantial and constant cash flow. Upon reaching the required amount, even if the person's assets did not meet the moving requirement, they could still proceed with the move.

This was how Xu Qian moved to a higher level. She lived there for almost two years before applying to move to the third level. After the application was approved, she took the central shuttle to the second level.

It was almost time to get off work now, and the central shuttle was crowded with people who had just finished work and were waiting to go home. Fortunately, the shuttle had quite an impressive capacity. There were four tracks in total. During peak hours, the shuttle would depart every three minutes on average, and it could accommodate up to 10,000 people at a time.

The people were lining up in their respective waiting rooms, waiting for the group of people in front of them to get into the shuttle. Once the group in front of them left, they would need to enter the corresponding waiting room immediately, find a seat, fasten their seat belts, and wait for the next shuttle to arrive.

Each waiting room had about fifty seats. All of which were passengers that wanted to go to the same level of the city. And all those waiting rooms were small units that could be detached and connected again.

When the shuttle arrived at the corresponding spot, there would be a total of two hundred waiting rooms assembled during extreme cases in just seven minutes. And these waiting rooms that were meant for people that just got off the train would be transferred to the arrival hall. After that, the waiting room modules would assemble at a different position according to the number of levels reached.

Although many people were waiting to go home, everything seemed to be in order.

Zhang Heng and Old Man Geng waited less than a quarter of an hour before boarding a shuttle. After another ten minutes, they arrived at the destination of their trip.

It was the first level of New Shanghai 0297.

Unlike the modern and technologically advanced third floor, the first floor appeared far more dilapidated. Whether it was the buildings or the streets, it was said that this level was the first to be built in the entire space station city. It was also the place where the construction workers lived before. After that, it became the place to earn more money for the young people and the low-income earners who had just moved to New Shanghai 0297.

This level had the largest population in 0297 in New Shanghai. However, the municipal council appeared to have invested little in this level, including the sky above them. All they got was the simple day and night, and they did not get to look at the stars at night. Zhang Heng raised his head and looked at the sky. All he could see was the moon. The facilities here could never be compared with what others had on the third level of this city, let alone the change of temperature and the four seasons.

To put it in simple terms, public facilities here were simply adequate to meet the most basic survival needs of the residents. If one wanted a better life, the person had to move to another level. At the same time, public security on the first level was the worst in the entire New Shanghai-0297.

This was also the reason why Old Man Geng took Zhang Heng with him. After he got off the central shuttle, he looked a little nervous. He was holding a very old-school briefcase and constantly looked around.

Zhang Heng, beside him, had to remind him, "If you do this, you are showing that you are holding something valuable. Basically, you are asking to be robbed."

"Then what should I do?" Old Man Geng asked.

"Just act normal, like an ordinary person," Zhang Heng said. "Where is the person you are looking for?"

"I don't know." Old Man Geng accepted Zhang Heng's suggestion, put down the briefcase as he tried to prevent attracting unnecessary attention.

"What do you mean?" Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows.

"He only asked me to come to the first level, and he will come to me when the time comes." Old Man Geng replied.

Finally, Zhang Heng had the opportunity to avenge himself.

"What are you? Are you a female high school student waiting for your boyfriend to take you to the nightclub?"

“ ... ”

This time it was Old Man Geng's turn to take a hit.

### **Chapter 938: Lowest Level**

The two did not stand by the roadside for too long. Soon enough, they were being targeted. A few villain-looking men surrounded them. However, after considering the number of people here and the guards that were not too far away, they decided not to do it immediately. Instead, they seemed to be waiting for Zhang Heng and Old Man Geng to go to a more remote place to rob them.

Old Man Geng became nervous again when he noticed the robbers. He then asked Zhang Heng in a low voice, “What should we do? Can you handle so many of them at the same time?”

“I can deal with them easily, but I don't need to take action,” Zhang Heng said while looking at a woman in a cheongsam across the road.

The latter did not seem to be someone who lived on this level.

Her facial features weren't outstanding, but she did look slightly prettier than most of her counterparts. In other words, her looks would not attract too much attention on this floor. However, she did have a very unique and strong temperament.

Xu Qian had a good temperament because she had practiced dancing before. However, when Zhang Heng compared her with Xu Qian, he felt that the latter overshadowed her. Even the top streamer of Xu Qian's company, Qiu Wei, who had tens of millions of fans and was featured in an advertisement, still had a temperament slightly inferior to that of the lady he had just seen.

It was undeniable that Qiu Wei was prettier and younger. However, when the two stood side by side, Qiu Wei looked more like an ugly duckling. A bizarre feeling struck Zhang Heng. It was as if an angel was trapped in her mortal body.

It was truly a shame. If she had Qiu Wei's facial features and worked as a streamer, she could've easily become an internet sensation, gaining hundreds of millions of rabid fans. But, other than her look and temperament, Zhang Heng also paid attention to her left arm.

For some reason, her left arm was missing. Instead, it was replaced by a prosthetic limb, and there was no artificial skin attached to it. The white titanium shell was visible to everyone.

It looked thin and slender, but Zhang Heng did not dare to underestimate it. The information that Zhang Heng collected earlier about this era before was related to mechanical prostheses. That was why he paid special attention to it.

As early as 2019, when he was currently living, the research and development of mechanical prosthetics had always been a hot topic. And many related products were being invented. Not only could these products greatly improve their quality of life, but they would enable the disabled to do things that the ordinary could never dream of. Not to mention the rapid technological development of the dungeon that he entered this time.

Some extremists took the initiative to replace some of their body parts with the corresponding mechanical parts to pursue greater strength and speed. Of course, this was strictly prohibited by laws and regulations.

Zhang Heng did not know what kind of abilities the cheongsam woman's mechanical prosthesis gave her, but judging from the saber hanging on her waist, the mechanical hand was more than just holding chopsticks and arranging flowers.

While waiting for the signal light to turn green, the cheongsam woman crossed the road and walked in front of Zhang Heng and Old Man Geng.

Going straight to the point, she said, "Follow me."

She then turned and walked towards another intersection. With her appearance, the men who thought of robbing them quickly retreated into the crowd.

"It seems the person that you're looking for at this level is not as simple as we thought," Zhang Heng said to Old Man Geng.

"New Shanghai 0297 was invested and constructed by the Shengtang Morgan Group. These people were a group of profit-oriented bastards. They clearly have the ability and technology to manage the city well, but they deliberately treat all five levels differently. They adopted a semi-laissez-faire attitude toward the first level, with their main reason being reducing expenditure. The other reason was to stimulate more people here to work hard and generate more wealth. However, no matter what land it is, there will always be a ruler. And this place is no exception. Shengtang Morgen has already given up on this place. Naturally, there will be more powerful people to fill in the gap they left. We are actually going to meet the ruler of this place," Old Man Geng explained.

Zhang Heng frowned when he heard this. He then stopped walking. "Why didn't you tell me earlier that the person you wanted to meet is the ruler of this place? Are you for real? For two shellac records, you made me come to this extremely dangerous place?"

"We won't be in any danger. You are just my contingency plan." Old Man Geng wiped the sweat on his forehead to defend himself. He felt a little nervous at the thought of going to meet such a powerful man. "I'm not here this time for a transaction. My role is to bring two parties together to discuss their potential transaction. I am just the intermediary."

"In other words, killing you will be no big deal to them," Zhang Heng said lightly.

"They won't do that." Old Man Geng then looked at the cheongsam girl who stopped moving and glared at them from a distance. He felt anxious. "Boy, can't we go back and talk about this? We haven't even met the person we were supposed to meet, and here we are fighting among ourselves. They must think we two are nothing more but clowns! Besides, you did promise to be my bodyguard. So fulfill your promise."

Zhang Heng was unmoved when he heard what Old Man Geng said. "That's because you concealed important information. You only paid me to deal with the goons. Now, you want to defeat the boss for you?"

"What do you want?"

"Either we re-negotiate a reasonable price, or we part ways and go on our own," Zhang Heng said.

"How much do you want?" Finally, old Man Geng helplessly relented.

"If you weren't lying this time, I want ten shellac records." However, Zhang Heng did not take advantage of him. Instead, he offered him a more reasonable price after reassessing the risk.

Upon hearing that, however, Old Man Geng was reluctant to take the offer. He then asked, "How about I give you three more shellac records?"

Zhang Heng didn't bother to respond.

"Alright. Let's do it. Ten shellac records it is then." Old Man Geng finally succumbed to Zhang Heng. Other than the fact that he couldn't find anyone to become his bodyguard at the moment, he also felt that the price that Zhang Heng was asking for was reasonable. Even if he hired other people in advance, the price would be the same.

The cheongsam girl on the other side was listening quietly to their bargain, and she did not speak a word while they were arguing. Instead, she only talked to them after the two finalized the transaction.

"You two don't have to worry about anything. You are guests, after all. Mr. G will not hurt his guests. "

"I know, I know." Old Man Geng nodded hurriedly, "Mr. G's accountability has always been renowned. I only hired a bodyguard to protect me on the way back and forth."

The cheongsam girl did not reveal the obvious lie that Old Man Geng just told. Instead, she asked, "Do you have anything else you might want to deal with? If not, let's continue our journey. We don't want to keep Mr. G waiting."

"Of course. Please lead the way." Seeing the cheongsam woman turning around again, Old Man Geng grabbed the briefcase and followed her.

### **Chapter 939: Movie**

The three of them did not walk too far before they came to a movie theater.

Since today wasn't a holiday, there were not many people in front of the cinema. The ticket inspector outside nodded respectfully at the cheongsam girl, and the latter also nodded in return. However, she did not stop in front of the gate. Instead, she continued walking on before turning into an alley on the side of the cinema.

There was an iron ladder facing a security door on the second floor of the theater.

The cheongsam girl walked at the front, arrived in front of the safe door, opened the door, and two men stood behind it, looking like bodyguards. Zhang Heng had a very decent physique. Ever since he started his first game, he had maintained the habit of staying fit. The strength of his arms, waist, and abdomen had significantly increased. To maintain flexibility, though, he also had to control his muscle growth. He did not want to grow too big like the two ripped bodyguards in front of him.

All they did was stand there and intimidate whoever came through the entrance.

Old Man Geng felt the same too. When he compared Zhang Heng and the two bodyguards, he thought it wasn't worth paying Zhang Heng with the ten shellac records. On the contrary, however, Zhang Heng wasn't affected by them.

The two brawny bodyguards searched Zhang Heng and Old Man Geng when they arrived in front of them. They were taken aback when they saw the pile of Lego bricks in Zhang Heng's backpack.

Old Man Geng wanted to dig a hole and hide in it. He did not expect Zhang Heng to like those bricks so much that he would carry them while at work. Was he planning to play with his Lego whenever he was bored?

Fortunately, the bodyguards did not make fun of their building blocks, not when they were there, at least. "Please stretch out your hand," the cheongsam woman said after scanning their belongings.

Zhang Heng then stretched out his left hand.

The cheongsam girl, however, looked at him and shook her head. "The other hand, the one with the bracelet."

Zhang Heng then showed her his right hand again. The cheongsam girl then put on another smaller black bracelet on his right wrist, explaining, "Don't worry, this is just a signal blocker. It will block all signals that originate from you. In order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and troubles, please don't take it off until you leave this place."

After that, she did the same to Old Man Geng. Once that was done, the cheongsam girl signaled them again. Now, Zhang Heng quickly realized that Old Man Geng's task might not be as simple as he put it to be.

According to the latter's statement, Mr. G was the ruler of the first level. He was supposed to be the uncrowned king, at least in his territory. Hence, he did not need to worry about his safety. In other words, the purpose of the search that was conducted on them earlier was not to ensure Mr. G's safety. From Zhang Heng's perspective, they were actually worried that Zhang Heng and Old Man Geng would leak the news.

After putting on the bracelet, Zhang Heng and Old Man Geng walked through the entrance. Zhang Heng noticed that the poorly wired was turned on when he walked past the door. It went out after a while. He looked back at the two burly bodyguards and the cheongsam girl behind him and found that they seemed oblivious to it.

The bodyguards were still guarding the entrance, and the cheongsam girl walked up from behind to lead the way. The three of them walked for about twenty meters before the cheongsam girl told Old Man Geng, "Mr. G is waiting for you in VIP Hall 6. Just go straight to the end."

Old man Geng nodded and glanced at Zhang Heng.

"We will make sure to treat your bodyguard well. You can meet up with him again after the meeting is over."

"Thank you," Old Man Geng replied.

Although he did not want to separate from Zhang Heng, he realized that it was not a good idea to let an outsider listen to what he would be discussing. Anyhow, if they wanted to harm him, they first had to take Zhang Heng into their consideration if he were here. So although Old Man Geng did not know what Zhang Heng was capable of, he, at the very least, gave him a sense of security.

He noticed how calm Zhang Heng was at all times. Even after he was told who he was about to meet, he did not see any fear shown on Zhang Heng's face. Old Man Geng was less nervous when he saw that.

After the two separated. Old man Geng continued walking forward, while Zhang Heng took a turn under the cheongsam girl's lead. Soon, he arrived at a screening room.

No movies, however, were being shown currently. He and the cheongsam woman were the only ones in the empty hall.

"What do you want to drink?"

"Water will be good," Zhang Heng said.

"What movie do you want to watch?" the cheongsam woman asked again.

"Oh, that'll be unnecessary."

"You'd better choose something to watch because I'm afraid they might take a long time to verify all the information," insisted the cheongsam woman.

"Okay. Do you have any recommendations?"

This time, the cheongsam girl did not speak anymore. Instead, she walked out of the screening hall. Five minutes later, the screening hall became completely dark, and the projector was turned on. A film titled "Symbolic Exchange and Death" began to play.

In this era, where holographic projection was widely used, this movie was still 2D. Its excessively dull-looking content showed a bald old man with a pair of glasses and white temple hair sitting in front of a wooden table, smoking and talking into the camera.

His speech was very random, saying whatever he wanted to say without a solid topic. His ramblings revolved around society, its organizational structure, its modus operandi, production and reproduction, consumption, and some other things.

Later, the cheongsam girl returned to the screening room with a jug of water and two cups. She sat down beside Zhang Heng and poured him a glass.

Neither of them talked.

Zhang Heng did not know why the cheongsam girl's attitude towards him changed slightly after he passed through the door and went to the second floor. He faintly felt a sense of intimacy from her. As compared to the main character, Old Man Geng, she behaved very formally towards him.

After that, Zhang Heng turned to look at the cheongsam girl next to her. The latter was watching the movie at the moment. She seemed to notice Zhang Heng was looking at her. She then frowned and warned him, "Watch the movie."

Although it was an imperative tone, it sounded more like a teacher scolding naughty students. However, her speech did not carry any threat or hostility.

So Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows and focused on the movie again.

The two watched the lengthy and boring movie that lasted three hours until someone walked in and informed them that the meeting was over.

#### **Chapter 940: Gift**

The cheongsam lady got up and sent Zhang Heng out of the screening room, all the way to the corridor.

At the very end, the VIP 6 room's door was opened. However, Old Man Geng was not the one who came out first. The first person that Zhang Heng saw was a middle-aged man of about 40 years old. He wasn't particularly tall, standing at only 1.7 meters. This made him half a head shorter than Zhang Heng. Although he was short, he was not the kind of person that one should mess with.

Whether it was the long scar on his face or the two missing fingers on his right hand, they all told what he had gone through. This was also the era where mechanical prosthetics were extremely well developed. He, however, still chose to keep his physical flaws.

If he was an ordinary person, he might not have enough money to buy himself a mechanical prosthesis. Zhang Heng had already figured out the man's identity. He was the uncrowned king of this place, and he obviously had no financial troubles.

When Zhang Heng laid eyes on him, the uncrowned king was also stared back. However, when he saw the cheongsam girl and Zhang Heng coming out of the screening room together, he seemed a little surprised. He soon thought of something, before proactively stretching out his hand. Smiling, he said, "Ah, you are the bodyguard. I am the owner here. Everyone calls me Mr. G."

Zhang Heng then shook hands with Mr. G.

At the same time, Old Man Geng walked out from behind. He no longer felt the tension he had earlier. He then muttered, "I've spent a lot of unnecessary money this time. If I know you and your man are so polite, I wouldn't have spent the money to hire a bodyguard."

Mr. G said in a noncommittal tone, "Danger will never come to you when you are well-prepared. As for the purpose of hiring a bodyguard, they do more than simply assist in the event of a threat. Their existence alone can eliminate a lot of dangers. It is apparent that the bodyguard you hired is a very capable person. And I dare to guarantee that no matter how much money you spend on him, it is never a failed investment."

"Him?" Old Man Geng continued sullenly, "He might be capable of dealing with the two stupid students on the third level. If it weren't for your people showing up on time, we might've been robbed by one of those gangsters in front of the station."

"Oh, it seems that I haven't introduced her to you." Mr. G stretched out a hand, and the cheongsam lady immediately placed her genuine hand onto Mr. G's palm.



"The person who brought you here is F, my fiancée. She doesn't like to introduce herself, so let me do the honor of introducing her to you guys. Mr. G and Miss F, I guess we two freaks are a good match," Mr. G teased.

"Are you engaged? Congratulations! Both of you are a match made in heaven," Old man Geng said. However, he did not agree with him. Although Mr. G was short, he had never felt the need to grow taller to pursue the women he liked. As the ruler of the first level, he could have women of all manner surrounding him. Although Miss F was outstanding in temperament, she still lacked in the appearance department.

Since ancient times, heroes were supposed to be paired up with beauties. Mr. G was no doubt a hero, but Miss F was no beauty. However, the two parties seemed to be quite satisfied with their significant other; hence Old Man Geng would never stick his nose into their business. He glanced at Zhang Heng and said, "Let's go. Aren't you still in a hurry to go home?"

"Then I will ask F to take you to the station," Mr. G said.

"No need. Although I am old, I think I still remember the route to the shuttle station. We can go back there by ourselves. You and your wife needn't worry about us."

Old Man Geng walked to the security gate as he spoke. Zhang Heng was about to follow him when he heard the cheongsam woman say, "Hold on. I have a gift for you."

Immediately, Old Man Geng stopped walking, and he looked flattered. "You don't have to be so polite. I'm just a middleman responsible for making connections."

"I'm not talking about you." Miss F looked at Zhang Heng and repeated, "I have a gift for you."

Zhang Heng looked at Mr. G, who shrugged. "You better accept her gift. No one here can refuse her, me included."

Zhang Heng nodded, not because of Mr. G's half-threat-half-joke remark, but the faint kindness he felt from Miss F when he was in the screening room.

Miss F then turned around and walked to another room. She came out of the room after a while and put the thing in Zhang Heng's hand.

"Here you go."

Mr. G raised his eyebrows.

"Oh, golden hamster. This little thing is cute. It's easy to raise, like a pet, and it doesn't take up much space. Just feed it on time."

Old Man Geng was a little confused, oblivious as to what Miss F's gift meant. After all, Mr. G was the uncrowned king of this place. He had all kinds of rare weapons and mechanical prostheses. Even if he reluctant to give those things away, he could have gifted them credits where it suited their identities more. But a hamster? Zhang Heng looked far from a person who liked to raise small animals.

This surprised Zhang Heng quite a bit as well. However, he still took the hamster cage from Miss F.

“Thank you.”

After that, Miss F stopped talking and stood beside Mr. G quietly. And Zhang Heng also carried the newly acquired hamster and caught up with Old Man Geng. The security guards at the security gate took off the signal-blocking bracelets they were wearing and returned them to Mr. G. After that, Zhang Heng and Old Man Geng walked down the stairs.

When they arrived outside the theater, the old man finally breathed a sigh of relief. He looked like he was in a good mood. Hence, he did not dwell on the fact that he needed to pay Zhang Heng ten shellac records later. He even suggested to look for somewhere nearby to have a drink. However, he later dismissed the idea, deciding to return to the third level as soon as possible.

Zhang Heng certainly would not object to such an idea. So, the two of them followed along and walked towards the central shuttle.

It was past peak office hours, And there were very few people left on the street.

The two of them crossed a quiet road. While Old Man Geng was complaining that the moon on the first level was designed perfunctory, Zhang Heng suddenly stopped moving forward and reached out his hand to stop Old Man Geng.

“What?” Old Man Geng looked a little lost.

Zhang Heng then asked again, “What are the consequences of killing someone on the first level?”

“Consequences? What do you mean? Who are you going to kill...” He then saw two teenagers skateboarding towards them before he could finish his sentence. When they saw Zhang Heng and Old Man Geng, they came down from their skateboards, reached into their pockets, took out guns, and approached them.

“Are they here for me?” Old Man Geng’s hairs stood up when he saw them.

“If not? Do you think they are here to rob me?” Zhang Heng said casually.